

LIBERATION
for the
BLACK NATION

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of the
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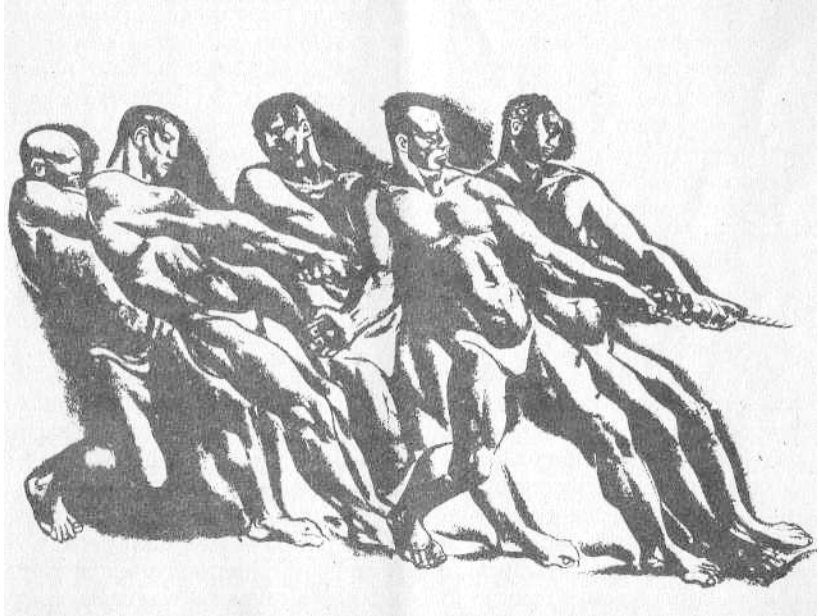
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Introduction:

The Importance of the Black National Question and the Struggle Against National Chauvinism



U.S. imperialism is a modern-day prison-house of nations. Since the American independence movement from British colonialism, the American bourgeoisie took on its chauvinist and racist “manifest destiny” and embarked on a path of building an empire on the basis of Black slave labor and annexing and plundering the lands of the Native Americans, Mexican and rising Chicano peoples and super-exploiting them as cheap labor.

This expansion and annexing of the Native American lands, the victory by the U.S. in the Mexican-American War of 1846-48, which resulted in the annexation of the northern colonized territory of the rising Mexican bourgeois and landlord class (then called New Mexico, but today, the southwest of the U.S.), and the consolidation of the power of the American bourgeoisie over the South as a result of the defeat of the slavocracy in the Civil War of 1861-65, provided the

American bourgeoisie with the material basis to become the 20th century's most dominant imperialist great power. By the end of the nineteenth century, industrial and bank capital had merged to form finance capital. Within the state boundaries of the U.S., captive nations and peoples existed whose aspirations to full nationhood were aggressively denied. The annexation of the Mexican territory and the Native lands are *very clear* violations of self-determination. Leninism has taught us that "... however you may twist and turn, annexation is *violation of the self-determination* of a nation, it is the establishment of state *frontiers contrary to the will of the population.*" "To be against annexation means to be in favor of the right to self-determination."¹

But in addition to the obvious annexationist and genocidal policies towards Native Americans, the American bourgeoisie pursued a chauvinist and racist policy of suppressing and crushing the newly emerging Black Nation in the deep South and the Chicano Nation in the southwest. Both the Blacks in the deep south and the Chicanos (who, just because of their lands being stolen and annexed in the southwest by the U.S. imperialists, are due the right to self-determination) were developing all the features which constitute a nation, i.e. "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."²

In 1914, on the basis of his analysis of agriculture in the U.S., Lenin concluded the following: "In the United States, the Negroes (and also the Mulattoes and Indians) account for only 11.1%. They should be classed as an oppressed nation."³

U.S. capitalism, on the basis of its accumulated profits derived from the racist robbery and pillage of Blacks, Native Americans, and Chicanos, proceeded to bribe the upper stratum of the American proletariat, much as Marx had described about the British proletariat. This system of corruption was further expanded with the development of U.S. imperialist pillage of most of the world. The American proletariat received national privileges and developed a labor aristocracy. There was as well an expansion of the petty bourgeoisie, all of these strata being the principal social props of U.S. imperialism. A split in the American proletariat was created. By the end of the nineteenth century, U.S. imperialism had developed a tremendous monopolization of capital and had generally captured its home market, enslaving the oppressed Black Nation, Chicano Nation, and Native

American people. It embarked on the inevitable path of imperialism, the path of capturing foreign markets and territories, colonies and semi-colonies, with the objectives of exploiting the raw materials, exporting capital, and super-exploiting the cheap labor. The Spanish-American War, the world's first major imperialist war, resulted in the creation of a U.S. colonial empire. The U.S. captured and colonized the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the island of Guam. Ever since then, U.S. imperialism has been involved in numerous imperialist wars with the objective of capturing territories and enslaving oppressed nations and peoples. Hawaii and Alaska are colonized territories of U.S. imperialism, despite their formal status of "states" of the U.S. As a result of the U.S. policy of national enslavement and suppression of any strivings toward national liberation, millions of workers and peasants have left their homes (Puerto Rico, Cuba, Philippines, Central and Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa etc.) and emigrated to the U.S. only to find that the American "promised land" and "paradise" maintained these peoples as oppressed national minorities within the U.S. state boundaries.

J.V. Stalin explains: "What is national oppression. National oppression is the system of exploitation and robbery of oppressed peoples, the measures of forcible restriction of the rights of oppressed nationalities, resorted to by imperialist circles. These, taken together, represent the policy generally known as a policy of national oppression."⁴

Elsewhere, Stalin summarizes: "Oppressed nationalities are usually oppressed not only as peasants and as urban working people, but also as nationalities, i.e., as the toilers of a definite nationality, language, culture, manner of life, habits and customs. The double oppression cannot help revolutionising the labouring masses of the oppressed nationalities, cannot help impelling them to fight the principal force of oppression—capital."⁵

This analysis applied to the U.S. reveals how the U.S. today is truly a prison-house of oppressed nations and national minorities. The U.S. is a multi-national state. However, it differs from the Eastern European multinational states. The Eastern European multi-national states like Russia (before the October Revolution), Hungary, Austria, arose in the epoch of the rise of capitalism and nation-states. The U.S. multi-national state developed both in the epoch of mercantile capitalism and in the epoch of imperialism on the basis of the ruthless annexation and subjugation of most of a continent, and then

continued this pursuit of “manifest destiny” right into the Pacific and the Caribbean.

This multinational character was expanded in the second period in the development of the national question when “in its quest for markets, raw materials, fuel and cheap labor, and in its fight for the export of capital and for securing important railway and sea routes, capitalism burst out of the framework of the national state and enlarged its territory at the expense of its neighbours, near and distant. In this second period the old national states in the West—Britain, Italy and France—ceased to be national states, i.e., owing to having seized new territories, they were transformed into multi-national, colonial states and thereby became arenas of the same kind of national and colonial oppression as already existed in Eastern Europe.”⁶

Today Blacks comprise 12% (26 million) of U.S. population with 54% concentrated in the Black Belt South. Chicanos comprise 10 to 12 million of the U.S. population with 85% concentrated in the southwest. The Native people comprise 1.4 million of U.S. population and are mostly concentrated in the southwest. These low figures, and even though they are undoubtedly an underestimation, reveal the fruits of the barbaric genocidal policies of the American bourgeoisie’s “manifest destiny”. Aside from those enslaved peoples, there are numerous oppressed national minorities (including immigrants) such as Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Haitians, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Salvadorians (and other Latin Americans). All Latinos combined make up 15 million of the U.S. population and it is estimated that they may become the largest grouping of oppressed nationalities by 1990. (This could be true already because of the tremendous number of “illegal” Latin immigrants, particularly Mexicans. One U.S. immigration official has said that 10% of the U.S. population is made up of “illegals,” mainly from Mexico.) Then there are the numerous Asians, Africans, and Arab immigrants who are also nationally oppressed by U.S. imperialism. The imperialists know they have enslaved nations and national minorities. However, they seek to disguise their enslavement by claiming to be the most democratic country in the world, by granting a few civil rights reforms, etc. in order to deceive the masses of oppressed.

The U.S. imperialists propagate the chauvinist theory of the “melting pot,” which covers up their reactionary policies of national oppression, systematic denial of rights to both oppressed nations and national minorities. This is particularly done on a racist basis. All that

has “melted” is the illusion of rights of the oppressed nationalities. U.S. imperialism is reaction all along the line. It is not the liberator of nations, but their oppressor. This is true not only in distant countries, but is particularly true right within the borders of the U.S.

The imperialists could not accomplish this task all by themselves. They are followed by the petty bourgeoisie, a section of the intelligentsia and a section of the upper stratum of the workers, who also share the spoils of robbery. These sectors of the population, overwhelmingly white, are the props of national chauvinism, patriotism, and racism. They fight for a defense of their national privileges, oppose the struggles for self-determination of the oppressed nations and help the imperialists in promoting divisions in the working class. They are the agents of imperialism in the working class and mass movements.

Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. In all the main capitalist countries, starting with the U.S., the objective conditions for the achievement of socialism exist. “In Western Europe and in the United States, therefore, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalist governments and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is on the order of the day.”⁷

In the U.S. many so-called socialists and communists would agree that the struggle for socialism is top item on the agenda. Many have demarcated from the revisionist path of the CPUSA of Foster and Gus Hall who advocate a “2-stage revolution” in the U.S., i.e., a fight for a “People’s Democracy” that would gradually lead to “socialism.” Such reformist and revisionist betrayals are daily combatted by many who claim to be communists. However, many of these “anti-CPUSA” and “anti-Trotskyite” communists have not demarcated from the national chauvinism that has plagued the U.S. communist movement historically, and the CPUSA in particular.

Self-proclaimed “anti-revisionist” and “anti-Trotskyite” communists, like those in the Progressive Labor Party (semi-Trotskyite and anarchist), Revolutionary Communist Party (Maoist-anarchists), the *Line of March* swamp (critical, pro-Russian forces), and the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA (pro-Party of Labor of Albania), all “agree” that socialist revolution is on the agenda and that it cannot be a reformist, parliamentary accomplishment but an armed “smashing” of the bourgeois state and the establishment of a “dictatorship of the proletariat”! (PLP, however, recently has become even more “leftist” in discarding even the task of building a socialist dictatorship of the

proletariat. They want to create immediate “communist” society, under the dictatorship of the PLP.) Hence, all their claims of being the most consistent “internationalists” and “revolutionary communists.” Yet, all these “revolutionaries” pursue a disgusting national chauvinist policy in regard to the national question in the U.S. They all deny that the U.S. is a prison-house of nations. They, like Lovestone, Browder, and Foster (in his latter years when he abandoned even in words the struggle for self-determination of the Black nation), deny that an oppressed Black Nation exists in the deep south. They consider that the struggles for self-determination of the Black and Chicano nations and the Natives peoples are “bourgeois nationalist” and “reactionary movements”. They have liquidated the national question within the U.S. from various perspectives such as: “all nationalism is reactionary;” “all nationalism is nationalism;” “industrialization and the dispersion of Blacks from the Black Belt have changed the concept of Black Nation;” etc. To them, the Black question is only a racial and class question. To them self-determination, the right to secession, is “Bundist”. Socialist revolution by itself will resolve racism. All these American exceptionalist and national chauvinist “theories” are propagated under the cloak of “internationalism” and “revolutionary communism”. To them, the Bolshevik principles on the national question do not apply in the U.S., hence, their American exceptionalism. (The PLP however, is “innocent” of this charge. They do not apply the Bolshevik principles on the national and colonial question to anywhere in the world.)

On the national question in the U.S., national chauvinism and racism has been and still remains the principal danger in the communist and workers’ movement.

Yet, even Karl Marx was very clear on this question. Long ago he stated: “A people which enslaves another people forges its own chains.”⁸ And that “Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin when in the black it is still branded.”⁹

Karl Marx noted this out of interest in achieving the final aim of world communism, i.e., the merger of all nations and abolition of class society. Lenin states: “The aim of socialism is not only to end the division of mankind into tiny states and the isolation of nations in any form, it is not only to bring the nations closer together but to integrate them... In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of

nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e. their freedom to secede.”¹⁰

In the interest of uniting the multi-national proletariat in the U.S. in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeois dictatorship and establish socialism, revolutionary communists in the U.S. must address the national question, especially the Black and Chicano national question. The proletariat from the various oppressed nationalities in the U.S. will not unite with the white American proletariat if the white proletariat and communists do not in deeds repudiate and fight against the annexations, national inequality, national privileges, national chauvinism and racism that their oppressor white nation propagates and implements on a daily basis. The narrow nationalism and “Bundist” deviations on the national question will not be eradicated unless and until the national chauvinism of the oppressor white nation is fought against and defeated. Failure to recognize the existence of oppressed nations within the U.S. and to uphold their right to self-determination will mean failure in accomplishing the socialist revolution in the U.S.

The October Socialist Revolution was successful precisely because the Bolshevik Party implemented a correct Marxist program on the national and peasant questions, which rallied the several oppressed nations and peasant masses to the banner of the proletariat. As stated previously, Russia too was a prison-house of nations. More than 13 oppressed nations resided *within* the state boundaries of Tsarist Russia. The Bolsheviks confronted many problems of bourgeois and narrow nationalism from the oppressed nations. Yet, Lenin and Stalin and the Bolsheviks were clear as to the fact that this was a reaction to the dominant great-Russian chauvinism. Part of the struggle for a Marxist program in the struggle to found a real workers’ communist party was the formulation of a correct program on the national question. The Bolsheviks accomplished this task in 1903 and had to fight for its implementation against chauvinists and nationalist deviations.

In 1913, J.V. Stalin wrote *Marxism and the National Question*, which further presented the Bolshevik line on the national question. During the imperialist WW1, Lenin continued to develop and defend the Bolshevik policy on the national and colonial question in struggle against other internationalists, like Rosa Luxemburg, who on this question in essence sided with the social-chauvinists. In the construction of the USSR, Stalin was the principal architect in resolving the national question on the basis of the right to secession and voluntary

union. Without such policies, the October revolution would never have occurred, nor the USSR been constructed.

Yet, today, we have communists in the U.S. who claim to be adherents of Lenin and Stalin, yet fail to apply a Bolshevik policy on the national question. In the U.S., the struggle for socialism is not just a pure act of “anti-racist” class struggle. We think, and revolutionary practice in the U.S. has confirmed, that the following passage by Lenin is very much applicable:

“The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

“It would be no less a mistake to remove one of the points of the democratic programme, for example, the point on the self-determination of nations, on the grounds of it being ‘impracticable’ or ‘illusory’ under imperialism. The contention that the right of nations to self-determination is impracticable within the bounds of capitalism can be understood either in the absolute, economic sense, or in the conditional, political sense.”¹¹

In the U.S. the CPUSA has abandoned the struggle for socialism as some “future society,” making the struggle for “democracy” and “social-progress” the main issue. With this, they have completely liquidated the right to secession of oppressed nations, like the Black Nation. (On the Chicano question, the CPUSA never had a correct Marxist line even in words.) The “anti-revisionist” communists view the struggle for socialism as just “class struggle.” Lenin, in his experiences against national and social-chauvinists taught us the following:

“In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an

imperialist. This is an absolute demand, even where the *chance* of secession being possible and ‘practicable’ before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand.”¹²

Stalin, too, stated that: “...it is imperatively necessary to include in the national programme a special point on the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secede.”¹³

The Bolshevik program demands that the right to self-determination be expressed as THE RIGHT TO SECEDE. Why? Because in Lenin’s days, and even more so today, the slogan of “self-determination” has been advanced and upheld by many opportunists, and even imperialists. Witness the former president of U.S. imperialism, Jimmy Carter, who upholds the right to “self-determination of Puerto Rico.” This surely did not mean that Carter recognizes Puerto Rico’s right to independence. It was only a sham pretense. Even Trotskyites and fascists will claim at various times that they support “self-determination.” In the U.S. there are many national chauvinists who attempt to pimp off the Black national movement by upholding the “struggle for self-determination” of Black people. The Trotskyite Socialist Workers’ Party and the revisionist CPUSA throw these slogans around. It has become a fetish. What they mean by self-determination is the right for Blacks to have politicians and reforms. What is liquidated is the right for Blacks to secede in their homeland in the Black Belt South, if they desire to do so. Some so-called communist groups like the Communist Party (M-L) (pro-theory of three worlds supporter), which no longer exists, propagated self-determination for the Black nation, but in deeds liquidated the right to secession (the same deviation as the CPUSA under William Z. Foster’s leadership). Others, like the League of Revolutionary Struggle (pro-NATO and China), also in words recognize the right to self-determination, but tail the national reformist politics of the Black bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie.

The Comintern *Resolutions* of 1928-1930 on the Black National Question, however, presented very clearly the first comprehensive Bolshevik approach to the Black national question. Though much of the objective data needs to be updated and the actual formulation of the partial demands for the Black national movement needs to be compiled and also updated, the 1928-1930 CI *Resolutions* must still be a starting point of analysis.

Nevertheless, any so-called communist who fails to uphold the right to secession of the Black nation, and who liquidates the Black

national question to just a struggle against racism, for equal rights, or an ambiguous “self-determination,” must be exposed as an “imperialist scoundrel.”

Historically, this question has been one of the fundamental questions where American socialism and communism has displayed its national chauvinist deviation. On the one hand, the old CPUSA, as part of the Communist International of Lenin and Stalin, was the best proletarian party that the American working class ever produced. The CPUSA, under the guidance of the CI, became the first advanced section of the American proletariat to struggle against national chauvinism, to fight for self-determination and equal rights, to develop Black-White unity in the proletarian movement, and to promote proletarian hegemony of the Black national movement. The CPUSA help formed many nationwide Black national formations (like the Negro Labor Congress) and led many struggles in support of Black people’s struggles, and against Jim Crow segregation. It helped build international campaigns against racism, in support of Black struggles like that of the Scottsboro Boys. At one point, 20% of the CPUSA’s membership was Black, an accomplishment that few mass multinational organizations can claim.

However, these accomplishments were achieved only through a ruthless struggle against national chauvinism *and* racism within the CPUSA. First Lovestone’s and then Browder’s leadership strove to liquidate the struggle for self-determination, allowing for the growth of national chauvinism. Their justification for liquidating the Black national question was their economist “productive forces” theory that industrialization in the Black Belt had “proletarianized the south.” Hence, no more agrarian question, hence no more “land” question for the Black masses.

When Foster reconstituted the CPUSA in 1945, it made attempts to reconstitute a correct line on the Black national question. In 1946, the CPUSA held a plenum of the Central Committee in which the “Resolution on Negro Rights and Self-Determination” was adopted. It is a very short statement which demarcated from Browder’s liquidation of the Black question and reiterated some of the basic points and tasks of the 1928-1930 CI *Resolutions*. However, the “reconstituted” resolution fails to interpret the right to self-determination as meaning the right to secede. The Fosterite CPUSA in 1946 raised: “The Communist Party supports the right to self-determination for the Negro people, that is, their right to realize self-government in the

Negro majority area in the South.”¹⁴

They reduce the task of self-determination to a “struggle for attaining representative government and land reform.” Yet, the Comintern thesis clearly states the following: “It is incorrect and harmful to interpret the Communist standpoint to mean that the Communists stand for the fight of self-determination of the Negroes only up to a certain point but not beyond this, to, for example, the right to separation.”¹⁵ The Comintern also adds: “...the right of the Negroes to governmental separation will be unconditionally realized by the Communist Party; it will unconditionally give the Negro population of the Black Belt freedom of choice on this question.”¹⁶ It also stated: “If it desires to separate, it must be free to do so; but if it prefers to remain federated with the United States it must also be free to do that. This is the correct meaning of the idea of self-determination, and it must be recognized quite independently of whether the United States is still a capitalist state or whether a proletarian dictatorship has already been established there.”¹⁷ Clear, one would think.

Yet, Foster in 1946 made sure that the right to secession of the Black nation would be liquidated in their “reconstructed,” “anti-Browderite” resolution. Foster stated: “Talk of an American Negro Republic has no foundation in present-day reality.”¹⁸ Benjamin J. Davis stated: “The position on self-determination as put toward in the resolution avoids two main dangers. First, it does not state, in a sectarian manner, as we did in the past, what the form and the exact manner would be in which this self-determination would be realized or exercised.”¹⁹ Eugene Dennis actually reveals that the slogan of self-determination is raised only for “historical reasons,” i.e., “Further, in contradistinction to the past, we do *not* present the slogan of self-determination as an immediate slogan of action, but as the affirmation of a historic right which guides and establishes the direction of all our work in the South.”²⁰

In actuality, the Fosterite CPUSA was forced to re-establish a position on self-determination for the Black nation, because in the late 1940’s a Black national movement was growing, with aspirations for self-determination. The liberating effects of the victory over fascism by the USSR, and the fact that many Black veterans who fought in World War II returned to the South and joined in with the Black farmers, sharecroppers, proletariat, and sections of the petty-bourgeoisie in a movement for self-determination and equal rights, forced the CPUSA to adopt a centrist position on the Black national

question. But the Fosterites' national chauvinism was sure to reduce this question to a national reformist battle for civil rights, land reforms, and electoral struggle.

Foster, Dennis, and all the other Browderites without Browder spent many years trying to cope with and divert this growing revolutionary tide among Black people away from the actual exercise of self-determination. This first took the form of various centrist subterfuges to uphold self-determination without actually upholding it. Finally, these same neo-Browderites, including Foster himself, liquidated the question entirely, which accounts for the present position of the CPUSA. But this subject has importance beyond the historical question of how a rather small organization today, came to its chauvinist position on the Black national question. Most of the "anti-revisionist" forces that arose in opposition to the CPUSA did not demarcate from this chauvinist line, but continued it, or they "demarcated" from the CPUSA by rejecting complete liquidation of the question in favor of the centrist position of Foster and company, leading to this liquidation.

Since the decline of the CPUSA as the party of the American proletariat, there has been a rise in the Black movement, but often in isolation from the white proletarian movement. The liquidation by the CPUSA of the Black national question, its failure to use its revolutionary potential, is a fundamental aspect of its revisionism, of its capitulation to the labor aristocracy and its contribution to the re-creation of a situation described by Marx, and that was beginning to be broken by the work of the CPUSA under the direction of the Comintern in the thirties. In describing the source of the impotence of the British labor movement, Marx compared the problem of chauvinism toward the Irish workers with the chauvinism of white workers in America to Blacks:

"England now possesses a working class divided into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he regards himself as a member of the *ruling* nation and consequently he becomes a tool of the English aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the 'poor whites' to the Negroes in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back

with interest, in his own money. He sees in the English worker both the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rulers in Ireland.

“This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. *This antagonism* is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And the latter is quite aware of this.”²¹

Indeed this also explains the impotence of American labor since the early fifties. As the Black movement arose, as the anti-war and student movements arose, the American proletariat was relatively quiet. Although this is due to the objective economic conditions of relative stabilization of capitalism at that time, this is not sufficient to explain the tremendous passivity of much of the white proletariat and the large section of it that regarded itself in comparison to Blacks “as a member of the *ruling* nation and consequently becomes a tool” of the American bourgeoisie against the Blacks. This strengthens the domination of American capital over all of the working class. These white workers see the Black workers as their competitors, who lower their standard of living. They cherish religious, social, national and racial prejudices towards Blacks. Of course, the Blacks pay them “back with interest” and see in them “the accomplice and the stupid tool of” the white rulers in America.

In America, as in Britain, “this antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, and, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes.” In this way the bourgeoisie creates national and racial enmity and diverts the proletariat from the struggle against capital. The secret of the impotence of the American proletariat in the last thirty years is this antagonism. It is precisely to break this antagonism that Lenin, at the Second Congress of the Comintern, compared the situation of Blacks in the U.S. with the Irish:

“it is necessary for the Communist Parties to render direct aid to the revolutionary movements in the dependent and subject nations (for example, in Ireland, the Negroes in America, etc.) and in the colonies.”²²

White chauvinism, the outlook of the labor aristocracy, constantly found its way into the ranks of the Communist Party. This was inevitable; it was a question of how it was struggled against. This always posed problems for the CP, but it was under Browder’s

leadership that this battle was lost, along with the battle for a proletarian party itself. With the intervention once again of the International Communist Movement, the “new Lovestone” was defeated and the Party reconstituted. But as we have seen, even though the chauvinist liquidation of the national question of Blacks was formally reversed, this did not mean that the correct position on this question was taken up, nor that it was consistently put into practice. But the question of international intervention is not sufficient to explain the restoration of the demand for self-determination. As an analysis of the history will show, the principal factor was the immense popularity of this demand among Blacks, particularly those in the Communist Party and those sympathetic to it.

Many Blacks had been rallied to the cause of communism on the basis of the correct position of the Communist International, and the immense popularity of the liberation of nations in the Soviet Union among Blacks. There was also support for this just position by many other workers in the Communist Party. All of this meant that it was not easy to overturn this position. Browder’s style of instant liquidation could not prevail, and a more subtle centrist approach had to be used to subordinate the Black proletariat to the white labor aristocracy and petty bourgeoisie. It needs to be understood that the class character of the reconstituted party was not as strongly proletarian as it had been prior to Browder’s liquidation, nor was it any longer based on factory nuclei as the basic units of the party. We have already shown the half-hearted rectification that was made on this question with the reconstitution of the party, but the position of the CP would only deteriorate more with time. At the fourteenth convention of the CP in 1948, beside the usual lip service to the right of self-determination, there was in practice the line of subordinating the Black struggle to the NAACP, the new Progressive Party, and generally to any other struggle of the party except the struggle for self-determination. The question of the Black Belt was subordinated to the concept of building a “new South” under the banner of the “Progressive Party” of the liberal bourgeoisie in the US. The election program adopted at this convention in its section on “Negro rights” does not even demand the right of self-determination in words. Of course the reports at the convention mention this, but never raise it to explicitly mean the right to secede and form an independent state. The program and reports drop the call for the confiscation of the land in the Black Belt from the landlords and the bourgeoisie, and instead the program calls only

for agrarian reform that would give some land to some Blacks. The question of state unity for the Black Belt was also totally abandoned in the program and in the reports.

In 1930 the Comintern had explained that the demand has to be put forward for the “Confiscation of the landed property of the white landowners and capitalists for the benefit of the Negro farmers.” It explained that “without this revolutionary measure, without the agrarian revolution, the right of self-determination would be only a Utopia or, at best, would remain only on paper without changing in any way the actual enslavement.”

The Comintern also raised, “Establishment of state unity of the Black Belt.” The Comintern explained that, “if the right of self-determination is to be put into force, it is necessary wherever possible to bring together into one governmental unit all districts of the south where the majority of the settled population consists of Negroes.” Instead of this just demand the CP emphasized the question of “the right of the Negro people to full representation in government and demand Federal enforcement of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, so that the Negro people, North and South, may participate freely and fully in the 1948 elections, and all elections thereafter.”²³ Although this is a correct democratic demand, it is no substitute for the struggle for self-determination. The CP at that time, and thereafter, officially upheld a view that Lenin criticised in this way: “Our Polish comrades like this last argument, on joint determination instead of self-determination, so much that they repeat it three times in their theses!... All reactionaries and bourgeois grant nations forcibly retained within the frontiers of a given state the right to ‘determine jointly’ their fate in a common parliament.”²⁴

This would then become the principal struggle of the CPUSA, the question of obtaining more democratic rights to participate in the “common parliament”, be it the state legislatures in the South or the Federal congress. Specifically, in 1948 the obsession for a few votes for the Progressive Party was sufficient reason to abandon all the demands that gave real substance to the right of self-determination for Blacks. This was a reflection of the general capitulation to electoral politics where it was important not to offend the chauvinist voters. Of course, combined with this was the struggle to get the Black communists who still defended real self-determination to be less “offensive,” despite claims that “right opportunism” in the form of chauvinism was the “main danger” (but only because it “encourages the left

danger,” which is actually attacked as the main one). The question of Right opportunism is limited to slapping some chauvinists in the party on the wrist, but this is not due “to any intrinsic delinquencies on the part of these comrades, but rather to a failure to estimate properly that the wave of war hysteria and national chauvinism has carried with it a great heightening of white opportunism.”²⁵

On the other hand, the “left” deviators were denounced with another tone: “Sundry renegade groups have sought to undermine and destroy our Party in the name of ‘criticism and self-criticism,’ and have sought to make factional and disruptive use of our Party’s weakness in the field of Negro work. These rotten elements, such as the Francis Franklins and other insects, must be exposed and their attempts to search around in our Party for factional soft spots, smashed. This is necessary for the disciplined unity and fighting efficiency of our Party.”²⁶ Apparently to fight the “main danger” it is sufficient to remind the chauvinists that they are underestimating chauvinism outside the party, and to warn the chauvinists that their failure to wage a token struggle against chauvinism outside the party is fueling the “left danger”, it is giving ground to the “insects” that need to be crushed. “The right-opportunist danger has also fed the Leftist-sectarian danger, which expressed itself among many of our Negro cadres in a ‘go-it-alone’ tendency toward self-isolation.”²⁷

It is not hard to understand that there might be tendencies in this direction because of the prevailing chauvinism that existed in the Party. Unlike Foster’s reborn Browderite party without Browder, the Comintern understood Lenin’s position that communists do different types of propaganda in the oppressor and the oppressed nation. In the *Resolutions on the Negro Question*, the Comintern makes clear time and time again that it is the task of Black communists to struggle against tendencies among Blacks toward “self-isolation,” but that fundamentally the only way to overcome this problem is for the Party to organize white workers to fight side by side with Black workers for the rights of Black people. The 1930 resolution concludes with the position that “it is essential for the Communist Party to make an energetic beginning now—at the present moment—with the organization of joint mass struggles of white and black workers against Negro oppression. This alone will enable us to get rid of the bourgeois white chauvinism which is polluting the ranks of the white workers in America, to overcome the distrust of the Negro masses caused by the inhuman barbarous Negro slave traffic still carried on by the

American bourgeoisie—inasmuch as it is directed even against all white workers—and to win over to our side these millions of Negroes as active fellow-fighters in the struggle for the overthrow of bourgeois power throughout America.”

This was done, although far from perfectly, in the thirties, and thousands of Blacks were won to the side of communism and millions were becoming sympathetic. But this was abandoned by the opportunists who took the lead in the party in their quest for electoral success. The grand designs of building the Progressive Party in the South, struggling for a “new South,” were not compatible with this kind of struggle, because it loses votes among backward workers who are still infected with a high degree of chauvinism and among various chauvinist petty bourgeois. This process continued and intensified throughout the degeneration of the CPUSA, in which the mass of Black members, if anything, resisted too much the necessity of splitting with this revisionist organization in an attempt to try to maintain unity with the white proletariat in America.

The struggle by Blacks in the party to have the party maintain its Bolshevik stand on the Black national question also posed another particular problem for the white leadership. In 1948 it was said at the convention that one of the principal tasks was this: “Our Negro comrades, in particular, must fight against the constant spread of the scourge of anti-Semitism in Negro communities. They must fight for collective leadership in Negro work.”²⁸ The importance of this statement must not be overlooked, even if not immediately apparent. This was 1948 and it was the year that Israel came into existence. The CPUSA took a leading position in the International Communist movement that the state of Israel should be recognized. This was part of the international Zionist conspiracy against the socialist camp, which has been explained in *Lines of Demarcation* no. 15, published by the Bolshevik Union of Canada. It is not a coincidence that the leadership of the American party and much of its white composition was Jewish and there was a great deal of Zionist sentimentality, particularly since Zionism in World War II had become an agency of US imperialism. Much of Jewish capitalism in the US was developed in the exploitation of the Blacks. This was what was allowed by the US bourgeoisie to the Jewish bourgeoisie, but, nevertheless, they did not refuse it. Because of this the immediate capitalist and landlord enemies of Blacks in the ghettos of the northern cities were Jewish. It is only natural that Blacks would spontaneously express more outrage

at Jewish capitalists than at capitalists in general. This situation can breed a certain amount of anti-Semitism, but this has nothing to do with the anti-Semitism of the fascists. This is the hostility of an oppressed race against its oppressors. The way to break any antagonism that would be expressed to Jews in general, and therefore to Jewish workers, would be for the Jewish workers to join with Blacks in the struggle against the Jewish capitalists and landlords in the ghetto. Actually the CPUSA was in a better position to organize such a joint struggle than it was with any other section of the white proletariat in America, but it did not do this precisely because it was heavily infected with Zionism and Jewish chauvinism.

The “anti-Semitism” that these Zionists and chauvinists wanted to stop was actually the rising proletarian struggle of the newly emerging Black proletariat in the major cities. Blacks had moved to the big cities of the North in large numbers during and immediately after WWII. Instead of finding the “promised land” they found a life of misery and oppression as the lowest strata of the proletariat, and the capitalists most directly involved in exploiting them as workers and consumers, the capitalists, landlords and petty bourgeois functionaries and bureaucrats they came into closest daily contact with, were Jewish. It is only natural that spontaneously most hostility would be expressed towards these capitalists first until the consciousness of Blacks was raised to understand that this was only the first line of capitalists they faced, that they were only the frontmen for monopoly capitalism, which has often used Jewish capitalism to divert anger at capitalism in general. On the other hand this Jewish capitalism was of vital importance to the Zionists because it provided the material basis for Zionism and the expansion of the state of Israel, which was and still is principally financed by Jewish capitalists in the US. The smashing of the Black revolutionary movement and diverting it into reformism was and remains one of the main goals of Zionism. The destruction of the Black revolutionary movement in the US was part of the offensive and conspiracy against the socialist camp. Stalin and the Comintern had always opposed Zionism and promoted the cause of Black liberation. One of the reasons the Comintern had such difficulty in getting the CPUSA to adopt the correct position on the Black national question was opposition from the Zionists and their dupes among the extensive Jewish membership in the CP. A component part of the Zionist-revisionist offensive against Stalin was the attack on the Black national revolutionary movement in the US.

The role of Zionist agents in the American left has continued long after this time and right into the Maoist movement.

It is not a coincidence that combined with the promotion of the defense of Jewish capitalism in 1948, there was a call for “collective leadership” on the Black question. This was the cry of the modern revisionists in the campaign against Stalin. They preached the concept of “collective leadership” to promote the conciliation of Bolshevism with revisionism, exercising a “collective leadership” that would result in the liquidation of the Bolsheviks from the “collective”. In the US this revisionist concept was used to attack the Black leadership in the CP, and the hegemony of the Black proletariat over the Black liberation struggle. The revisionists and Zionists demanded “collective leadership”, that is, they demanded that they be given veto power over the work among Blacks and to use this position to launch an all-out attack on the Black Bolsheviks. This was not an attack that could be launched in a single blow, it took them time and subtle centrist methods to exterminate the “insects”.

So this “collective leadership” over the Black question was established in 1948. It is instructive to examine what the result was. At the 1951 convention the Black national question was not liquidated in word, but was reduced to token reference in presentations on the South and on agriculture in America. It was said that “this Convention will further signalize the fact that the question of peace and the fight for peace is the paramount common concern of each of the aforementioned groupings of the Southern masses. Above all it is the tactical key to achieving in life now the united action of masses of Negro and white people—a pre-condition for winning basic changes in the social condition of the Southern masses.”²⁹ By this means the national struggle of the Black nation was reduced to a question that was subsidiary to uniting on peace issues with white “people” in the South. Instead of unity with the white proletariat in America, there is now promoted unity with white “people” in the South for peace, and that the only way there could be basic changes in the “social condition” of the Black nation is if it first waged a struggle with white “people” for “peace”. In this spirit the convention of course said nothing about self-determination, the right to political secession, agrarian revolution and state unity for the Black Nation. All of these demands would apparently endanger the struggle for peace with the white “people” of the South.

It is in 1953, combined with the general struggle against

Stalinism, that the CPUSA begins an even stronger campaign against the Black Bolsheviks in the Party. In July of that year, at the same time that disguised criticism of Stalin was launched in the Soviet Union, William Foster, himself, writes an article entitled “Left Sectarianism in the Fight for Negro Rights and Against White Chauvinism.” In the same issue of the party’s theoretical journal was an article justifying the existence of the state of Israel under the cover of criticising Zionism. This article ignored the fact that the Soviet Union under Stalin’s leadership had broken off any relations with this state and denounced them as a “gang of bandits”, nor does the article talk about the hideous Doctor’s Plot, which had been exposed earlier that year.

Foster first gives lip service to the struggle against chauvinism and once again points the finger outside the party, and proclaimed the party as “far freer from the political disease of white chauvinism than any other predominantly white organization in the country.” While possibly true, this did not say much, because chauvinism was growing in the party. Foster, of course, does not deny that the problem exists, but tries to point the finger at the bad attitudes of certain members rather than problems of political and organizational line. Foster admits that, “Among the more common manifestations of white chauvinism in the Party are passivity in the fight for Negro rights, failure to develop social contact with Negroes, refusal of homeowners to rent rooms to Negroes, hypocritical attitudes toward Negro Party and union functionaries, failure to upgrade Negro workers in industry and to elect them as union officials in progressive unions, disapproval of intermarriage, the practice of white chauvinist language and habits, etc.”³⁰

Obviously the problem of chauvinism was severe and this is intolerable in a communist organization. If this situation were even half as serious as this, there should have been sweeping purges, but no doubt it was twice as serious. Whenever there is this degree of chauvinist degeneration among cadre, it has to reflect an incorrect policy and line of the party on the struggle against chauvinism. But, instead of addressing this question, Foster tries to use this situation to launch an attack on “Left sectarianism,” treating it as the main problem in reality, and as even the cause of white chauvinism! For Foster the principal error of left sectarianism is in the struggle against white chauvinism: “In the fight against white chauvinism, to the degree that it is being waged, the main hindrance to a successful struggle is sectarianism and distortion of the battle against white chauvinism.”³¹

Foster explains this “sectarianism and distortion” this way: “The left-sectarian tendency isolates the Party from the masses, makes a caricature of the fight against white chauvinism, considers white chauvinism as virtually ineradicable and proposes impossible disciplinary measures to combat it... It is, therefore, a basic necessity, if our Party is to make a solid fight for Negro rights and against white chauvinism, that it must eliminate these Leftist errors which are widely prevalent in the Party and are crippling its Negro work. These errors are the more dangerous because they have been but little discussed and not at all fought.”³² So here is the admission that these “Leftist errors” are more dangerous than white chauvinism in the party, and it is the “Left sectarian tendency” that must be disciplined. It must be disciplined because it wants to apply disciplinary measures to chauvinism in the party. Given Foster’s own description of the problem in the Party quoted above, it is quite understandable why some Black cadre would feel that the problem is virtually “ineradicable,” particularly when they faced it right from the top of the leadership.

It is rightism that breeds Left sectarian errors. No doubt some of the positions taken in the face of the extensive chauvinism in the party were sectarian sometimes, but what could be expected under the circumstances? These errors could only be very secondary compared to the problems of white chauvinism. The way to get rid of white chauvinism is not to attack the people trying to get rid of it, however flawed their attempts. The way to get rid of the white chauvinism and problems of sectarianism is to show the correct way to fight and defeat white chauvinism in the party. But Foster and the other leaders wanted as wide a membership as possible, and the struggle against chauvinism prevented the rallying of those infected with chauvinism. For that reason the struggle against white chauvinism had to be curtailed. For a real Bolshevik party, the consistent struggle against chauvinism is the means by which to keep out chauvinists and to consistently take the severest disciplinary action against those who sneak in or those who degenerate. How can the Black proletariat be won to the side of communism, how can it consent to be part of an organization that can have a non-Black majority, if that organization does not take the severest disciplinary action against any and all manifestations of white chauvinism? If a party has a fundamentally revolutionary point of view, it understands the absolutely essential role that the Black proletariat and the Black national liberation struggle has for revolution in America, and would allow no cheap popularity among

backward white workers to get in the way of forging the necessary unity. But if a party has a fundamentally reformist point of view, and is abandoning revolution in favor of electoral, social-democratic style politics, it will sacrifice the revolutionary possibilities of the Blacks for the sake of popularity among the majority of the country that is still infected by chauvinism.

But the question here is much more than just a correct stand on the national question. It is a fundamental question of what kind of party is going to be built and struggled for, a Bolshevik party or a Menshevik social-democratic party. Stalin, in explaining the difference and in defining the character of Bolshevik parties, says: "The theory of 'defeating' opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of 'overcoming' these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism... Our Party succeeded in achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution..., because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators and Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists. The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements."³³ This is the path that Foster rejected. He denounces it as "impossible disciplinary measures," and it is clear where this Menshevik path led the CPUSA. Foster demanded that chauvinism be dealt with inside the party, that it be "defeated" and "overcome" without purging the Party of opportunism. The result has been that the Party was first condemned to paralysis and chronic infirmity and has fallen prey to opportunism, and this has left the proletariat without its revolutionary party, without its principal weapon in the fight against imperialism. Today the CPUSA has become a party of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists.

One of the most fundamental questions around which this happened, one of the most important questions that was at the basis of the degeneration of the CPUSA, was the Black national question. In 1948 the Party attacked and purged Bolsheviks on this question, it did it again in 1953 and would again and again throughout the fifties.

In 1953 Foster says that, “The most serious sectarian error now being made by the Party in its fight against white chauvinism, and one which gives birth to various other sectarian mistakes is to neglect work in general among the Negro masses and to develop the fight against white chauvinism primarily as an inner-Party campaign. Many comrades—Perry, Henderson, Haywood, and others—have indicated this serious lack of mass work in the NAACP, the Urban League, and among the Negro people in general.”³⁴ With typical Menshevik demagoguery, Foster tries to paint the struggle for the purity of the Party as sectarianism from the masses, instead of it being the only way to ensure that the masses have a revolutionary party. Instead of this Bolshevik struggle, Foster wants the Black comrades to submerge themselves in reformist organizations that liquidate the Black national question.

Already in 1931, a programmatic document of the League Against Imperialism, a mass organization of the Comintern, entitled “Negro’s Struggle against Capitalist and Imperialist Exploitation and Oppression,” describes the nature of the two organizations that Foster wanted the Black communists to submerge themselves in. These organizations certainly did not change in the intervening period, except to continue even further on the path of development described at that time. Of the Urban League this document says: “The Urban League cooperated with the United States Department of Labor, the United States Chamber of Commerce and with managers of Industrial and manufacturing concerns, employing large numbers of Negroes. They say that the American capitalists are friends of the Negroes. They do not concern themselves with the working conditions, wages, hours, etc., of the Negro workers, but on the contrary, say that the Negro workers should accept the conditions which ‘their friends’ impose upon them. They actively support strike-breaking policies.” Of the NAACP it is said: “This organization also has the support of white capitalists, like Julius Rosenwald the multi-millionaire of Chicago: John Rockefeller Jr., the oil king; the ammunition magnate, Dupont of New Jersey, and others. This is a happy combination. Certainly such an organization will not struggle against American imperialism, and cannot represent the interests of the toiling masses. It is quite natural that it will take a reformist character. Its leadership has given up the struggle for full social, political and economic equality of the Negro toilers. It even tries to play with the fight against lynching through reformist methods. It is a petty-bourgeois organization that

is now beginning to represent the interest of the rising Negro bourgeoisie.”³⁵

So this is where Foster wanted the Black communists to put their effort, instead of struggling against white chauvinism in the party! There is no question that at that time some form of work should have gone on in the NAACP and the Urban League, but to pose it as Foster does is not the question of whether to work in reformist organizations to defeat reformism and win the masses influenced by it away from the reformist leaders. The question for Foster was to make reformist work in these reformist, pro-imperialist organizations the principal activity of the Black communists so as to stop their struggle against chauvinism in the party. This was the meaning of “collective leadership” of the work on the Black question.

Foster criticizes the “typical sectarian attitude to consider white chauvinism as a sort of detached phenomenon, especially within the Party, and to shoot into it on this basis. But this whole trend is basically incorrect and tends to cripple our work generally among the Negro people. White chauvinism cannot be fought as a thing in itself by a separate campaign. It can be fought only in connection with the struggle of the Negro people for full economic, political, social and cultural equality. The fight against white chauvinism is an organic part of this broad struggle for Negro rights and cannot be divorced from it without itself becoming reduced to an empty harmful abstraction.” For Foster the solution to the problem of white chauvinism generally, and in the party in particular, is for the Black communists to subordinate themselves to the “collective leadership” of the chauvinists in the party, and to subordinate themselves in the Black movement to the most pro-imperialist bourgeois nationalist organizations.

What this amounts to is a liquidation of the special double role that the Comintern declared for the Black proletariat. It is both a denial of the hegemony of the proletariat in the Black movement and a denial of the particularly important role the Black proletariat must play in the revolutionary struggle for socialism of the entire proletariat in the US. Foster, in the name of battling “left sectarianism,” is demanding hegemony in the party for white reformists and in the Black movement for bourgeois reformists, who are united on one point, the liquidation of the right to self-determination and the struggle for it. Instead they wanted a reformist struggle for equal rights to replace it. This does not mean the revolutionaries were against the struggle for equal rights, far from it, but they see these reforms as the

by-product of revolutionary struggle and not the aim of the struggle itself. We need only ask the question of which situation would have produced more gains in the attainment of equal rights—the reformist movement that the CPUSA tailed behind these many years, or a revolutionary vanguard party of the white and Black proletariat, fighting for the revolutionary programme adopted by the Comintern, including the *Resolutions on the Negro Question*? Think of this in combination with the spontaneous rise of the Black movement, the anti-war movement and the student movement in the sixties, and then with the coming to life again of the workers’ movement in the seventies and early eighties. Only thinking about the possibilities will show the importance to the bourgeoisie to stop any attempt to break the antagonism that exists between labor in white skin and labor in black skin. Indeed this is the secret of the impotence of the white proletariat in America.

To understand the importance of the possibilities for the growth of the revolutionary movement in the US, is also to understand that what Foster and others were doing at this time is not just some sterile intellectual debate in some insignificant left-wing Maoist sect. The fate of the revolutionary proletariat in the US for several decades was hanging in the balance. We do not want to engage here in a series of “what if” speculations, but rather we want the reader to understand the vital historical importance of reviewing the victory of chauvinism in the party of the proletarian vanguard in this country, and what an influence this has had on creating the present weakness of both workers’ and Black national organizations.

Today, in the period of trying to reconstitute a vanguard organization of the proletariat, the struggle to build a Bolshevik party, it is important to look at the subtle centrist ways in which chauvinism was defended in the CPUSA. It is easy to look at the finished product and condemn it. It is, however, much more difficult to examine the process as it is happening, to be able to detect it in its early stages and to combat it. This is why examining Foster’s 1953 article is important. At this time Foster did not deny the right of self-determination, he only criticizes “the early Leftist presentation of the slogan of self-determination”, i.e., in the way that the Comintern presented it. Foster poses as an opponent of white chauvinism, and no doubt to a degree he was, at least in its most overt forms. The next year Foster published a huge book entitled, “The Negro People in American History,” which might be the best history ever written from a Marxist

point of view, despite its considerable theoretical weaknesses. There were leaders of the CPUSA that wanted to liquidate the Black national question completely, and at that time Foster opposed them. But we aim our fire at Foster because he was a cowardly opportunist, a centrist who prepared the ground for the victory of the right by his hypocritical defense of the self-determination slogan, by his hypocritical struggle against white chauvinism, and by his very real fight to liquidate the correct Bolshevik line from the CPUSA on the Black national question. We aim our fire at him also because of his attempts to eliminate any cadre that made even an inconsistent defense of this position. The right wing of the party hid behind Foster's hypocrisy and his reputation of opposing Browder to prepare the ground to subordinate and then liquidate first the genuine left in the party, and then force the center to capitulate to the right, as Foster did in his last years.

An example of the kind of centrist hypocrisy that Foster promoted at that time is when he admits that "those who are openly or covertly advocates of white supremacist ideas and practices, are enemies of the Negro people and the working class, and they should be treated as such. Our Party cannot tolerate the membership of such elements; expulsion is the answer for them." Indeed the membership policies of the party have to seriously be brought into question if open advocates of white supremacy could find their way into the party in the first place. But Foster puts up this facade of "firm" action against chauvinists to turn around and subtly defend the existence of what were the far more serious manifestations of chauvinism in the party. "There are large numbers of workers, however, many of them members of our Party, who, although genuine friends of the Negro people, sometimes, through lack of sensitivity or understanding of the Negro question, give vent to white chauvinist expressions and acts. Obviously the treatment in such instances is friendly education, not harsh disciplinary measures." What is "obvious" is that with friends like these, the Black people do not need enemies. Indeed white workers who have some manifestations of chauvinism cannot be treated like the KKKers, but on the other hand they do not have to be members of the proletarian vanguard either. Indeed the party must educate white workers infected with the disease of chauvinism, but this treatment must be outside the party and not in it. If the party is not quarantined from this infection, then it can only spread in the party as it does throughout the rest of society. How can the party become the

vanguard fighter against white chauvinism if it itself is half crippled with the disease? It is only natural that at the time the so-called “left sectarians” would concentrate on ridding the party of this disease, as the necessary precondition to fighting it in the whole working class. Foster preaches the Menshevik line of “overcoming” and “defeating” chauvinism in the party, of opening the doors of the party to all kinds of similar “genuine friends of the Negro people” who “give vent to white chauvinist expressions and acts”!

When Foster attacks the “left sectarians,” if we understand where he is coming from and realize that he is offering a caricature of their line, we can get a glimpse of their struggle: “There is, in the Party, however, a strong Leftist sectarian tendency to evaluate white chauvinism as a uniform political disease and to lump together and to throw into one pot as white chauvinists all those who are in any way, however slightly, tainted by this weakness. The sectarian tendency also sharply condemns as conciliators of white chauvinism, if not as outright chauvinists, all those others who see any difference in degree of contamination with white chauvinism. This sectarian definition of chauvinism practically eliminates education as a corrective measure and puts the whole stress upon organizational measures. Consequently, not only have comrades been unjustly disciplined, and even expelled, but the whole fight against white chauvinism has been confused and weakened... Especially charges of white chauvinism should not be thrown around so recklessly as is now the case. This is a most serious charge, and it should not be leveled against a Party member until it is clearly justified. A comrade in our Party, convicted of white chauvinism, is crippled from then on, if not politically dead. Such severe penalties should be reserved for real white chauvinists, not for comrades where need is for more education on the Negro question. Also we should not dull the effects of the white chauvinist appellation by applying it indiscriminately.”

Those who have had a few years’ experience in the movement should not have difficulty recognizing this kind of double-talk to avoid a real struggle against chauvinism. But unfortunately this kind of blandishment still has its effects. It is a common technique of opportunism to hide in a Bolshevik organization on the basis of maintaining that opportunism only really exists outside the organization, and it is sectarianism to suggest otherwise. That it is “uncomradely” and even if there are “errors” they need to be “patiently” corrected “over time” and we must not do anything “hasty” etc., etc., ad

nauseum. Indeed, errors must be corrected through education, and indeed not every error requires organizational exclusion, etc. but there are errors and again there are errors. Giving “vent to white chauvinist expressions and acts” does not exactly fall into the category of minor errors. It is instructive to repeat the problems that Foster admits openly existed in the party: “Among the more common manifestations of white chauvinism in the Party are passivity in the fight for Negro rights, failure to develop social contact with Negroes, refusal of homeowners to rent rooms to Negroes, hypocritical attitudes toward Negro Party and union functionaries, failure to upgrade Negro workers in industry and to elect them as union officials in progressive unions, disapproval of intermarriage, the practice of white chauvinist language and habits, etc.” This is not a new party. It was one that had been in existence for more than thirty years. Obviously the theory of overcoming these problems with education had already been a complete failure. But even the education that Foster was proposing was that the Black communists subordinate themselves in the NAACP and the Urban League in the reformist struggle for equal rights, and when this struggle was won and chauvinism did not exist in the American working class, it would not exist in the party either!

But it is not only in the party that Foster wanted to liquidate a real and consistent struggle against white chauvinism. He also wanted to liquidate it in the mass movement as well: “The development of a correct definition of white chauvinism also carries with it a more correct application among the masses of the Party’s fight against white chauvinism. Our Party fights resolutely, upon every occasion, for Negro rights and full equality. How much, however, it is able to insist upon its advanced stand against white chauvinism in a mass organization depends upon Communist tactical considerations in the given circumstances. Undoubtedly those comrades have taken a Leftist sectarian position on more than one occasion who have laid down as the basis for cooperation with non-Party masses, heavily infected with white chauvinism, the full acceptance of the Party’s advanced stand on the Negro question.” What Foster is advocating is precisely the retrograde trend in the socialist movement that Lenin condemned at the beginning of the century: “To reduce the entire movement to the interests of the moment means to speculate on the backward condition of the workers, means to cater to their worst inclinations. It means artificially to break the link between the working-class movement and socialism, between the fully defined political

strivings of the advanced workers and the spontaneous manifestations of protest on the part of the masses.”³⁶

The kind of struggle Foster was leading against the “left sectarians” was the same kind of struggle the right opportunists waged against Lenin. Lenin said: “The objection will also probably be raised that the working-class masses are not yet able to understand the idea of the political struggle, an idea that is comprehensible only to certain, more developed workers. To this objection, which we hear so frequently from ‘young’ Russian Social-Democrats, our answer is that, firstly, Social-Democracy has everywhere and always been, and cannot but be the representative of the class-conscious, and not of the non-class-conscious, workers and that there cannot be anything more dangerous and more criminal than the demagogic speculation on the underdevelopment of the workers. If the criterion of activity were that which is immediately, directly, and to the greatest degree accessible to the broadest masses, we should have to preach anti-Semitism or to agitate, let us say, on the basis of an appeal to Father Johann of Kronstadt.”³⁷ It is precisely this kind of dangerous and criminal demagogic speculation on the underdevelopment of the workers that Foster engages in by demanding that the party hide its program on the Black national question in the mass movement, that it cater to those “heavily infected with white chauvinism” in order to build some kind of unprincipled bloc on some other issue, like some kind of pacifist action in defense of “peace”. The question here is not a question of maximum program. Of course we can participate in mass struggles without adherence to the party program by all those involved, but even on the question of maximum program we do not hide our program for the sake of some unprincipled alliance. But in the case of the Black question, we are not dealing with maximum program, we are dealing with minimum program, with basic democratic rights. We are also dealing with the question that is the secret of the impotence of the American proletariat. To abandon this question in the mass movement is to abandon not only socialism but even democracy itself. Indeed it is difficult at the best of times to be a champion of the national and democratic rights of Black people, let alone in the kind of reactionary period that existed in 1953. But if the vanguard of the most conscious and revolutionary class is not going to face this situation with courage, then who is? How will the working class progress if its vanguard does not only not oppose the wave of chauvinism but heroically combat it, no matter what the cost? Indeed in any struggle

there are tactics of battle, but precisely tactics to win the struggle, not tactics to capitulate to the most backward tendencies in the working class and thus to capitulate to imperialism and its offensive. How is the American working-class ever going to overcome the crippling disease of white chauvinism if there is not the most determined struggle by the vanguard to use every occasion to struggle against it. Who is to cure it, the NAACP and the Urban League? This is what Foster would have the party believe. The Comintern called for “the combating of every expression of Negrophobia,” but Foster considered this sectarian even in the Party let alone in the mass movement.

The Comintern made it clear that “this Yankee arrogance towards Negroes stinks of the disgusting atmosphere of the old slave market.” There is certainly no place for this “disgusting atmosphere” in the Communist party, but even this is not enough, although it is too much for Foster. There is no place for conciliation with this “disgusting atmosphere” anywhere, particularly where the Communists organize their activities in the mass movement. Of course, we are not idealists and know that the stench of this disgusting atmosphere of the slave market will exist even until after the socialist revolution. The question is not its existence even into the most advanced sections of the proletariat. The question is how to struggle against it and destroy it, because without this struggle from the very beginning there will be no revolution, there will be no socialism, there will only be the continued domination of US imperialism.

There is no way to defeat US imperialism by making concessions on this question, there is no way to defeat it by ignoring the disgusting atmosphere that exists even in the proletariat for the sake of some kind of unity on trade union issues, peace issues etc. It is the maintenance of this disgusting atmosphere of the slave market that is the secret strength of the American bourgeoisie and it persistently uses it to divide its enemy, the proletariat. Sectarianism on this question is the view that the entire white proletariat is put in the camp of the enemy because of the existence of chauvinism. But this kind of sectarianism can be defeated by the Black communists if every effort is made in practice to demonstrate that the proletarian vanguard is not infected with this disease and is doing everything to combat it in the white proletariat. It is a matter of understanding that the horse goes before the cart and if the vanguard wants to be followed, it has to prove it is marching in the right direction with something more than a lot of fine-sounding words.

We have seen how Foster wanted to maintain the disgusting atmosphere of the slave market even in the party. He goes even farther in this regard by criticizing “leftism regarding Negro national sensitivity.” Towards those afflicted with white chauvinism the party has to combat the “sectarian” methods that offend these people, who are “poorly educated” in such matters. But on the other hand the party has to struggle against the Black members who react against this. Although Foster admits that Blacks have reasons for a certain “national sensitivity” because of the history of their oppression, he objects to the “sectarians” who say that “No white comrade should ever do anything to offend a Negro.” Foster says that “This idea, often expressed, is sheer nonsense,” and calls it “patronizing”. It is incredible that someone who fancies himself as a great defender of the Black race could sink to such levels in the defense of chauvinism. It is amazing how concepts can be turned on their heads—how can Blacks feel patronized by whites who take care not to offend their national sensitivities, who make the daily effort to make sure they do not spontaneously fall into the disgusting atmosphere of the slave market. Blacks feel patronized by liberals like Foster, who mouth a lot of things about the rights of Blacks, but in practice defend and exhibit the kind of patronizing chauvinism of the missionary to Africa. Blacks know too well the patronizing chauvinist liberals “whose best friends are Black,” and would like to know more white proletarians who make every effort to not offend their national sensitivity and do everything they can to offend the chauvinist inclinations of even the most liberal chauvinists by their consistent and persistent struggle against chauvinism.

Foster then proposes to deal with this problem by advocating an increased level of criticism of the Black communists, “constructive criticism” to be sure! In other words, to launch a campaign against the “left sectarianism” of the Black communists who wanted a revolutionary position on the Black national question and a struggle against chauvinism in the party.

Foster then goes on to explain that it is necessary to maintain the disgusting atmosphere of the slave market in the language of the daily life of the party in his criticism of “sectarianism regarding white supremacist terminology.” Foster explains that: “During the past few years, however, our Party has tended to tolerate a number of crass Leftist-sectarian errors in this general matter, especially in its efforts to cleanse the American language of its white chauvinist infection.

Thus, impossible language standards are being set up and comrades are often called to order or disciplined as white chauvinists for using speech expressions which are devoid of white chauvinist content... The problem becomes more complicated, however, when it comes to words and phrases which, while not in themselves white chauvinist, are used in a white chauvinist manner against Negroes. Thus, among many, are the words 'boy' and 'girl', which are widely used insultingly to adult Negro men and women. The leftist reaction to this practice is the trend to play down or discard altogether these words as applied to Negroes. But this is nonsense. Our task is not to eliminate such basic words from the vocabulary, but simply to war against their being used in a derogatory sense against Negroes." Unfortunately, Foster does not attempt to explain how it is possible to call a Black man a "boy" in a "non-derogatory sense"! The fact that today even some of the most backward sections of the population know that it is wrong and offensive to use this kind of language is proof enough how far Foster wanted to go in conciliating with chauvinism. But this change is not the result of liberals like Foster, but because Blacks stood up verbally and otherwise to this kind of abuse.

It might be possible in this or that instance to go too far in these questions, but in which direction is it better to err—in the direction of chauvinism or the direction of the national sensitivity of an oppressed people? A communist can give only one answer to that question. The kind of example Foster gives is disgusting, and it can only be imagined what other use of language from the disgusting atmosphere of the slave market he wanted to preserve in the party.

Then Foster proceeds to equate "Left sectarianism" with bourgeois nationalism among Blacks, saying that they are different but that "Left-sectarianism cultivates and feeds Negro nationalism and often closely resembles it." The examples that Foster provides includes views that "whites cannot be depended upon to lead Negro masses in struggle," but this was the view of the Comintern that said it is the Black proletariat that leads the Black masses. Another example is "when people within or without our ranks criticize the Party almost as though it were cultivating white chauvinism instead of combatting it."

This was exactly the case in the CPUSA. Although it waged a struggle against many of the most overt manifestations of chauvinism, it denounced as "left sectarian" a consistent struggle against chauvinism, particularly in the party, and this had the result of

cultivating chauvinism. We have seen how Foster cultivated chauvinism in the party and capitulated to it outside the party in the mass movement. In a desperate attempt to give a theoretical fig leaf to cover his own chauvinism, Foster quotes Stalin about the necessity of struggling on “two fronts” against both right and left deviations. This kind of comparison is often used by opportunists, who ignore the real content of the struggle against opportunist deviations by applying some formula in a totally meaningless way. Indeed there must always be a struggle on two fronts, but what is the real content of those fronts on the national question generally, and on the Black national question particularly.

The two fronts that Stalin was struggling on were the right opportunists led in the CPSU(B) by Bukharin, and the “left” opportunists led by Trotsky. Where did these two opportunist fronts stand on these questions? The right opportunist trend was not confined to the CPSU(B) but was widely present in the Communist International. One of the principal spokesmen of the right deviation internationally was Jay Lovestone, the head of the CPUSA, who advocated the theory of “American exceptionalism,” that maintained that the principles of Bolshevism and the programme of the Comintern did not really apply to America because of its “exceptional” development. A key aspect of this theory is the liquidation of the Black national question. The very arguments that were used by the CPUSA in 1956 to liquidate the question entirely were used by Lovestone in 1928, to oppose the Comintern Resolution. Theories of “mass exodus,” “dispersion of the nation,” etc., caused by the development of capitalism were all rejected by the Comintern.

Because of resistance in the American party by the right deviation, the Comintern had to pass another Resolution on this question in 1930, which put particular emphasis on upholding the national aspect of the Negro question against both right and left deviations. Browder followed the course that would later be followed by Foster, which was acquiescence to the correct position at the beginning, then carrying out various centrist subterfuges to undermine the application of the correct line by the party, to open liquidation of the question. Foster would oppose Browder in 1945 and criticize his liquidation of the national aspect of the Black question. But by the end of his life he too would end up liquidating the question as well, after passing through the centrist subterfuges that we have started to outline here. The technique was always to recognize the right of self-determination

in words but to first minimize its importance in theory and practice, to liquidate the revolutionary aspects of the question, such as the agrarian revolution, to maintain that it is secondary to the struggle for equal rights, to then decide that the position was correct at one time, but the various changes brought about by the development of American capitalism have liquidated the national question, to finally concluding that the position was incorrect all along and was a manifestation of “Left sectarianism.” In order to cover the real nature of the right opportunist deviation on this question, Foster tries to pass off open racism as right opportunism, revolutionary struggle as Leftism, and the correct position the center, of struggling for equal rights. This is a bourgeois conception of these terms, and has nothing in common with how Stalin used them. It was precisely in the struggle against the right deviation that the Comintern passed the 1928 Resolution. It was precisely to strengthen this struggle that the 1930 Resolution was passed to expose Lovestone and the deviation towards great-nation chauvinism in the CPUSA. Of course for right-opportunists such a position is “Left sectarian”.

This does not mean there are no actual “Left” deviations on this question. The “left” deviation on the national question became prevalent at the very beginning of the struggle to reconstitute a Communist International after the collapse of the Second International. The Second International had collapsed under the weight of its thoroughly right-opportunist and chauvinist positions of supporting their own imperialist bourgeoisies in the imperialist war. In reaction to the prevalent national chauvinism of the Second International, which openly supported imperialist annexations and violations of people’s right to self-determination, there was a leftist reaction that advocated the total liquidation of the national question, since the attainment of real independence was “impossible” under imperialism, because the right of self-determination was only a “bourgeois demand,” etc. This position was advocated by Luxemburg, Bukharin, Trotsky and others. Lenin struggled against and defeated “left” opportunism on the national question and established the importance of the national question in the epoch of imperialism as a part of the question of world proletarian revolution. This deviation was reanimated by Trotsky and his “theory of permanent revolution” in his struggle against the Comintern. Specifically, on the Black national question, the Comintern had to demarcate from certain “left” opportunist views. These views maintained that self-determination should only be supported if there

is Black proletarian leadership of the movement, that it should only be supported on the basis of the Soviet form, that it can only be realized and struggled for by struggling for proletarian revolution in the US generally. It is easy to see how these “left” views end up serving the right opportunist liquidation of the national question. Of course, when these kinds of views are put into practice, it is a sectarian practice in relation to the national movement.

These are the two fronts in the oppressor nation. In the oppressed nation they have certain different characteristics, where right opportunism can take the form of capitulation to the oppressor nation or it can take the form of bourgeois nationalism and narrow nationalism. Among communists from the oppressed nations, rightist deviations can be made in both directions. In the CPUSA the right deviation among Black communists, particularly in the leadership, was the same as the general direction of the Black intelligentsia in organizations like the NAACP, which is the line of imminent integration and liquidation of the national question. There were also deviations towards bourgeois nationalism, particularly in reaction to chauvinism in the party, but it is incorrect to equate the defenders of the Comintern Resolutions with bourgeois nationalists, the way that Foster does. In the struggle in the CPUSA over the Black national question in the forties and fifties, there was not an actual left sectarian front on this question. There were semi-Trotskyites, but generally they also liquidated the Black national question. The left opportunist front on the Black national question was to emerge strongly in the Maoist movement and persists today.

In the collapse of the CPUSA into modern revisionism there were generally three trends on the Black national question. These three trends were similar in content to the three trends that Lenin defined in the period of the collapse of the Second International. The main trend was a social chauvinist trend that capitulated to US imperialism and painted its policy of tremendous national oppression towards the Black nation in progressive colors. When US imperialism drove Black peasants forcefully from their land and stole their land and gave it to white supremacists and the big monopolies, these chauvinists praised this as the “solution” to the national question. When the dispossessed Black peasants were forced out of their nation by the Jim Crow policies of whites only in Southern factories and were forced North by the imperialists to work at the hardest and lowest paying jobs, forced to live a horrendous existence in ghettos as an

unemployed reserve army of labor, the chauvinists praised this as integration and the achievement of the historical aspirations of the Black people. The following words of Earl Browder should live in infamy: “Therefore we see now, sharply and clearly, the right of the Negroes as a people to the determination of their own destiny. It is just as much an inviolable right as it ever was; and that right is being exercised today in the form of a decision by Negro people themselves, without any pressure from special interests, to choose the path of the integration of the Negroes into the whole American nation as one united nation. It is this choice which gives the possibility in this period of integrating the Negro people into the general democracy of our country, on the basis of complete and unconditional equality, of solving this question now, and of no longer postponing it. The immediate achievement in this period, under the present American system, of complete equality for the Negroes, has been made possible... America can expect in the next few years to achieve an approximation of the full aim in this respect. I won’t promise that ten years from now we shall be able to say of the United States what someone, in one of the panels of the recent Congress of American-Soviet Friendship, said in introducing a prominent speaker—that in the Soviet Union there is no problem of national minorities anymore. Perhaps that complete and unconditional achievement is possible only under socialism. But I think we can say that an approximation of that achievement is within our reach today under capitalism, under the existing American system.”³⁸ It was not ten years, but twenty years later in 1963, that hundreds of thousands of Blacks marched on Washington demanding recognition of the most elemental rights, and now another twenty years have passed and Blacks are still waiting for Browder’s “promised land”.

The second trend was a “centrist” trend headed by Foster, that upheld the right of self-determination in word, but their stand was a hypocritical defense of this national right and they liquidated the struggle for it in practice, like Kautsky who proclaimed his internationalism in WWI, but who refused to carry it out in practice. Not only this, but Kautsky allied with the chauvinists against the genuine Left trend, the internationalists, who wanted to and who did put internationalism into practice. The centrists attack the Left to help the right. They preach unity with the chauvinists and they denounce as sectarians and splittists those who do not want unity with the chauvinists. Centrism is, as Stalin explained, the policy which consists “in

embellishing the opportunism of the Rights with Left phrases and subordinating the Lefts to the Rights.”³⁹ This was Foster’s job when he replaced Browder. His centrism on the Black national question was for the purpose of subordinating the Black proletariat in the party to the right opportunist liquidators, the chauvinists. This is exactly how the chauvinists and Zionists used Foster and this was the meaning of the attack on “Left sectarianism.” It was in reality an attack on the genuine Lefts, on Stalin and the Comintern and the legacy they gave to the communist movement in the US. It was also an attack on those communists who tried to defend that legacy and continue to use it as their beacon in struggle. This was the third trend, the trend of internationalists in the CPUSA.

It is not our purpose here to analyze the development of that trend. This has been started in the introduction to the book, *The Communist International in America*, and will continue in the future. What we want to accomplish here is to establish that there was a genuine Left that was struggling, even if inconsistently at times, for the maintenance of the theses of the Comintern on the Black national question. What we want to demonstrate here is that the attack on the correct position was not led by the open chauvinists so much as it was led by the disguised hypocritical centrism of the Foster type. Foster’s attack on the “Left sectarians,” i.e., the Black revolutionary proletarians, was done under the cover of a hypocritical defense of the right of self-determination, for the purpose of undermining the hegemony of the Black revolutionary proletarians over the Black question in the party and to liquidate the developing hegemony of the revolutionary Black proletarians in the Black movement.

One of the “Left sectarians” attacked by Foster was Harry Haywood, a Black proletarian leader who was one of the authors of the 1928 Comintern Resolution. In a document which led to his purge from the Party in 1957, Haywood explains how the attack on them in 1953 and 1954 and the attack on the “left centers” in the mass movement, i.e., the mass organizations under the hegemony of the Black proletariat, was a sneak attack on the genuine Left. “Now it has become clear that the debate on left centers which raged in the movement in 1953-1954 was not just a matter of tactics, this was simply an early manifestation of right liquidationism which later blossomed into a fully rounded theory. It was a sneak attack upon the vanguard role of the Party—an initial stage in the war on left leadership and initiative. It was a diversionist move. The attack focused on left

centers, a main vehicle for left initiative, counterposing the existence of left centers to work in reformist-led organizations. The result was the liquidation of both left centers and organized work in the ‘main-stream’.⁴⁰ It was also the subordination of the Lefts to the Rights, that was preparatory to the liquidation of even a hypocritical defense of self-determination.

In May of 1955 Foster was saying: “Those comrades who are placing all the stress upon building ‘Left centers’ are not abreast of the actual situation prevailing among the Negro people, especially in the North, and among the broad American masses. ‘Left centers,’ correct 25 years ago, may now be highly sectarian.” The question here was not a question of doing any work at all in reformist organizations that had mass influence among Blacks, but the question of whether in addition to the reformist organizations, whether any other form of Black mass organization should exist. The “Left centers” that Foster is talking about were mass organizations under the hegemony of the Black communist proletariat. Foster demands that since the majority of Blacks are still under the influence of reformist organizations, these ‘Left centers’ should be abandoned. Foster explains that “with the Northern Negro workers members en masse of the trade unions—both AF of L and CIO—with their building of the NAACP into a mass body, with their playing an increasingly important role in the Democratic Party, and with their entering into many other types of mass organizations from which they had hitherto been barred. Obviously, in such a situation it is our task to base our Negro work upon these mass organizations.”⁴¹

So for Foster, the Democratic Party was not a bourgeois party of monopoly capital, but a mass organization that communists, particularly black communists should subordinate themselves in, along with subordination to the labor aristocracy in the AFL and the CIO, and to the capitulationist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leadership of the NAACP. This was nothing but a call for the liquidation of the vanguard role of the party and the vanguard role of the revolutionary Black proletarians in the Black movement. This becomes painfully obvious when we consider just exactly what “Left centers” were liquidated for the sake of building the Democratic Party and the NAACP. Haywood explains: “As a result of this policy, such organizations as for example the Civil Rights Congress (which was a continuation of the International Labor Defense, led by William L. Patterson), which filled a vital need for militant, mass campaigns in

behalf of victims of Dixiecrat lynch terror, and as late as the early 50's, led mass struggles around the Willie McGee, Martinsville Seven and Ingram cases, and exposed to the world the savage oppression of the Negro people in the US in the historic appeal to the UN embodied in 'We Charge Genocide'. There was the Negro Labor council which became a leading and directing center of the spontaneous Negro caucus movement, which sprang up throughout the country, as a necessary, special instrument to wage a consistent battle for the rights of Negro trade unionists. This spontaneous movement expressed lack of faith of Negro workers in the trade union bureaucracy to carry on a consistent struggle for Negro rights... Can it be denied that the liquidation of these centers left a vacuum in the struggle for Negro rights? These liquidationist moves resulted in the dispersal of an important core of Party and non-Party cadres of these organizations, cutting the ground from under them, destroying their base of operations from which they felt they could make their best contributions, resulting in the dispersal and demoralization of many of them."⁴²

Indeed this was exactly the purpose, to destroy the organizational base of the "Left sectarians," to destroy the development of Black proletarian hegemony that had been built since 1928, in campaigns like the Scottsboro case, and to destroy the base for revolutionary struggle. This also was a particular attack on the right of self-determination of the Black nation, because Foster admits that these organizations, in which he wanted the Black proletariat to submerge itself, had a weak or non-existent presence in the South. It was in the South, in the Black Belt, that there was a desperate need for the work of the "Left centers" to be expanded and built, but this could only be done on the basis of the struggle for self-determination in a revolutionary way against the power of the land owners and the bourgeoisie. This would have "distracted" Blacks from the struggle for equal rights, in Foster's view. In reality, it is only this revolutionary struggle that, as a by-product, can produce significant gains in the struggle for equal rights under capitalism.

These "Left centers" were attacked by the right opportunists and the centrists in the CPUSA as part of their campaign to defeat the "main danger" in the work among Blacks, the "Left sectarians". Previously lip service had been given that right opportunism was the main danger, but in reality it is the Left that was attacked most. After most of the work of liquidation had been done, the centrists advanced

the theory that: "As far as the Party's work among the Negro masses is concerned at the present moment the main danger which confronts us is Left sectarianism. This Left sectarianism has led to the isolation of the Party in the Negro communities from the mainstream of the Negro liberation movement."⁴³ This "mainstream" being the Democratic Party, the NAACP, and those great champions of Black rights in the bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO. But as Haywood pointed out, with the liquidation of the "Left centers" there was also in practice a liquidation of the work even in this "mainstream."

The centrists attacked the Left in three particular areas. The first was the Left's refusal to be swept up in the hysteria over McCarthyism to the point of liquidating everything else, and its resistance to seeing McCarthyism as a "fascism" that was more important than the question of the struggle of Black people, who already were living under "McCarthyism" for many years. The centrists complained: "There is a failure to join with the masses of Negro people in the fight against McCarthyism. Instead, everything is geared to a different task, to the 'revolutionary, anti-imperialist struggle of the Negro people'." With what contempt revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggle is spoken of. This is simply an open confession of reformism. The second objection of the centrists was that the Lefts were making "an overestimation of the radicalization of the Negro masses," and were making "an exaggerated concept of the role of Left committees and centers", i.e., of proletarian hegemony. "Correspondingly, there is opposition and resistance to placing chief emphasis upon work within the main organizations of the Negro people—NAACP, Elks, churches, etc."

Only thoroughgoing reformists could be attracted by this charge. This kind of statement is only a testimonial that there were some revolutionaries left in the CPUSA at that time, but obviously not very many. The third charge against the Lefts was that they underestimated the recent reforms that had been granted on the question of equal rights, that they were not taken in by these sops, and that they "conclude that the only way the Communists can break the Negro masses from the influence of the reformists who are being given credit for these concessions, is to project 'more advanced' slogans, e.g., propaganda for socialism." Indeed revolutionaries would not want to be caught advancing "more advanced slogans" than the NAACP, the churches and the Elks! And by all means let us not engage in the "sectarian" propagation of the slogan of socialism among

Blacks. They might “get ideas”! Foster did not want any “upitty Black boys” to do anything “more advanced” than the NAACP, the churches and the Elks wanted them to do! From being the main support of the revolutionary Black proletariat, the CPUSA was becoming its worst enemy and a chauvinist and racist swamp. Such was the nature of its revisionist degeneration. The Lefts cannot be faulted for putting the main emphasis on the struggle against chauvinism in the party.

This attack on the Left was preparatory for the total liquidation of the Black national question. These attacks on Left sectarianism were carried out on the basis of a verbal adherence to the right of self-determination. It is not our intention here to review all the arguments put forward by the revisionists in their total revision of the correct position recognizing the right to self-determination for the Black nation. We recommend that the reader read Harry Haywood’s 1957 article, “For a Revolutionary Position on the Negro Question,” which offers refutation to many of the chauvinist arguments that were advanced. We have tried to establish the nature of the attack on the correct position as represented in the Comintern resolutions, and to demonstrate some of the aspects of how chauvinism became dominant in what had been the vanguard organization of both the white and Black proletariat. In the future we will examine Haywood’s and others’ positions in more depth and develop the critique of the chauvinism of the CPUSA as well as a critique of some of the deficiencies in the struggle against it.

The important lesson is the necessity to struggle against centrism and its hypocritical defense of self-determination. This hypocrisy can be clearly seen in Foster’s case because of his own liquidation of his own centrist and hypocritical defense of self-determination. In the CPUSA’s last “debate” on this question and in one of Foster’s last articles before his death he said: “It was during this general period, in the late 1920’s, that the Communist Party adopted the theory that the Negro people in the South were a nation, and when it seriously overstressed the theory of self-determination. At the present time, however, the Negro people are developing a strong trend towards integration with the dominant institutions of the United States... In this movement for integration, the slogan of self-determination is altogether inapplicable for the American Negro people.”⁴³ The only problem was that the “dominant institutions of the United States” have never developed a “strong trend towards integration” of Blacks, and

this is part and parcel of the policy of national oppression of Blacks.

The fraud that Foster pulls is that because Blacks want equal rights they are not entitled to self-determination. But a communist principle is that nations retain this right no matter how they choose to exercise it. In the Soviet Union it was written into the constitution, even though the nations that had been oppressed under Tsarism consciously chose to be part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Article 17 of the Soviet Constitution, which was drafted by Stalin states that, "The right freely to secede from the USSR is reserved to each constituent republic." Foster and the others refused to support this right for the Black nation in the United States, regardless of what relationship Blacks chose to have with the United States. Browder said that the situation in the US in ten years would be like that in the Soviet Union, but ten years later the situation in the Soviet Union had become like the one in the US; and Foster was saying that Blacks in the US did not have the rights that nations in the USSR were once given, and now were taken away by the modern revisionists that Foster supported.

By the 1950's the complete betrayal and reformist course of Foster's CPUSA was more and more openly seen by many communists, although belatedly. The CPUSA's chauvinism and liquidation of the Black national question had finally come to the fore. The CPUSA reduced the Black struggle to one of civil rights, promoting the bourgeois national reformists and even pro-imperialists like the NAACP as the "vanguard" of the Black people's movement.

Foster's CPUSA, like Lovestone and Browder previously, and like the Maoists and ex-Maoists after Foster (PLP, RCP, Line of March, MLP, USA, etc.), all deny the struggle for self-determination and the existence of an oppressed Black nation on the grounds that Blacks are overwhelmingly proletarian, the South is industrialized, that there are no Black peasants or significant sharecroppers, hence, no land question, hence, no national struggle for self-determination. They all fail to understand the process of development of oppressed nations in the imperialist epoch, especially within an imperialist state. Though, generally speaking, Marxism teaches that the national question is in essence an agrarian question, it is not absolutely *only* an agrarian question. Otherwise, national and agrarian question would be one and the same thing. They fail to understand or just simply disagree with what Stalin meant when he stated that: "Oppressed nationalities are usually oppressed not only as peasants and as urban

working people, but also as nationalities, i.e., as the toiler of a definite nationality, language, culture, manner of life, habits and customs.”

Lenin even stated that in the struggle for self-determination, Marxists are particularly interested “first and foremost, in the self-determination of the proletariat within a given nation.”⁴⁴ Instead, the various national chauvinists in the US are objectively protecting their source of national privileges by repudiating and rejecting the right to secession of the Black nation.

The effects of this chauvinist and revisionist betrayal was that the working-class movement and the Black national movement proceeded in separate ways. No longer was chauvinism combated even at a “weak” level amongst the American proletariat.

National reformist leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King assumed complete hegemony of the Black people’s movement. With King’s assassination, the illusions of non-violence and peaceful reform for self-determination and equal rights were shattered among many Blacks. As a result, in the absence of a vanguard Bolshevik Party, revolutionary nationalism came to the fore, opposing the national reformist and collaborationist path of King, the NAACP, etc. Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party, and other petty-bourgeois and revolutionary nationalist tendencies led broad masses of Blacks, producing new generations of revolutionaries. Despite the dominant incorrect petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalist lines, the Black liberation movement (followed by the growing Chicano liberation movement of the 1960’s, the Puerto Rican movement, and the pacifist student anti-war movement) shook the edifice of US imperialism internally. The potential for a Black liberation movement sparking a proletarian revolution in the US was shown in the 1960’s. Absent was a proletarian movement (which was in an ebb) and the existence of a Bolshevik Party.

Nevertheless, the Black liberation movements’ relationship to the struggle for socialism in the US was clearly shown to be real. It reflect Lenin’s comments long ago that: “The socialist revolution may flare up not only through some big strike, street demonstration or hunger riot or a military insurrection or colonial revolt, but also as a result of a political crisis such as the Dreyfus case or the Zabern incident, or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation, etc.”⁴⁵ ...Or if we were to substitute America for Europe in the following comment by Lenin... “The struggle of the oppressed nations in *Europe*, a struggle capable of going all the way

to insurrection and street fighting, capable of breaking down the iron discipline of the army and martial law, will 'sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe' to an infinitely greater degree than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony."⁴⁶

Clearly, the importance of having a correct Bolshevik policy on the Black national question (as well as the Chicano and all other national questions) is a fundamental question for the success or failure of socialist revolution in the US.

The 1970's Maoist movement that came out of the 1960's generally followed Mao's ambiguous line of support for the Black masses and Martin Luther King. The October League (forerunner of the liquidated CPML) attempted to combine Mao's national reformist line on the Black masses with the Comintern's Resolutions and ended up implementing a Fosterite national reformist interpretation of the right to self-determination of the Black nation. As stated previously, the RCP denied the existence of a Black nation in the Black Belt South. So did the PLP and other predominantly white, supposedly "anti-revisionists." Maoist organizations that originated from the movements of the oppressed nationalities, like the Black Workers Congress, the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization, the Revolutionary Workers League, etc., demarcated from the more open national chauvinist lines of the RCP and the hidden chauvinist (or national reformist) lines of the OL-CPML, MLOC (Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee, today, the pro-PLA circle known as "CPUSA-ML"). However, their recognition of the right to self-determination of the Black nation was, to say the least, inconsistent and degenerated into a semi-Trotskyite interpretation of Black liberation or self-determination, but *only* through socialist revolution. In practice, these groups applied a sectarian policy towards potential allies in the Black national revolutionary movement, and ended up liquidating the Black national question. These groups disintegrated and/or degenerated into sectarian and even social-fascist sects. Despite their upholding of the CI Resolutions of 1928-1930 on the Black National Question, the BWC, PRRWO, RWL, etc., failed to understand the following statement by the Comintern: "... the Party cannot make its stand for this slogan (self-determination—BL) dependent upon any conditions, even the condition that the proletariat has the hegemony in the national revolutionary Negro movement or that the majority of the Negro population in the Black Belt adopts the Soviet form (as Pepper demanded), etc.... so long as, the majority of this population

wishes to handle the situation in the Black Belt in a different manner from that which we Communists would like, its complete right to self-determination must be recognized. This right we must defend as a free democratic right.”⁴⁷

Hence, as we’ve attempted to show, today national chauvinism remains the principal danger in the communist movement. Like all other aspects of the socialist revolution, the American Maoist movement failed to present a correct policy on the national question in general, and the Black National Question in particular. As a result, the Black national revolutionary movement, as well as all the other national movements, are in crisis, with ideological confusion and organizational chaos, and under the hegemony of either the national reformists or petty-bourgeois nationalists. Likewise, the dominance of national chauvinism and the liquidation of the Black national question of the 1970’s is again giving rise to currents of Black petty-bourgeois and revolutionary nationalism.

The Maoist movement, or the “anti-revisionist” movement, never really demarcated from the chauvinist and centrist positions that existed in the CPUSA on the Black national question, not even the October League that had Harry Haywood as a member of its Central Committee. Most of the Maoists, like Mao himself as well as the PLA, supported Foster and they generally carried forward his line on the Black national question, either in its hypocritical centrist form, or in its open liquidationist form. In the future we will analyze in depth the development of the Maoist movement on this question. What we have established here is that the confusion and incorrect positions on this question are a product of the revisionist liquidation of this question, and only a further continuation of this liquidation. In the Maoist movement this liquidation came in Rightist, Centrist and “Left” forms but as in the CPUSA, it remains today that chauvinism is the main danger in the Communist movement and in the working class movement, and that until this chauvinism is defeated, it will not be possible to overcome the impotence of the white proletariat weakened by its antagonism to labor in a Black skin, an antagonism that is continuously propagated by US imperialism. To achieve proletarian revolution, to achieve the genuine liberation of the Black nation, to defeat racism and establish true equal rights of all Black people, to accomplish these tasks for the other oppressed nations and nationalities in the United States, it is necessary to overcome this antagonism. Central to doing this is waging the struggle for the right of self-

determination up to, and including, political separation for the Black Nation.

The capitalist offensive, imperialist war preparations, and the increased national chauvinism and racism have already given rise to spontaneous outbursts of both the oppressed nationality movements and to a re-awakening workers' movement. This is inevitable. In the Black national movement, the left wing, or the anti-imperialist sectors, has begun to mobilize and attempt to once again find a platform of unity to begin to organize a Black national revolutionary movement. Formations like the National Black United Front and the National Black Independent Party, and the conference on Self-Determination held in New York City in December, 1981, are indications of this direction. However, the present state of all these processes displays also the crisis that persists.

Within the communist and workers' movement there exists the fundamental task of exposing and defeating national chauvinism and racism. Within the Black national revolutionary movement there exists the task of exposing and defeating the various forms of petty-bourgeois narrow nationalism and reformism. The Bolshevik League is of the opinion that the central task confronting *all* revolutionary communists of all nationalities in the US is the construction of a Bolshevik Party. But this task is not to be carried out to the exclusion of organizing the proletarian and national revolutionary movements. In order to even construct a Bolshevik Party, we must first resolve what will be the programme of this Party. If there is anything we can learn from the history of American Communism it is that the National Question must be a component part of the Programme of the Party. The Comintern of Lenin and Stalin long ago stated: "There can be no Bolshevization without a correct policy on the national question."⁴⁸

In regard to the development of a correct Bolshevik line and policy on the Black movement, and in the interests of actively organizing a Black national revolutionary movement under the hegemony of the proletariat, we propose that all Black revolutionary nationalists and revolutionary communists who agree in deeds on the necessity to struggle for self-determination of the Black nation, come together to organize the polemics that would result in the formulation of a correct policy to guide the Black national revolutionary movement. There is an absence of a means or tool to organize the debate, which could at the same time provide some minimal guidance and organization to the growing spontaneous movement of the Black masses. The

careerist ambitions of various individuals must be severely criticized and exposed and the sectarian squabbles must come to an end. The real revolutionaries must seriously address the crisis and begin to plan out how to resolve it.

It is our opinion that the time is ripe for Black revolutionary nationalists and communists to jointly sponsor activities addressing key topics of the Black movement, outlining the unities and differences in front of the masses of workers and progressive people, and that a consistent publication be published with the aim of putting forth the various political views. Let the debate enter every mass organization and trade union. But let it be organized and based on principle. Such activity can take place in a conference or series of conferences on Self-Determination for the Black Nation.

Such activity, however, must not stop the beginning attempts to organize an anti-imperialist Black United Front. On the contrary, all the forces involved should in deeds also aid the process of organizing the Black masses and begin preparing them for revolutionary battles. Immediate tasks and formulation of partial slogans and demands need to be addressed, with the aims of rallying and organizing the Black workers and masses. Only such activity will produce real proletarian revolutionary cadres that will be part of the Bolshevik Party. In this activity, emphasis must be placed on the proletariat. Otherwise, the struggle for hegemony of the proletariat will be only a wish. If we are to struggle for socialism and for the real liberation of the Black nation, we must ensure that the Black proletariat (and not some self-proclaimed petty-bourgeois “communist” or “socialist” or “revolutionary” party) has hegemony of this movement.

Thus, the BL is presenting this issue of *Bolshevik Revolution* as our contribution to the struggle to formulate the line and policy on the Black National Question. By no means is our analysis complete. On the contrary it is only a beginning to seriously tackle this fundamental question of proletarian revolution. There are still many weaknesses to resolve and updating of the analysis that needs to be accomplished. However, we present our views to the revolutionary movement in the spirit of promoting discussion and debate, in order to clearly delineate and demarcate the opportunist lines, and thereby advance the struggle to formulate the correct proletarian line on the Black National Question.

In this issue...

Bolshevik Revolution, no. 9, presents the speech, "The Black National Question Today," that a delegate of the Bolshevik League presented in a "Symposium on the National Colonial Question" sponsored by the Editorial Board of *International Correspondence* in Paris during the commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. This was an opportunity for Black Bolsheviks from the United States to discuss with Black Bolsheviks from several African countries, and from the Caribbean the Black national question in the United States and its relationship to the struggle of Black people in Africa and the Caribbean against imperialism and the system of semi-colonialism. It was also an opportunity to discuss the problems of Blacks who are immigrant workers and students in Europe. The unity of Black people internationally must be built in the struggle against racial, national and class oppression, and these discussions were a step in rebuilding the contacts and unity that is necessary to build this struggle on an international level. Through *International Correspondence* the kind of contacts and discussions are occurring again that were so valuable to revolutionaries in the past in the United States, to advance the struggle against imperialism and for national liberation and socialism.

We also are publishing an article responding to various correspondence to us from the revolutionary nationalist, Muhammad Ahmad (s.n. Max Stanford). This comrade is a veteran fighter of the Black revolutionary movement since the 1960's. He worked closely with Malcolm X and was national chairman of the African People's Party. We reprint an article and also a letter which reflect some key features of the political views of Black revolutionary nationalists struggling for self-determination of the oppressed Black Nation.

The BL is publishing these articles and correspondence in the interest of broadening the polemics. The views of the writer do not represent the views of the BL. Nevertheless, they represent political currents in the Black Liberation Movement which need to be struggled over. In order to draw lines of demarcation and develop a correct Bolshevik programme on the Black Nation Question, this debate must ensue, it must be organized and it must be conducted on a principled basis. Otherwise, the present crisis will not be resolved and once again the growing spontaneous Black movement will proceed without Marxist-Leninist leadership.

Finally, we have reprinted the Comintern *Resolutions* on the Black National Question of 1928-1930. We have also reprinted these

documents in a pamphlet and in the recent book, *The Communist International in America: Documents 1925-1933*. In the near future, the Bolshevik League will also elaborate on our views of the Chicano and Native National Questions. As always, we encourage our readers to respond and comment on this issue of *Bolshevik Revolution*.

Bolshevik League of the US
February, 1983

Notes:

1. "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," *LCW* 22:328. 2. Stalin, "Marxism and the National and Colonial Question," p. 22. 3. "Statistics and Sociology", *LCW* 23:275. 4. Stalin, "Report on the National Question", April 29, 1917, p. 100. 5. Stalin, "The October Revolution and Question of Middle Strata," op. cit. p. 278. 6. Stalin, "The 10th Congress of the RCP(B)," *ibid.*, p. 154-155. 7. The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *LCW* 22:143. 8. "Resolution of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association," 1861, Karl Marx. 9. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I. 10. *LCW* 22: 146-147. 11. *LCW* 22:144. 12. *LCW* 22:346. 13. "Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia," op. cit., p. 301. 14. "Resolutions on the Question of Negro Rights and Self-Determination," Dec. 3-5, 1946. 15. *CI Resolutions on the Negro Question 1928-30*, reprinted in this book, 1930, Sec. 7. 16. *Ibid.*, Sec. 8. 17. *Ibid.* 18. CPUSA Resolution, op. cit., p. 18. 19. *Ibid.*, p. 21. 20. *Ibid.*, p. 25. 21. "Marx to Meyer and Vogt," April 9, 1970, *Marx and Engels Selected Correspondence*, pp. 239-7. 22. "Preliminary Theses on the National and Colonial Question", *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 235. 23. *Political Affairs*, Sept., 1948. 24. "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22. p. 322. 25. *Political Affairs*, Sept., 1948. 26. *Ibid.* 27. *Ibid.* 28. *Ibid.* 29. *Political Affairs*, Feb., 1951. 30. *Political Affairs*, July, 1953. 31. *Ibid.* 32. *ibid.* 33. *Foundations of Leninism*, pp. 116-7. 34. *Political Affairs*, July, 1953. 35. League Against Imperialism, *The Negro's Struggle Against Capitalist and Imperialist Exploitation and Oppression*, 1931, pp. 20-1. 36. "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 284. 37. "Apropos of the *Profession De Foi*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 291. 38. "Communists in the Struggle for Negro Rights," New Century Publishers, 1945. 39. "Industrialization of the Country and the Right Deviation in the CPSU(B)," *Works*, Vol. 11,

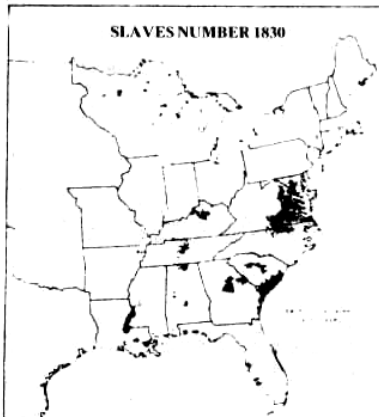
p. 293. 40. H. Haywood, *Fora Revolutionary Position on the Negro Question*, 1975, p. 27. 41. *Political Affairs*, May, 1955. 42. Haywood, op. cit. 43. *Political Affairs*, May, 1955. 44. "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *LCW* 20:428. 45. "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination". *LCW*, 22:145. 46. *LCW* 22:356-7. 47. 1930 Resolution, Sec. 7. 48. *Communist International in America 1925-1933*, p. 29, reprinted by B.L.

THE BLACK NATION



**A Historical Illustration
with
Maps and Pictures**

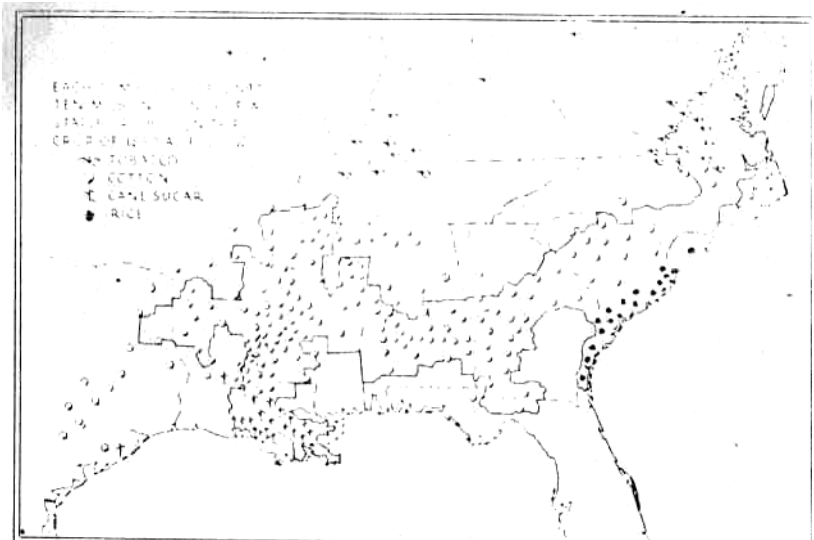
The Black Nation emerged from African Peoples brought to North America and enslaved in what is known as the “Black Belt” for the color of the rich soil in the south.



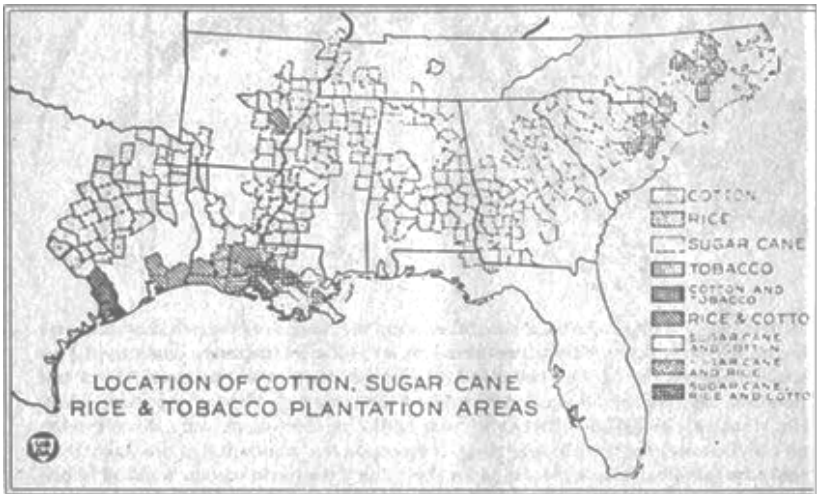


England, by the Asiento treaty, extorted from the Spaniards the privilege of carrying on the slave trade, hitherto confined, as far as the English were concerned, to a traffic between the African coast and the English West Indies, between Africa and Spanish America as well. England acquired the monopoly right of supplying Spanish America with 4800 negroes every year until 1743. Simultaneously, this served as an official cover for British smuggling. It was upon the foundation of the slave trade that Liverpool became a great city, for there the slave trade was the method of primary accumulation... The cotton industry, while introducing child slavery into England, gave at the same time an impetus towards the transformation of the slave system of the United States, which had hitherto been a more or less patriarchal one, into a commercial system of exploitation. Speaking generally, the veiled slavery of the European wage earners became the pedestal of unqualified slavery in the New World... capital comes into the world soiled with mire from top to toe, and oozing blood from every pore!’

KARL MARX



Agricultural Production in the South, 1859



1920-21

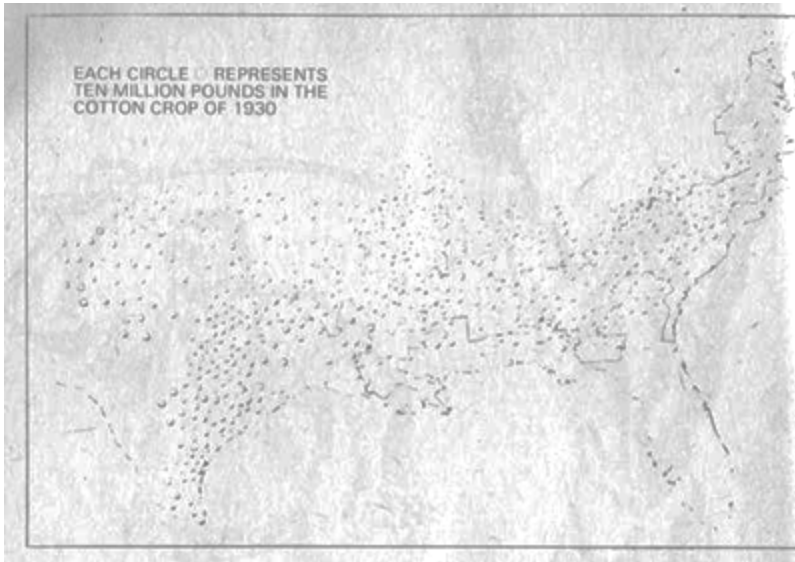


“In the Southern States of the American Union negro slavery had a moderate and patriarchal character so long as production was mainly carried on for the satisfaction of the immediate needs of the slave owners. But in proportion as the export of cotton grew to be a vital interest of the slave States, overwork became a factor in a calculated and calculating system, so that in many places it was considered ‘good business’ to use up the negroes’ lives in seven years!”

KARL MARX

“This whole system of ‘segregation’ and ‘Jim-Crowism’ is a special form of national and social oppression under which the American Negroes have much to suffer. The origin of all this is not difficult to find: this Yankee arrogance towards the Negroes stinks of the disgusting atmosphere of the old slave market. This is downright robbery and slave whipping barbarism at the peak of capitalist ‘culture’!”

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1930



“The landed property in the hands of the white American exploiters constitutes the most important material basis of the entire system of national oppression and serfdom of the Negroes in the Black Belt. More than three-quarters of all Negro farmers here are bound in actual serfdom to the farms and plantations of the white exploiters by the feudal system of ‘share cropping’. Only on paper and not in practice are they freed from the yoke of their former slavery... No breaking of the chains of this slavery is possible without confiscating all the landed property of the white masters!”

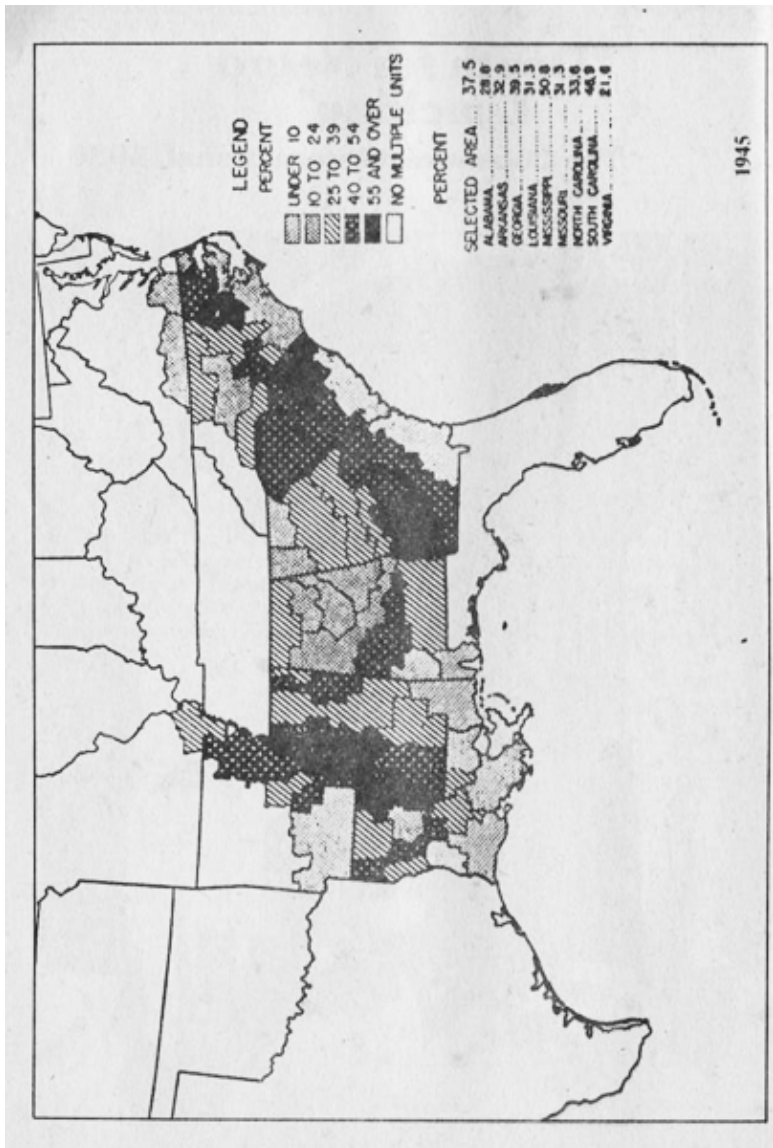
THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1930

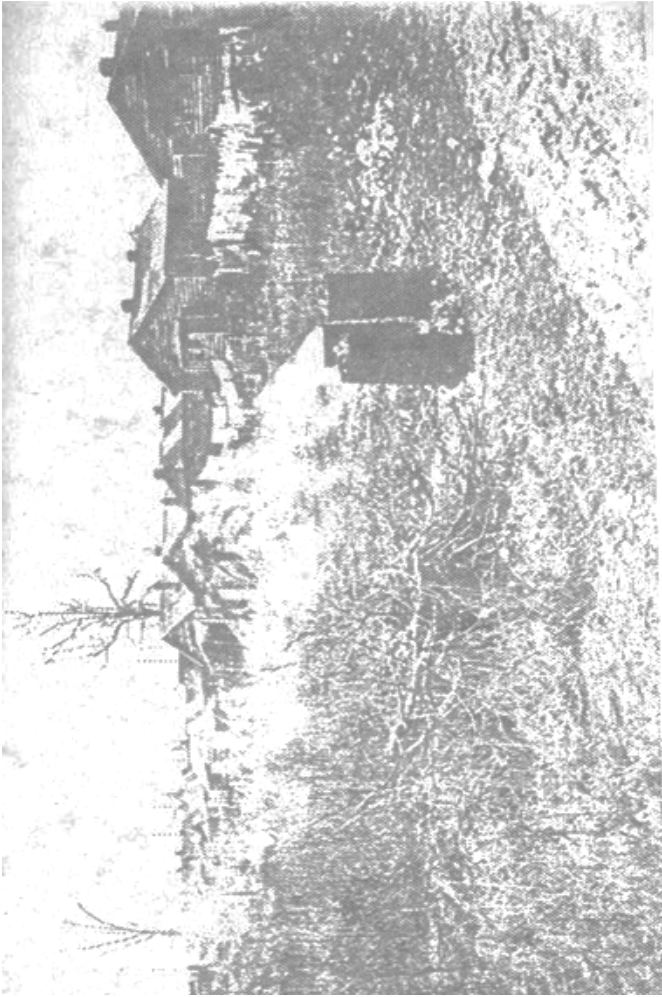
One of the Communist International
Slogans is:

“Death for Negro Lynching”

The Communist International, 1930







Right of self-determination. This means complete and unlimited right of the Negro majority to exercise governmental authority in the entire territory of the Black Belt, as well as to decide upon the relations between their territory and other nations, particularly the United States... At the present time all this power is concentrated in the hands of the white bourgeoisie and landlords... The overthrow of this class rule in the Black Belt is unconditionally necessary in the struggle for the Negroes' right of self-determination.

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL. 1930

Poorest in a poor land:
the "Black Belt"



The unshaded area of the map above is known as the "Black Belt," an almost unbroken line of counties where the greatest numbers of South-era blacks live. Most of the South's — and many of the nation's — poorest counties are in this region.



Victorious Oneita Strikers, 1973



“The white workers must boldly jump at the throat of the 100% bandits who strike a Negro in the face. This struggle will be the test of real international solidarity of the American white workers.:

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1930

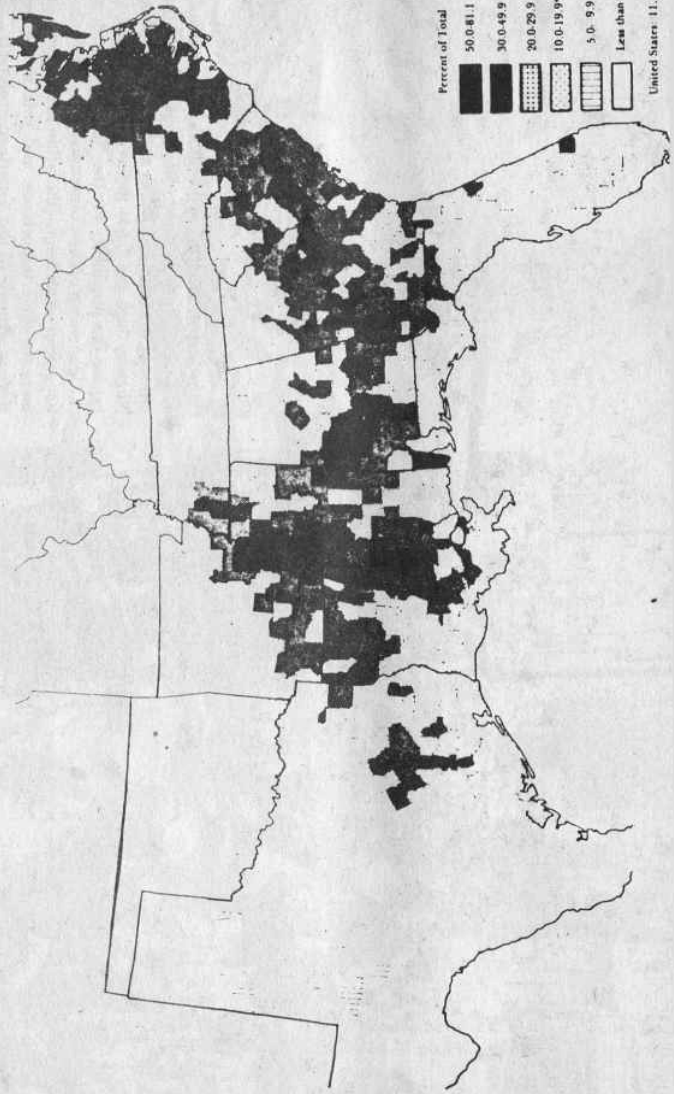


A strike in Charleston, South Carolina

“The industrialization of the South, the concentration of a new Negro working class population in the big cities of the East and North and the entrance of the Negroes into the basic industries on a mass scale, create the possibility for the Negro workers, under the leadership of the Communist Party, to assume the hegemony of all Negro liberation movements, and to increase their importance and role in the revolutionary struggle of the American proletariat.

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1928

**BLACK POPULATION AS PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION
By County, 1970**



The Black National Question Today



A presentation by Black Bolsheviks from the U.S. to Black Bolsheviks from Africa, on the occasion of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Paris, November 1982.

Comrades:

We could not have picked a more appropriate occasion on which to present to you a general picture of the Black National Movement in the United States and its struggle for self-determination than on this sixty-fifth anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. No better example can be given of the correct struggle for self-determination of oppressed nations than that applied by the Bolsheviks, which culminated in the October Revolution. The work done by them to liberate their oppressed nations should not only be an inspiration but should serve as a guide to present day Bolsheviks in our work on the National and Colonial Questions.

One particular example comes to mind which occurred just prior to the October Revolution and which illustrates the Bolsheviks' work on the national question. In central Asia in the oppressed nation of Tashkent, side by side with Kerensky's Provisional Government, sprang up Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. On September 12, 1917, the Tashkent Soviets took power. The Provisional Government arrested the Bolshevik leaders and tried to suppress the uprising, but so strong was the local opposition to this action that the Provisional Government had to release the arrested Bolsheviks almost immediately. Two months later the Soviets were back in power after bitter fighting that lasted several days. "This victory was rendered doubly significant by the fact that Russian soldiers... fought side by side with Tashkent workers and peasants."¹ Imagine, if you will, white soldiers in the U.S. fighting side by side with Black workers and toilers against U.S. imperialism and you get an idea of how strong the Bolsheviks' program on the national question must have been to create such a development in Tashkent during the October Revolution.

It is highly appropriate and highly significant that this anniversary is the occasion for the first time in the last thirty years for Black Bolsheviks from the United States to discuss the Black national question and the question of the liberation of the Black race with Bolsheviks from Africa. Many things have changed in Africa and for Blacks in the US, but the racial and national oppression of the Black race has not changed, whether we are in the most "advanced" country, the United States, or we are in Azania and Namibia and struggling for freedom from apartheid, or we are in the countries of Africa that are formally independent but are enslaved by the system of semi-colonialism. The combination of racial and national oppression creates a

special bond among all the Black peoples of the world and it makes the question of our liberation a world question.

This special connection of our struggles was understood by the old Bolsheviks in the Communist International, who proclaimed in a Resolution in 1928: "The Negro question in the United States must be treated in its relation to the Negro questions and struggles in other parts of the world. The Negro race everywhere is an oppressed race. Whether it is a minority (USA. etc.), majority (South Africa) or inhabits a so-called independent state (Liberia, etc.), the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism. Thus, a common tie of interest is established for the revolutionary struggle of race mid national liberation from imperialist domination of the Negroes in various parts of the world."

This is an occasion to once again discuss our common tie of interest in the revolutionary struggle for race and national liberation from imperialist domination for Black people all over the world. It is our task to once again bring this message of revolutionary solidarity to the world. It is the task of the new Bolsheviks to bring these revolutionary traditions to life again, to reanimate the work of the Communist International on this question. As black revolutionaries from the United States we particularly welcome the opportunity to speak to revolutionaries from West Africa, which is the part of Africa most of our ancestors were kidnapped from and forced into a life of slavery.

The struggle of the oppressed Black Nation in the U.S. necessitates that the Bolsheviks' program of self-determination for the Black Belt Nation be as strong today as it was in the Soviet Union and the Comintern. The tremendous chauvinism that has existed on this question must be eradicated, there has been almost as much opposition to the Black National Question within what is commonly called the U.S. left as there is in the U.S. Congress. These social-chauvinists "either entirely deny the right to self-determination... or they recognized that right in a patently hypocritical fashion, namely, without applying it to those very nations that are oppressed by their own nation."² Applied to the Black National Question in the U.S., this has taken the form of denying the historical development and present existence of an oppressed Black Nation as well as distorting the content of self-determination for this nation. Also these chauvinists have failed to understand that the lengthy exploitation and oppression of the Black Nation by U.S. imperialism has filled Black workers and the Black

masses with animosity, not only towards the white ruling class but also with distrust towards white workers. Consequently these chauvinists forget that it is the duty of “the class conscious communist proletariat of all countries to treat with particular caution and attention the survivals of national sentiments among the countries and nationalities which have been longest oppressed, it is equally necessary to make certain concessions with a view to hastening the extinction of the aforementioned distrust and prejudices.”³³ Instead of thus creating the conditions to eventually end this distrust, the chauvinism of the U.S. left and the Maoist movement only served to strengthen and reinforce this distrust among Blacks.

Another crucial mistake made by these social-chauvinists is their failure to grasp and understand the correct approach to the national question and its relationship to the proletarian revolution. The national program as well as the agrarian program were integral parts of the Bolshevik strategy for proletarian revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks understood that the success of one was dependent upon the success of the other. Consequently the “Bolsheviks never separated the national question from the general question of revolution, either before October or after October. The main essence of the Bolshevik approach to the national question is that the Bolsheviks always examined the national question in inseparable connection with the revolutionary perspective.”³⁴ The failure of the social-chauvinists from the U.S. left and Maoist movement to use this approach has resulted in the sabotage of the Black liberation struggle and the prolongation of the proletarian revolution.

To overcome this state of affairs, it is important for the present-day Bolsheviks to unconditionally uphold the right to self-determination of the oppressed Black Nation. The oppression faced by Blacks in the U.S. is national oppression, with Blacks in the southern U.S. being an oppressed nation (i.e. the Black Belt South) and Blacks in other areas of the U.S. an oppressed national minority. The oppressed Black Nation in the Black Belt South was and is “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.”³⁵ Africans were taken from different tribes, countries, and cultures and brought as slaves to the U.S. In the U.S. their different customs and cultures were merged with the existing U.S. culture developing out of their common experience of exploitation and oppression. As the plantations spread throughout the

South, growing the commercial crops of cotton, sugar, rice, tobacco and indigo, slaves were sold from the upper South to the lower (deep) South spreading a common Afro-American culture across the entire territory of the Black Belt South.

The origins of the Black Nation in the Black Belt South are rooted in the hundreds of years of slavocracy and the plantation system in the Black Belt. The bourgeois-democratic Civil War led to the abolition of chattel slavery and hence, the emancipation of Black slaves. The Black slaves were joined by the northern industrial bourgeoisie and the proletariat in this battle.

For the slaves, the defeat of the slavocracy meant the possibility for Blacks to develop freely along democratic lines. After the Civil War, Blacks in the Black Belt were developing all the features which comprise a fully developed nation. Black sharecroppers, Black landowners, tenant farmers, Black-owned banks and lending institutions, Black merchants, Black colleges, were emerging to such a degree that there existed a “flourishing Black economy in the South.”⁶ The territory encompassing the Black Belt South formed a “crescent through 12 southern states, from Virginia’s tidewater into North Carolina, South Carolina, lower and central Georgia and Alabama, into upper Florida, engulfing Mississippi and the Louisiana delta and wedging into eastern Texas and southeast Tennessee, with its western anchor in southern Arkansas.”⁷

However, the growing bourgeoisie of the north did not partake in the Civil War out of a sense of justice and equality for the Black slaves. The military defeat of the slavocracy and the abolition of chattel slavery cleared away the main obstacles to capitalist penetration of the South, for the rounding out of the national market under its complete and unchallenged dominance. With control of the southern market and the expansion of its capital in the South, the northern bourgeoisie had realized its potential of growth and ability to compete with other modern capitalist nations in the cotton industry. Until then, British capitalism had profited most handsomely from the cotton production from slave labor, used in its textile industry. In fact, during the Civil War, the British sided with the slavocracy. Karl Marx, on the contrary, rallied British workers to oppose the British support of the slavocracy and to support the emancipatory struggle of the Black slaves.

Following this victory, the northern bourgeoisie was able to consolidate its power throughout the U.S. By the 1880’s and 1890’s,

American capitalism developed into monopoly capitalism. With the defeat of the slavocracy, this phenomenon, the concentration of capital developing into monopoly capitalism, accelerated rapidly.

The right to self-determination of the developing Black nation was impeded, however, by U.S. imperialism. The monopoly capitalists gained control over the resources and land of the Black Belt and exploited them for their imperialist profitableness. The Rockefellers, the Mellons, the Morgans, the DuPonts, to name just a few, gained control of the oil, rubber, lumber, tobacco, textile, chemical and cotton industries throughout the South. The power Blacks had gained to govern themselves during Reconstruction was taken away and the Black Belt was split up to dilute their strength where Blacks were a majority.

With the aid of the imperialists, the white landlords maintained the agrarian economy in the South in colonial-type bondage. The Black peasantry was used as cheap labor and super-exploited. Many Blacks were reduced to a status of peonage. The economic growth of the Black Belt was retarded. The Black Belt became like a large ghetto.

In this period the U.S. began military aggression against Spain. The scramble for colonial spoils had already resulted in the division of the world among the European powers. The young U.S. imperialism, arriving late on the scene, was determined to capture its "share." The vast internal market provided a strong base for the aims of U.S. imperialism. In this respect, the semi-feudal South, with its essentially colonial economic structure, assured control of the world cotton market to emerging U.S. imperialism. This became a pillar of strength for the struggle for U.S. imperialist supremacy. This scheme was carried out at the expense of the enslavement of the Black Nation in the Black Belt.

The Resolutions of the Comintern on the Black National Question (published in this volume) were a response to these developments as well as to the liquidation of the Black National Question by certain opportunists. The right of self-determination as outlined by the C.I. implied the struggle for three basic demands. Examining these demands it becomes clear that the Comintern saw that Black self-determination was intricately connected with the power of U.S. imperialism and a successful proletarian revolution. The first demand was the "Confiscation of the landed property of the white landowners and capitalists for the benefit of the Negro farmers." It I was

understood that this landed property in the hands of the white American exploiters constituted the “most important material basis of the entire system of national oppression... in the Black Belt.” The second demand was the “Establishment of the state unity of the Black Belt” because “precisely for the purpose of facilitating national oppression” it is artificially split up and divided. The third demand was the “right to self-determination.” This meant the “complete and unlimited right of the Negro majority to exercise governmental authority in the entire territory of the Black Belt.”⁸ Formulated by the entire international Communist movement at that time, these demands still have their relevance for today. The Black Belt nation is still being denied its right to self-determination, and it is still being plundered and exploited by U.S. imperialism. Aspects of the national oppression Blacks face can be seen from unemployment, poverty, police repression and the expropriation of Blacks from the land in the south.

Aspects of Current Black National Oppression

A most pressing problem for Blacks in the U.S. today is unemployment. For Black adults unemployment is more than 21%. Unemployment for Black women is 16% and for Black men 19.8%. While of the number of Black youths, the unemployed are more than 50%. This “reserve army of labor” is “kept in misery in order to be always at the disposal of capital.”⁹ Imperialism’s current plans for Black youth are either unemployment, under-employment with wages lower than the miserable “slave minimum wage”, or into the military. Examining a cross section of the entire U.S., we see that Black youth unemployment is 40% in San Francisco, 55% in Chicago, 53% in Omaha, Nebraska, 45% in Kansas City, Missouri, 67% in Detroit, 80% in Youngstown, Ohio, 50% in New York City, 56% in Baltimore, Maryland, 60% in Richmond, Virginia, 31% in Birmingham, Alabama, and 79% in Montgomery, Alabama.¹⁰ These are official statistics that do not include those young Blacks who have stopped looking and stopped registering at the unemployment offices and who are termed “discouraged youth.” How could Black youth be anything but discouraged with such a future facing them.

The situation is not that much better for Blacks who are working. Focusing on the South, despite all the uproar in the bourgeois media about the “new South” and despite increased industrialization; the South is still the poorest region in the U.S. Blacks in the South are the poorest of the poor. Forty-four percent of Blacks in the South are

below the poverty level. In Mississippi 46% of Blacks are living in poverty. Louisiana has 37.2% Blacks living in poverty and Alabama has 36.8%.¹¹ Compare this with the fact that Blacks make up 35.2% of the Mississippi population, 24.4% of Louisiana and 25.6% of the Alabama population and a very large proportion of Blacks in these states live in poverty. In addition, 42% of all Black children in the U.S. live in poverty.¹²

In the Black Belt South, where the population ranges from 52% to 82% Black, the median income for the 300 counties of that region ranges from \$2,200 to \$5,000, with most earning less than \$3,200; “in Black Belt America people live in overcrowded makeshift housing, often converted stables or chicken coops, or houses insulated with card-board and roofed with sheets of tin.” “They have no toilets indoors or out. and often transport water over long distances.” “Most babies are born without benefit of medical assistance.”¹³ Ironically, the nation’s capital, Washington, D.C., has the highest infant mortality rate in the country. Not surprisingly 80% of the population is Black. Clearly such a phenomenon can only be the result of national oppression. Would the nation’s capital have such a high infant mortality rate if 80% of its population was white? We think not. As for the Black Belt, many counties have infant mortality rates in excess of 50 per 1,000 births each year. Sixty-five percent of Blacks in Black Belt regions live below the poverty level.¹⁴ And as of 1970, 29% of Blacks in the South lacked some or all plumbing facilities.¹⁵

Along with unemployment and poverty. Blacks have to also fight the state apparatus, especially its official arm (police brutality and the prison system) and its unofficial arm in the form of increasing Ku Klux Klan activity. All are designed to terrorize Blacks into submission. Police killings of Blacks have become so common it is more and more referred to as “legal lynching”. Witness the Miami, Florida, rebellions by Blacks which were direct results of such police killings of Blacks. Such killings are not isolated nor are they random incidents. They are commonplace throughout the U.S. and particularly brutal when directed at the Black Nation in the South. For instance, one of the most outrageous attacks by the police apparatus on the oppressed Black Nation occurred in 1975 in South Carolina, which came to be known as the “Bloody Summer”. From May to October of that year Blacks in the state were killed by the police at the rate of almost one every month. It was called by the Black masses “a declaration of war on the Black community.” When a group of Black

workers and community activists began fighting back against these attacks and killings, the governor of South Carolina “ordered the National Guard... on standby alert.” “Police began a military occupation of Black neighborhoods. Checkpoints were set up in various strategic areas. Black people... were routinely stopped, searched and checked for identification. Helicopters patrolled the skies over the Black district. All this was done in the name of “preventing violence.”¹⁶ Recently in Tchula, Mississippi the white power structure removed the duly-elected Black mayor of this city that is 80% Black. In Wellston, Missouri, another Black mayor was railroaded out of his job by a white jury. In Afton, in Warren County, North Carolina, protests are going on to stop the state from dumping toxic chemicals in these areas. It is clearly being dumped in these areas because the residents are mostly Black, poor and powerless, i.e., they do not have the right to self-determination. “The county is 65% Black and the city is 75% Black and the per capita income of all residents both Black and white as of 1980 was \$5,230.”¹⁷ The encouraging aspect of this struggle is that the community pulled together. The school board “granted permission for students and teachers to absent themselves from school without penalty to participate in the protest and hardware stores and fast food restaurants contributed food and watercoolers to sustain protestors.”¹⁸ This collective action is important because it trains the working class in the necessity for an organization, the one weapon it has at its disposal. The collective mass organized struggles of this period highlight the potential for future organizations of soviet power given a revolutionary situation.

Prisons are another area where the national oppression of Blacks is felt the hardest. Blacks are approximately 12% of the U.S. population but make up 48% of the prison population.¹⁹ In every state in the southern United States the percentage of prisoners who are non-white (Black, Chicano, Native Americans, immigrants) far exceeds the proportion of non-whites in the general southern population. In addition, in every southern state the number of Blacks in prison is double the number of Blacks in the general population.²⁰

TABLE

State	% of State Population that is Black	% of Prison Population that is Black
Alabama	26%	62%
Florida	15%	30%
Georgia	26%	60%
Kentucky	7%	26%
Louisiana	30%	64%
Mississippi	37%	70%
North Carolina	22%	57%
South Carolina	31%	58%
Tennessee	16%	50%
Texas	13%	60%
Virginia	19%	61%

There has also been an increase in Ku Klux Klan activity. This racist terrorist organization has been mobilizing its members and attacking the democratic rights of Blacks both in the north and the south. To date several lynchings have occurred in the south, resulting in a demonstration of over 8,000 Blacks in Mobile, Alabama, in 1981 fighting against the Klan violence. The most recent battleground between the Klan and Blacks has been Washington, D.C. After threatening to come to Washington and actually rallying in one of the counties surrounding the city, the Klan set a rally date and was confronted by thousands of anti-Klan demonstrators. In a city that is 80% Black such a reaction could be expected. Such mass demonstrations of self-defense are encouraging in face of the increasing terror practiced against Blacks.

Land, the Agrarian Question and Self-Determination

Any significant assessment of current conditions of Blacks must take into consideration the question of land. "According to the Emergency Land Fund of Atlanta, Georgia, (Blacks) are losing 9,615 acres of land per week and by 1983 the Black race in the U.S., if this trend continues, will be landless."²¹ Compare this to 1910 when Blacks owned 15 million acres of land. Also in 1910 Black farmers accounted for almost 70% of the total Black population.²² At the peak in 1920, there were 926,000 Black-operated farms comprising one-seventh of all farm operations. By 1978, only 6.2% of that number

remained.²³ Today there are only about 55,000 Black-owned operated farms still in existence.

It is important however, in formulating a correct approach to the agrarian question to not view Black ownership of land in bourgeois terms. Historically the majority of Black farmers never “owned” the land in the bourgeois sense, but rather worked the land as sharecroppers, tenant farmers and agricultural (wage) laborers. “In the South, 1,021,000 out of 1,537,000 tenant farmers, i.e., 66%, were sharecroppers. In 1910... America had 1,500,000 sharecroppers, of whom more than 1,000,000 were Negroes. And the proportion of sharecroppers to the total number of farmers is not decreasing, but is on the contrary steadily and rather rapidly increasing.”²⁴

There are two ideas in this information which we must take into consideration in our approach to the Black agrarian question. One is that we as Bolsheviks must orient our policies towards the most oppressed sector of the rural population, i.e., the agricultural (wage) laborers, the sector of those who obtain their livelihood by working for hire in capitalist agricultural enterprises,²⁵ “the semi-proletarians..., i.e., those who obtain their livelihood partly as wage-laborers in agricultural and industrial capitalist enterprises and partly by working their own, or rented, plots of land, which provides only a part of the means of subsistence for their families,”²⁶ and “third, the small peasantry, i.e. the small tillers, who hold, either as owners or as tenants, small plots of land which enable them to meet the requirements of their families and their farms without hiring outside labor.”²⁷

The other point that must be kept in mind is that “the fundamental and principal trend of capitalism is the displacement of small-scale by large-scale production both in industry and in agriculture. But this displacement should not be interpreted merely as immediate expropriation. Displacement also implies the ruin of the small farmers and a worsening of conditions on their farms, a process that may go on for years and decades. This deterioration assumes a variety of forms such as the small farmer’s overwork or malnutrition, his heavy debts, worse feed and poorer care of livestock in general, poorer husbandry, cultivation, fertilization, and the like as well as technical stagnation on the farm, etc.”²⁸ As mechanization came to the cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar cane fields of the South, this displacement of Black farmers, who predominantly ran small-scale farms, took place at a rapid pace. In 17 Arkansas counties typical of the southern cotton economy, the number of cotton-picking machines increased from 482

to 5,061 between 1952 and 1963. Black tenant farmers in these counties declined from 21,862 to 6,587 between 1952 and 1959.²⁹ In 1948, a cotton grower in Bolivar County, Mississippi, used 105 sharecropper families to plant and harvest 2,500 acres of cotton. But by 1978, fifteen tractor and cotton-picking machine drivers and six laborers did the same work.³⁰

The crucial point to understand is that not only those Black farmers who own land outright, but those sharecroppers, tenant farmers and agricultural workers are also entitled to the land they have farmed, worked in and tilled.

When the Comintern analyzed the Black agrarian question as lying at the “basis of the national question,” its purpose was to counteract the opportunist elements at that time who held that rural Blacks (who were 70% of the total Black population) were “reserves of capitalist reaction.” It attempted to illustrate that these rural Blacks were, on the contrary, “allies of the revolutionary proletariat” and that “their objective position facilitates their transformation into a revolutionary force.”³¹ It also pointed out that although the Black Nation was not a classical colony, it still faced colonial-type conditions in the Black Belt. It therefore put forward as one of its uppermost demands the “confiscation of the landed property of the white landowners and capitalists for the benefit of the Negro farmers.”³² The Comintern believed that the “landed property in the hands of the white American exploiters constituted the most important material basis of the entire system of national oppression and serfdom of the Negroes in the Black Belt.”³³ This position is still appropriate for today. And while there has been an increase in industrialization of the South and a decrease in the proportion of Black farmers, the essential relations of production are still the same. The white landowners and capitalists still own and control the land and industry while the Black semi-proletarians and agricultural workers are tremendously exploited and oppressed. The demise of Blacks from the land does not mean that the agrarian question is no longer of importance in the national question. Obviously with fewer Blacks being on the land, the agrarian crisis of exploitation caused by imperialism and its subsequent agrarian solution affects fewer Blacks. However, to combat this growing expropriation of Blacks from the land, along with the demand for “confiscation of the landed property of the capitalists,” or maybe even encompassed within this demand, there may be a need for the “restitution of land to the landless and land-poor Blacks” as in the case of

solutions to the agrarian question in South Africa (Azania). Thus the Black agrarian question, while not having the same prominence as it did before, is still crucial for solving the national question.

Black Workers in the Black Belt South

The expropriation of Blacks from the land has not meant a “dying away of the national revolutionary Black movement in the South... but on the contrary, a great advance of this movement”³⁴ because “the growth of the most important driving force of the national revolution, the Black working class, is especially strengthened.”³⁵ Already struggles for unionization in the South highlight the “driving force” of the Black proletariat, and especially Black working class women. In March 1981, 450 hospital workers in Sumter, South Carolina were the first private hospital in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia to be unionized. More than three-fourths of these workers were Black women. In Memphis, Tennessee on March 13, 1980, 1,000 Memphis furniture workers, 90% of whom were Black and 85% of whom were women, won a 10-week strike.³⁶ Black women were in the lead in the Oneita Knitting Mills struggle in Andrews, South Carolina, in a factory that was 75% Black and 85% women. In Laural, Mississippi, Black women workers are struggling against the Sanderson Chicken Farm’s oppressive working regulations of “hanging up 140 live chickens on the line each minute (up recently from 100 a minute), cutting a major incision in 60 chickens a minute; venting (making a cut and milling out the chicken’s guts) 20 to 24 a minute; completely cutting up 5 whole chickens a minute,” as well as against the fact that nearly all the foremen are white men while all the workers are Black women.³⁷ Black workers in general have played important roles in the Newport News, Virginia, successful strike of 16,000 dockworkers in 1979, in the J.P. Stevens textile struggle in North Carolina, in the Charleston, South Carolina hospital workers strike in 1970, in strikes by sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, and Atlanta, Georgia; as well as in struggles in the Louisiana sugar cane plantations. In the textile industry where 20% of the workforce is Black, textile capitalists have “equated the advent of unionism with a Black takeover of the workplace.”³⁸ It should be noted that the textile industry “in five southern states employs over 25% of the labor force. The majority of U.S. textile mills are located in an arc across the south, extending from the northeastern North Carolina, through the Piedmont to the textile ‘capital’ of Greenville, South

Carolina, down to Georgia and into the Black Belt of Alabama.”³⁹

This only represents the struggles of the southern portion of the 12 million Black workers today in the U.S. Clearly the Black working class has reached a stage in its development “which enables it, if properly organized and well led, to fulfill successfully its double historical missions: a.) to play a considerable role in the class struggle against American imperialism as an important part of the American working class; and b.) to lead the movement of the oppressed masses of the Black population.”⁴⁰

The Black Bourgeoisie and National Reformism

The chauvinist liquidation of the Black National Question by the CPUSA has allowed for the flourishing of chauvinism in the American proletarian-movement and the lack of support for the struggle for self-determination and equal rights of the Black masses by the white proletariat. This chauvinist betrayal, stemming from the mid-1940’s, led to liquidation of the struggle for Black proletarian hegemony in the Black Liberation Movement. By the 1950’s, the Black movement proceeded separately from the broad proletarian movement. The CPUSA began to promote the rising reformist Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie as the vanguard of the Black movement. Rather than concentrate on organizing the large and growing Black proletariat, the CPUSA promoted the national-reformist—and at times pro-imperialist —National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Hence, the movement for self-determination of the Black Nation and the struggle for equal rights have been lowered to only a struggle against racial discrimination, for civil rights, voter registration, and the struggle to elect Black politicians. The right to secession, the demand for state unity of the Black Belt, the demand for confiscation of the land stolen from Blacks by white landowners, insurance companies, and imperialism in general, have been neglected or abandoned. These have been the consequences of the national chauvinist betrayal by the CPUSA and the promotion of the national reformists as the vanguard of the Black National movement.

Today such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement for Colored People (NAACP), People United to Serve Humanity (PUSH), Black banks, Black insurance companies, Black businesses, have developed a strategy of “economic boycott” and “economic blackmail” to force the U.S. corporations to hand down

some of the imperialist crumbs gained by the exploitation of peoples around the world, including U.S. Blacks. Never once do these Black organizations question where the imperialists get their profits. All they want is a piece of the imperialist pie. What is also obvious is that the Black masses never reap any of this. The Black bourgeoisie is trying to use the threat of the Black masses in actions against imperialism for the purpose of lining its own pockets with imperialist super-profits.

Examining the agreement between Operation PUSH, headed by Jesse Jackson, and the Seven-Up soft drink company illustrates this. This agreement calls for a “\$2.5 million program with Black travel agencies, \$5 million group life insurance with Black insurance companies, expansion of 7-Up’s relationship with 67 Black banks, channeling \$15 million into payroll accounts and 15% of public relations expenditures to Black firms and all Black advertising to be placed through Black firms, the appointment of a Black person to the 7-Up board of directors, and retaining of a Black consulting firm.”⁴¹ Where are the demands that will help Black workers? Nowhere!

As *Black Enterprise Magazine* (the spokesman for the Black bourgeoisie) says, “Jesse Jackson’s efforts... to make large corporations aware of the pivotal role Blacks play in their profit picture is important.”⁴² Why? Because it represents one of the steps that “Black businesses can take to protect their future.”⁴³ There should be no confusion about the present role of the Black bourgeoisie. They represent 4% of the gross national product of the U.S. They predominate in the service industries and consumer products. As manufacturers Black-owned enterprises have actually decreased since 1973. The total assets of all Black banks that exist equal one-half of 1% of the total assets of Bank of America alone.⁴⁴ Clearly as an economic competitor the Black bourgeoisie does not represent a threat to U.S. imperialists. They are much more important because of the ideological role they play, primarily fostering reformist solutions for the national oppression Blacks face, as well as channeling Black struggles onto a reformist path. By their control of the Black media, i.e., newspapers, magazines, radio and television shows, the Black bourgeoisie attempts to mold ideas and opinions such that the dominant ideas are those of the Black bourgeoisie and represents its own interest. Another example of the use the imperialists make of the Black bourgeoisie can be seen by what happened in Miami. During the Miami rebellion, both Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young came to town and in

collaboration with their imperialist masters tried to get the Black masses to cool down. The response given by the Black masses and Black youth is worthy of imitation by all revolutionaries. "Andrew Young was booed off the stage...by young people." And "one well publicized media event featuring Jesse Jackson... drew only 12 people, six of whom were television reporters."⁴⁵

The Struggle for a Black National Revolutionary Movement

Clearly the need for a consolidated Black anti-imperialist movement to counter this Black reformist wing and win over the following of the Black masses is very important. As the crisis of U.S. imperialism intensifies and leads it more and more towards a world war, the development of a Black National Revolutionary Movement becomes ever more crucial. Historically, the Black movement has made severe attacks on U.S. imperialism that at times have shaken its foundations and forced it to make certain concessions. The most recent was the struggle of Blacks against the Vietnam war, which illustrated this point. However, it is important to remember that such a struggle was aided by the development of the Black national struggle already going on. The Black Power movement, civil rights movement, Black student movement, were all playing a "revolutionizing" role on the Black masses during the Vietnam War.

This same process could take place today. But crucial to this is the development, consolidation and organization of a Black National Revolutionary Movement, which the Black left-wing has the possibility of taking steps towards. As Bolsheviks we encourage any process that will contribute to the destruction of U.S. imperialism and aid the process of developing a proletarian revolution in the U.S. A Black National Revolutionary Movement fighting for self-determination represents such a process.

Thus as Bolsheviks we uphold the right to self-determination of the Black Nation in the Black Belt South, including its right to political secession, and we encourage the development of a Black National Revolutionary Movement. To some degree this movement already exists, but it is still scattered and weak. There are several things which we feel need to be done in order to overcome the present weakness of the Black left-wing. The progressive, democratic and anti-imperialist forces must struggle for principled unity in a united front-type situation and overcome the sectarianism which has plagued this section of the Black movement. Organizations and individuals must

seek to strengthen and revolutionize the Black mass movement. Black workers must be developed in these mass organizations to fight for their own class interest. The struggles of Blacks should not be seen as only a competing ground for self-appointed leaders. The Black masses will decide on their leaders based on whether they are struggling for the genuine interest of the masses. Analysis, discussions and communications between various organizations within this Black left-wing must be implemented in order to solve the burning questions and issues facing the Black masses (for instance, the land question, content of self-determination, partial demands and long-range goals, etc.). All these are necessary for the organizational consolidation of this left-wing to take place.

In recent years, several activities and conferences have occurred which signify the resurgence of the Black movement. In August, 1981, there was a conference of Black workers which attempted to form a Black Workers' Organizing Committee, but failed. In December, 1981, more than 200 Blacks came together in what was called the First National Plenary Conference on Self-Determination. This was the first time in approximately a decade that various Black organizations had come together specifically to discuss the question of self-determination. Conference participants included the Black Human Rights Coalition, National Black Independent Party, the Republic of New Africa, the African Peoples Socialist Party, the National Black United Front, the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party and the League of Revolutionary Struggle. There has also been the creation of the National Black United Front, which held its founding conference in June of 1980, and of the National Black Independent Party, which held its conference in August of 1980. Presently it appears the National Black United Front has the most potential. Its orientation at its last convention in 1982 was clearly in favor of self-determination for Blacks; it is democratically run, has an international perspective (it has supported the campaign to free the Ivorian workers, is supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people, the anti-apartheid struggle in Azania, etc.) and it has chapters throughout the U.S. Both the NBUF and the NBIPP held their 1982 conventions in the South (NBUF in Atlanta, Georgia, and NBIPP in Raleigh, North Carolina.) as a way of emphasizing the importance of the struggle in that area. Coupled with these developments has been the creation of local Black assemblies within the Black Belt South counties. These

assemblies are being formed in an effort to aid Blacks in the Black Belt to solve their problems through “local self-determination.” They are being organized by the National Association for the Southern Poor, “dedicated to eradicating the effects of poverty in the Black Belt.”⁴⁶

The importance of these developments should not be underrated. Since the demise of the National Black Political Convention (which was a united front of Black organizations and individuals from 43 states organized in 1972 at a convention in Gary, Indiana, comprising 3,000 delegates and almost 5,000 alternates, representing all classes among Blacks from the Congressional Black Caucus to the Black Panther Party, integrationist organizations to nationalist organizations, local community groups, businessmen, public officials, civil rights organizations, revolutionary nationalists, cultural nationalists etc.), the Black movement has been split into a left wing and a right wing. The right wing has a more reformist, pro-imperialist character while the left wing has tended to have more of an anti-imperialist character. Until now this left wing has been severely factionalized, split and sectarian. A combination of FBI harassment and provocations and internal bickering has left this left wing so disorganized that its influence on the mass movement of Blacks against the manifestations of their oppression has been minimal. The left wing has organizationally been the weaker of the two wings. The National Black United Front is important, because it is the first attempt to organize this left wing in several years that has yielded some degree of success. This has a potential revolutionizing effect on the Black masses, because the present line of demarcation between the left wing and the right would be precisely that of the question of self-determination. Thus the consolidation of this left wing would be on a comparably higher political level.

The primary classes making up the left wing of the Black movement are the radicalized Black petty bourgeoisie and the Black working class. The radicalized Black petty bourgeoisie predominates at this time. This can be seen all too clearly by reviewing the dominant ideas and programs for Black self-determination put forward by these forces. They represent a range and mixture of views from Pan-Africanism and revolutionary nationalism, to Marxism-Leninism.

One set of ideas in the current Black left wing is that of Pan-Africanism. As a concept Pan-Africanism has been around for several decades and while it has had numerous different interpretations,

it basically is defined as Africa for Africans. Essentially it insisted on the unity of Black people... treatment, with dignity and respect of all Blacks in the African diaspora and it linked the regeneration of Blacks in the diaspora to the redemption of Africa as an independent and united continent.⁴⁷

The old Garvey movement was the most illusionary separatist version of Pan-Africanism. On the one hand, the Garvey movement sparked Black national consciousness and anti-imperialist sentiments among broad masses of Black people in the early 1920's. However, Garvey began to liquidate the struggles of Black people in America and actually promoted Black capitalism, sought the aid of imperialists, and even the Ku Klux Klan, in order to return Black Americans to Africa to set up a "pure" Black nation. Such "Black Zionism" and reactionary separatism was defeated with the growth of the Black proletarian movement and the growing influence of Bolshevism among the Black masses.

W.E.B. DuBois also was a Pan-Africanist. His views, however, vacillated from revolutionary communist to Pan-Africanism. Between 1900 and 1945 he played a leading role in the six Pan-African Congresses that were held. The first congress was held right after the end of the first world war and while it did serve to "revolutionize" the emerging African national bourgeoisies around their class interest within the growing national liberation struggles, Pan-Africanism was a movement outside of Africa long before it was a movement inside Africa. It only became a movement inside Africa around 1945 after the Second World War. Why? Because it was offered to the Western imperialists as a buffer against the strengthening of Communism on the African continent. Many of the foremost proponents of Pan-Africanism became willing accomplices in this endeavor. George Padmore (a foremost advocate of Pan-Africanism and advisor to Kwame Nkrumah) stated that "Pan-Africanism offers an alternative to Communism"⁴⁸ and he believed it was the "only force capable of containing Communism... in Africa."⁴⁹ Padmore advised that "if the Western powers are really afraid of Communism and want to defeat it... there must be a complete transfer of power... as America did in the Philippines... to the emerging colonial nations."⁵⁰ And we all know the results of America's "transfer of power" to the Philippines merely ensured the continued exploitation of these islands with the aid and consent of the Philippine national bourgeoisie.

This is precisely the use that was made of Pan-Africanism by the

western imperialist powers. The progressive role that the Pan-Africanist movement played in the achievement of independence for many African states should not be overlooked, yet it should not be overrated either. Pan-Africanism had very severe limitations, the severest being its bourgeois and petty bourgeois class origins. The first-generation Pan-Africanist leaders' primary goal upon achieving independence was to maintain their positions as heads of states. As soon as this was accomplished, the bourgeois democratic tasks in the national revolution were stopped. The struggles of the masses, who were duped into believing that Pan-Africanism transcended class lines, were sold out. The agrarian revolutions were stopped and maintaining the status quo was the priority. The African countries were transformed from colonies to semi-colonies with the African national bourgeoisies in power. Such were the limitations of Pan-Africanism.

Pan-Africanism in the U.S. in the 1980's is very romantic and illusionary. There is a tendency among Blacks in the African diaspora, especially Black Americans, to glorify and romanticize Pan-Africanism and overlook the actual practice of this concept. Sekou Toure, one of the foremost proponents of Pan-Africanism, is now walking hand in hand with David Rockefeller, and has repaid Rockefeller's visit to Guinea by coming to the U.S. on a "borrowing spree." The All African Peoples' Revolutionary Party has no base in Guinea. Only Toure's Parti Democratique Guinea (PDG) is allowed. This is important because the main U.S. proponent of Pan-Africanism, Stokely Carmichael (now calling himself Kwame Toure), and his AAPRP forget to tell his followers what 15 years of ~~the African~~ has really meant for the African people.

Maybe his followers will see the crisis that the OAU is having as the African national bourgeoisies' struggle for hegemony within this "non-aligned" organization to see which imperialist bloc it will negotiate with until the next summit. This summit may not occur, because for the second time in four months (once in August and now in November), the OAU has collapsed around this contention on which imperialist bloc will be the best with which to negotiate the continued exploitation of the African masses. This is the reaping of the harvest of Pan-Africanism's influence of a denial of the class struggle in Africa. It has not prepared the African proletariat and peasantry for this capitulation of the African national bourgeoisies precisely because it serves the interest of these bourgeoisies, and through them serves imperialism.

The AAPRP and the more “leftist” African Peoples Socialist Party in the U.S., would do well to analyze these developments. Yet, these “African Peoples” parties refused to learn from the real struggles of African people on the continent.

The AAPRP focuses exclusively on Black students in the U.S. as the vanguard of any struggle. Their primary activity is building their “party” through the annual historical celebration of African Liberation Day in the U.S. Blacks in the U.S. (and Africans also we presume) are to struggle for the “liberation and unification of Africa under scientific socialism as expressed by Nkrumahism.” Black students are the vanguard because they “have always provided the spark needed to set in motion demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, and armed insurrections.” As for the proletariat, its role is never mentioned either as vanguard or rearguard. Neither does the AAPRP speak to what exactly the Blacks in the U.S. are supposed to do to achieve this liberation and unification. It seems that Blacks are to go back to Africa to fight for this unification.

As for the African Peoples Socialist Party, its distinguishing feature is that unlike the AAPRP, it does ask for Blacks to struggle here in the U.S. Yet while recognizing self-determination for everyone else, it refused to recognize it for Blacks in the Black Belt South.

APSP is of the opinion that Blacks throughout the U.S. are “colonized Africans” and, hence, their salvation lies in the socialist emancipation of the African continent. They therefore deny the existence of a Black Nation in the Black Belt. APSP claims that America *today* still belongs to the Native Americans; that the southwest is still a legitimate part of Mexico *today*; and that the white population is an illegitimate settler population with the white bourgeoisie lording over the other oppressed nationalities. APSP tends to reduce the role of the white proletariat to being a “solidarity” supporter for the Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, etc., in the struggle for “socialism.”

In addition, the APSP, similar to AAPRP, is primarily trying to build its own organization, instead of trying to build some sort of ongoing Black revolutionary mass movement. Witness APSP’s prerequisites for work on their international tribunal for reparations, i.e. “to recognize APSP as soli leader of the tribunal” and “to see Blacks as having the exclusive rights to organize Black people.” What about a Native American or a Puerto Rican organizing within the Black community? Are they to be thrown out? Such a view plays into the hands

of the imperialists because it perpetuates the divisions that already exist within the U.S. and is used by the imperialists to maintain their rule.

Freedom fighters (adherents of the Black Liberation Army) represent another segment of the left-wing of the Black movement, primarily being nationalist and conducting adventurist and terrorist actions unconnected with any development of the mass movement. Most recently the Brinks expropriation action illustrated the weakness of the Freedom Fighters. It must be understood that as Bolsheviks we certainly understand the need for armed struggle. No overthrow of the imperialist system will take place without it. But this must be connected with revolutionary mass actions, strikes, boycotts, etc., and most importantly there must be no *playing* with armed struggle.

The overthrow of imperialism and the bourgeois dictatorship will only occur with a mass insurrection of the proletariat in alliance with the oppressed nationalities, poor farmers, etc. Capitalism will not be overthrown, nor will the masses rise up in rebellion as a result of the adventurist and terrorist actions of either unstable petty bourgeois or lumpen elements under the title of freedom fighters. There have been many serious revolutionaries who have flirted with these adventurist tactics. We do not criticize those serious revolutionaries who have a burning desire to overthrow imperialism. But one must not be carried away with impetuosity and military romanticism. Guerrilla tactics are subordinate to the general strategy of armed insurrection. Armed struggle is an art that must be mastered. When a revolutionary crisis approaches, the vanguard Bolshevik Party must be equipped with a military program, with well-prepared cadres closely tied to the broad masses. But such activity must be guided by the Bolshevik Party. The "soldier" and the "army" are subordinated to the proletarian vanguard and not the other way around. Otherwise, any sect of unstable elements, or even police provocateurs, can conduct such activity with the aim of disrupting the movement under the guise of "revolution," "socialism," "liberation" etc. Such isolated actions only bring about more repression on the young and growing revolutionary movement.

There have been too many martyrs in the Black liberation movement already for this lesson to go unheeded. This movement has numerous lessons from past experience of mistakes in prematurely picking up the gun as well as belatedly picking up the gun. There must be a discussion and summation of these past experiences so as not to

repeat them time and time again.

Among forces claiming to be Marxist, the social-chauvinists, the centrists and the genuine internationalists are all represented in the left-wing of the Black movement. The social-chauvinists are composed of the Maoist and ex-Maoist forces of the League for Revolutionary Struggle, the Communist Workers' Party, the ex-cadres from the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (also known as the October League), and other ex-Maoist groups. The chauvinism of these organizations was one of the prime reasons the Black movement's left wing is so weak today. Many of these organizations upheld the right to self-determination for the Black Belt Nation "in a patently hypocritical fashion" resulting in numerous resignations of their Black cadres because of this prevalence of chauvinism. If these forces are *to* play any sort of revolutionizing role in the development of a Black National Revolutionary Movement, they must jettison this chauvinism and Maoism. If they fail to do this, they will again make the same mistakes as before in being inconsistent in upholding the right to self-determination *for* the Black Belt Nation including political secession, just like the old revisionist CPUSA.

There are also within this Black left-wing various centrist organizations. Some who follow the politics of the Party of Labor of Albania (PLA) staunchly and others who do so half-heartedly, based on the PLA's claim to being the only consistent revolutionaries. The strength of these organizations is their upholding the right to self-determination of the Black Belt Nation. If they are to genuinely support this right, however, and not a caricature of it as the PLA has done in its sham upholding of this right for Zimbabwe, Iran, Afghanistan, etc., then they must break with the PLA and its sectarian policies. As the struggle of the Black Nation for self-determination runs headlong into the coming imperialist war, centrist vacillations will only serve to hinder this struggle. And these organizations will be forced to take a stand based on either the interest of the international proletariat or the national interest of the PLA. These organizations must examine closely the PLA's class collaborationist and national reformist positions on the national struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies, and expect the same sort of capitulation by the PLA on the Black National Question.

There is also a growing number of Black Marxist-Leninists who consider themselves independent of any trend, and of Black revolutionary nationalists who also consider themselves as independents.

Some of these forces are stressing independence and socialism as the slogans for the Black Belt Nation, as well as calling for a Black Communist Party. These developments are a response to the dominance of white chauvinism on the Black National Question and to the absence of Bolshevism. It is important for these forces to re-examine the past experiences of the Black movement and to examine the re-birth of Bolshevism. The creation of mechanisms for discussion are crucial in this period.

This coalescing of forces upholding the right to self-determination of the Black Belt Nation also includes the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks too have not been free of errors. The Comintern states that "Communists must fight in the forefront of the national-liberation movement and do their utmost for the progress of this mass movement and its revolutionization."⁵¹ To achieve this revolutionization process we must do more than just declare the hegemony of the proletariat. Too often the work of the Bolsheviks in the Black Liberation Movement has centered around criticizing the various national reformists, resting content and self-satisfied that we have done our part in helping to achieve proletarian hegemony. This however, is not enough. Yes it is crucial that the vacillating nature of the radicalized Black petty bourgeoisie (which goes from a national revolutionary to a national reformist position), be exposed. But it is equally crucial that Black workers be organized to struggle for their own interest within the Black national organizations. To expect organizations that are predominantly composed and led by the petty bourgeoisie to carry out a program geared towards the interest of the Black working class, simply because they are criticized, is foolish and dangerous.

The Bolshevik League with the aid of Bolsheviks from Africa has done a considerable amount of work in aiding the revolutionization of U.S. Blacks by exposing the capitulation of the Black national bourgeoisies on the African continent. This has been significant in breaking the ideological hold of various U.S. Pan-Africanists, and prepares the Black proletariat for the capitulation of the U.S. Black bourgeoisie. Much still remains to be done. We must remember that Black workers can only play their historic mission "if properly organized and well led," two tasks that have yet to be accomplished. To ensure that a Black National Revolutionary Movement is built and that the Black proletariat has hegemony over this movement, the Bolshevik League called on all Black workers "...to participate in the struggle to organize a mass-based Black national revolutionary

movement. We call on the American proletariat as a whole to support such activity. The struggle for self-determination for the Black Nation... is part of the struggle in the U.S. to overthrow imperialism. Socialism in the U.S. will never occur without the struggle for the liberation of the Black Nation.”⁵²

We in the Bolshevik League, as well as all revolutionary communists, must work in the trade unions and other mass organizations and struggle for these to actively support the struggle for self-determination of the Black Nation and for equal rights. Such support must not be only verbal support. Active propaganda and agitation, the struggle against all manifestations of chauvinism and racism, against police terror, for the banning of any rights for fascist elements like the Ku Klux Klan, active financial support for the Black revolutionary movement, etc., must be conducted among the American proletariat. This activity must never let up. To fail to rally the U.S. proletariat to support the Black National Revolutionary Movement is to betray and weaken the struggle for socialism in the U.S.

Revolutionaries who are genuinely interested in the struggle for socialism in the U.S., and in the achievement of self-determination for the Black Nation, must keep in mind the following passage from the Resolutions of the Communist International:

“The Communist Party of the United States must bring into play its entire revolutionary energy, in order to mobilize the widest possible masses of the white and black proletariat of the United States, not by words, but by deeds, for real effective support of the struggle for the liberation of the Negroes. Enslavement of the Negroes is one of the most important foundations of the imperialist dictatorship of United *States* capitalism. The more American imperialism fastens its yoke on the millions strong Negro masses, the more must the Communist Party develop the mass struggle for Negro emancipation, and the better use it must make of *all* conflicts which arise out of the national difference, as an incentive for revolutionary mass actions against the bourgeoisie. This is as much in the direct interest of the proletarian revolution in America. Whether the rebellion of the Negroes is to be the outcome of a general-revolutionary situation in the United States, whether it is to originate in the whirlpool of decisive fights for power by the working class, for proletarian dictatorship, or whether on the contrary the Negro rebellion will be the prelude of gigantic struggles for power by the American proletariat, cannot be foretold now. But in either contingency it is essential for the

Communist Party to make an energetic beginning now—at the present moment—with the organization of joint mass struggles of white and black workers against Negro oppression. This alone will enable us to get rid of the bourgeois white chauvinism which is polluting the ranks of the white workers in America, to overcome the distrust of the Negro masses caused by the inhuman barbarous Negro slave traffic still carried on by the American bourgeoisie—inasmuch as it is directed even against all white workers—and to win over to our side these millions of Negroes as active fellow-fighters in the struggle for the overthrow of bourgeois power throughout America.

Notes:

1. *Soviets in Central Asia*, W.P. and Zelda Coates, 1951, p. 70.
2. Lenin, "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *Collected Works* 21:411.
3. "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," in *Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions*, pp. 28-29, published in 1920 for the Second Congress of the Communist International.
4. Stalin, "Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia," *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 295.
5. "Marxism and the National Question," *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 22.
6. Manning Marable, *Blackwater*, p. 51, 1981.
7. W. Patterson, *We Charge Genocide*, p. 22, 1951 (Petition to the United Nations for Relief from the Crime of the U.S. Government Against Negro People).
8. *Resolutions of the Communist International on the Negro Question. 1928 and 1930* (reprinted in this volume), 1930, Sec. 6.
9. Karl Marx, *Capital*, 1:487.
10. *The National Leader* (a Black weekly newspaper) 6-7-82, p. 9.
11. *Washington Post*, 1-23-82, p. A-1.
12. *The Black Resource Guide*, 1982, p. 64.
13. *National Black Monitor*, 7-82, vol. 7, no. 7, p. 12.
14. Manning Marable, *From the Grassroots*, 1980, p. 150.
15. *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population, 1790-1978*, p. 139, U.S. Dept. of Commerce 1979.
16. *Southern Exposure* (Stayed on for Freedom), p. 101.
17. *The Guardian*, 9-29-82, p. 8.
18. *Ibid.* p. 3.
19. *Workers' Tribune*, Bolshevik League of the U.S., July-August 1982, p. 3.
20. *Southern Exposure* (Inside Southern Prisons) vol. 6, no. 4, 1978, pp. 26-27.
21. *Blacks Book Bulletin* (The South) vol. 7, no. 3, p. 4.
22. Ingolf Vogeler, *The Myth of the Family Farm*, 1981, p. 79.
23. *New York Times*, 2-20-82, p. 9.
24. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 22: 25. "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development

of Capitalism in Agriculture: Part I Capitalism and Agriculture in the USA". 25. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the Agrarian Question," published for the Second Congress of the Communist International and taken from the pamphlet *The Land Question and the Fight for Freedom*, pp. 107-108. 26. Ibid. 27. Ibid. 28. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 22:70, op. cit. 29. Herbert Gutman. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925*, p. 466, 1976. 30. Miller, Ed., *Working Lives*, p. 302. 31. *Resolutions on the Negro Question* (reprinted in this volume) 1928, Sec. 3. 32. Ibid., 1930, Sec. 5-6. 33. Ibid. 34. Ibid. 35. Ibid. 36. *Southern Exposure* (Working Women), Winter, 1981. 37. Miller, op. cit. p. 292. 38. Ibid. p. 342. 39. Ibid. p. 339. 40. *Resolutions...* (reprinted in this volume) 1928, Sec. I. 41. *Washington Informer* (a Black bi-weekly newspaper), 2-29, 8-4 1982, p. 18. 42. *Black Enterprise*, June 1982, p. 15. 43. Ibid. p. 15. 44. Earl Ofari, *The Myth of Black Capitalism*. 1970, p. 76. 45. *The Black Scholar*, July-August 1980, p. 7. 46. *National Black Monitor*, p. 14. 47. Thomas Blair, *Retreat to the Ghetto*, 1977, p. 123. 48. George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, 1971, p. 355. 49. Ibid, p. 317. 50. Ibid. p. 317. 51. *Resolutions....* (reprinted in this volume) 1930, Sec. 10. 52. *Workers' Tribune*. Bolshevik League of the U.S., July-August 1982, p. 4. 53. *Resolutions...* (reprinted in this volume) 1930, Sec. 12.

Response to a Black Revolutionary Nationalist



Published in this book are articles written by the Black revolutionary, Muhammad Ahmad. The writer represents one of the tendencies in the Black Liberation movement. The articles present many positive comments which, if implemented, would aid the process of developing proletarian hegemony in the Black Liberation Movement. The Bolshevik League does not agree with all the views promoted by the writer. In the following statement, we will speak to the *main* features that characterize the views of this political tendency in the Black Liberation Movement. We stress the *main* features because, although there are other minor, though important differences we have with the correspondent, we wish to elaborate on those views which have more of an immediate and widespread influence and which need to be debated in the Black revolutionary movement.

Muhammad Ahmad agrees that Marxism-Leninism is the theory that must guide our analysis. This must be a fundamental starting point for anyone who professes to be fighting for socialism. In the study of the history of the international communist movement,

proletarian revolutionary fighters will recognize that the greatest Marxist-Leninist authors on the national and colonial question are V.I. Lenin and J.V. Stalin. A study of both: 1.) the construction of the USSR, a former prison-house of nations, and 2.) the role of the International which united the peoples of the colonies, semi-colonies, and oppressed nations with the proletarian movements in the imperialist countries in one world party, the Communist International, which formulated the world program of communism on how to resolve the national-colonial questions in conjunction with the world socialist revolution, will reveal the authoritative roles of Lenin, and Stalin.

Likewise, there have been numerous other internationally-known authors who have attempted to “update,” or “modify” or “rectify,” or just simply *revise* the original Bolshevik line and policy on the national-colonial question. Authors from Bukharin to Trotsky, Khrushchev, Brezhnev to Mao-Enver Hoxha, Nkrumah-Castro, to the new generation of semi-Trotskyites, have all attempted to discredit and destroy the original Bolshevik principles on the national-colonial question.

One may preach “Chinese socialism,” another “Albanian socialism,” another “African socialism,” another “Pan-American socialism,” and another “New African socialism.” Yet, they are all nationalist adaptations of socialism, many a reaction and response to the national chauvinism of the new bourgeois dictatorship in the former socialist USSR. The Program of the 3rd Communist International preached only one type of socialism...

“Standing out against all these tendencies is *Proletarian Communism*. The powerful ideology of the international revolutionary working class; it differs from all these tendencies, and primarily from social-democracy, in that in complete harmony with the teachings of Marx and Engels, it conducts a theoretical and practical revolutionary struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and in the struggle applies all forms of proletarian mass action.”*¹

The articles by Muhammad Ahmad, “The Role of Black Marxist Leninists in the Black Liberation Movement” and “The Black Liberation Movement at the Crossroads: Organize Revolutionary Black

* For more on the Bolshevik principles on the national-colonial question in contrast to the various opportunist currents, we refer our readers to a presentation made by the Bolshevik Union of Canada, published in *International Correspondence*. No. 6.

Workers and the Black Unemployed,” present many concrete ideas and proposals on how to practically advance the Black national revolutionary movement. Tasks such as: training of cadres in the course of the national and class struggles; the need for a better grasp and implementation of Marxism-Leninism applied to the Black National question; the need to conduct serious M-L research and theoretical analysis; the elaboration of slogans and partial demands; the necessity to fuse communism with the workers’ movement; the necessity to correctly apply military strategy and form self-defense units; the need for Black national formations (like a BUF) and a national Black workers’ organization, in order to develop proletarian hegemony; the need to organize the unorganized and the unemployed; the need to concentrate in the Black Belt South where the oppressed Black Nation exists, i.e., the core of the Black national revolutionary movement the need to conduct systematic and consistent propaganda and agitation, especially aimed at the Black proletariat, with the immediate aim of rallying the advanced workers to communism; the need to master all forms of struggle both legal and illegal; the need for a “*Black revolutionary press*” as a tool to begin to unite the Black revolutionary movement. The ideas that Muhammad Ahmad has advanced in regard to these tasks should and must be discussed in the Black movement. It is not the first time that such tasks have been outlined.

But in view of the rising spontaneous upsurge of the Black masses in opposition to the capitalist offensive and increased national oppression, all real Black revolutionaries and revolutionary Communists must begin to address these tasks seriously with the aim of resolving them, and not allow for opportunism, careerism, and procrastination to dominate. The fact that a second rebellion has occurred in Miami (December, 1982) in a two-year span, yet no *real* revolutionary organization existed among the Black masses of Miami, is reflective of the need for a serious debate and process to organize and unite the Black revolutionary movement. Hence, the need for a “Black revolutionary press,” i.e., the concept of the Iskra principles, but modified and applied to the particularities of the Black Liberation movement, may be of key importance to organize the debate, the drawing of lines of demarcation, in order to formulate the correct program and tactics, and unify the Black Liberation Movement.

In the tasks elaborated by Muhammad Ahmad, there are various

points which we would differ with, or formulate differently, and some which we would emphasize more, in view of the period of disunity and ideological crisis that we are in. (Some specific points of difference are on the building of a market for the “Third World,” or on the promotion of electoral politics at this stage of crisis in the revolutionary movement.) We consider these differences, though important, of a secondary nature. More important to discuss are the differences we have with the fundamental analysis, slogans, and tasks that Muhammad Ahmad outlines. Namely: 1.) that the Black nation in the South is a colony; 2.) that the central slogan should be national independence; and 3.) that all Black communists must unite in a “New African” or Black Communist Party. Though perhaps formulated differently by Muhammad Ahmad, these tasks are generally agreed upon by many Black revolutionary nationalists.

Before proceeding to these three points, it is first important to differ with the comrade’s assertion that, “Much of the oppressor nation’s left agrees that New Africa (The Black Nation—BL) has the right to self-determination.” This is not accurate. Actually, the majority of America’s “left” opposes the struggle for self-determination, i.e., the right to secede as a separate nation in the Black Belt. The main reason being that the majority of the “left” denies the existence of an oppressed Black nation. All the social democratic organizations, the revisionist CPUSA, all the Trotskyite sects, various Maoist and pro-Albanian “communists” like the RCP, MLPUSA, or pro-Russian apologists and semi-Trotskyite groupings and circles like PLP, all deny that a Black nation exists and has the right to secede. Many use the term self-determination as a fetish, as a means of expressing “equal rights” or some reformist “cultural autonomy” for Blacks. And even those who have upheld the slogan of self-determination applied to the existence of a Black Nation, e.g., the Maoist CPML (which no longer exists), and the pro-Albanian CPUSA ML, and a few other circles, apply this task in a national reformist manner which actually liquidates the right to secession. Then, those Maoist formations from oppressed nationalities, like the Black Workers’ Congress, the Revolutionary Workers’ League, and the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers’ Organization, upheld self-determination for the Black Nation in words only, while in practice they developed a semi-Trotskyite and simplistic caricature of the science of Marxism-Leninism leading to the disintegration and destruction of these groups. With such traditions of the US “left” of the 1970’s, it is no

wonder that today we see that in reaction to this chauvinist legacy, there is a rise, once again, of narrow nationalist tendencies in the Black revolutionary movement. The Bolshevik analysis of the Black national question has not yet really been upheld nor implemented in such a way as to really develop a Black national revolutionary movement. Only reformist or semi-Trotskyite interpretations of the 1928 and 1930 Comintern Resolutions have been prevalent.* The rise today of concepts of a Black colony, independence, and the task of constructing a Black Communist Party is the response to the revisionist and Maoist movements of the 1970's in the same way that Malcolm X's and the Black Panther Party's revolutionary nationalism was a response to the years of revisionist betrayal by the CPUSA and the promotion of the national reformist politics of Dr. Martin Luther King.

So actually, and unfortunately, the chauvinist liquidation of the right to self-determination of the Black nation is what has predominated in the American "left." If the comrade meant the fetish-ist and bourgeois usage of the term "self-determination," then this is certainly so.

To proceed...

(1) *The analysis of "Black Colony."* Unlike the Pan-Africanists (whether they be the classical Garveyites or the "M-L" Pan-Africanists like the African Peoples' Socialist Party), who consider all Blacks in the US to be "colonized African people" whose only salvation lies in a "Free Africa" across the ocean, liquidating the right to self-determination of Blacks in the US in a specific territory, Muhammad Ahmad considers the oppressed Black nation in the Black Belt South as a domestic colony of US imperialism. At issue is not whether an oppressed Black nation exists in the Black Belt, but whether or not this captive nation is a *colony* in the scientific, Marxist-Leninist sense. Muhammad Ahmad states that, "Having clarity on this point is very important because it will help New African Communists to correctly apply the mass line and fully integrate themselves with the New African masses. When one understands that New Africans constitute a 'colony' of a new type (internal colony) then one can understand the socio-psycho-dynamics of the New African masses' thoughts, actions and behaviors... the Black liberation movement

*See the Introduction to this book regarding the historical national chauvinism of the U.S. left.

when viewed from the internal colony model is viewed as a *protracted national liberation revolution having its own independent laws of development... It aids New African Communists to understand that within this context they must also be nationalists demanding national independence (through armed struggle) for the colonial captive New African nation.* “²

The starting point which will determine the central task and the strategy and tactics in the Black Liberation Movement is therefore the existence of a domestic Black colony in the south. In Muhammad Ahmad’s article, “The Role of Black Marxist Leninists...,” the principal argument provided is Frantz Fanon’s view of Blacks in the US having a “colonized mentality” in order to understand the “self-destructive behavior of black people” (?) and the “socio-psycho-dynamics of the New African masses’ thoughts, actions and behavior.” Also presented as an argument connected to the existence of a Black colony is the Black proletariat’s status as an “underclass” and the existence of a “dual labor market.” These are the main points presented in the article (published in this volume) which seek to explain the existence and importance of addressing the Black national question as a *colonial question*. However, in the journal *Class Struggle* of the now-defunct social-chauvinist CPML, in the summer of 1980, Muhammad Ahmad elaborates more explicitly why a domestic Black colony exists. Regarding the “dual labor market” theory, the comrade explains this as “a labor market in which clean, skilled, and better paying jobs go to white workers and the dirty, unskilled, low paying jobs go to Third World workers. Additionally, Third World workers constantly make up a large percentage of the permanently unemployed.” The comrade seeks to show that this “underclass status” for the Black proletariat reveals the existence of “economic domestic colonialism,” most especially in the south where imperialism extracts super-profits. Along with economic domestic colonialism is the “institutionalized racism in the labor market” promulgated by the bourgeoisie. These above features combined with Stalin’s definition of a nation applied to the Black Belt South are the arguments presented to show the existence of a domestic Black colony. Muhammad Ahmad summarizes a Black domestic colony in this way:

“Black people in America are an oppressed nation of a new type having unique or special features to their colonial oppression. Black people are not only a nation within a nation, but are a ‘captive’ nation which was originally kidnapped and transplanted by force to America

from their original homeland, Africa. As a result they are within the geographical boundaries of the colonial mother country, the United States, the world's most powerful imperialist country."³

Yet all of the above combined does not prove the existence of a domestic Black colony. It only shallowly proves the existence of an oppressed Black nation in the Black Belt South. The Fanonian views of "colonized mentality" of Black masses do not *prove* the existence of a colony. What they do show is the effects of bourgeois ideology and racism on the Black masses. Puerto Ricans, Haitians, Dominicans, etc., too, were forced to come to the US by imperialism, and also are infected with bourgeois ideology or a "colonized mentality." But this does not mean that *in* the US, Haitians, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, etc., are a "domestic colony." All it proves is that this is one of the features of being an oppressed national minority. (This is aside from the point that we do not believe that Frantz Fanon had a scientific, *dialectical materialist* approach in his analysis of the psychology of Black people.)

The "Black underclass" or "dual labor market" theory, referring especially to the Black Belt South and the extraction of super-profits by US imperialism, is most certainly a real phenomenon that continues today. It does reveal the split in the working class, how Blacks form a significant part of the "lower and deeper" sections of the proletariat, and how the Black proletariat faces both national and class oppression. Muhammad Ahmad sees this "dual labor market" theory as being an expression of the following phenomenon of super-exploitation of an oppressed nation and/or colony by imperialism, as explained by Lenin:

"*Economically*, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressing nations receive crumbs of the *super-profits* which the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations obtain by the extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations. Moreover, economic data shows that a larger percentage of the workers of the oppressing nations become 'foremen' than the workers of the oppressed nations, i.e., a *larger* percentage rise to the position of *labor aristocracy*. This is a fact. *To a certain degree* the workers of the oppressing nation share with *their* bourgeoisie in the plunder of the workers (and the masses of the population) of the oppressed nations."⁴

But again, this does not prove the existence of a "colony." It only shows the existence of the plunder and super-exploitation of an oppressed nation *and or* a colony and how the bourgeoisie utilizes this

plunder to split their own proletariat by bribing its upper sectors and providing national privileges to its proletariat.

Stalin's criteria *is* applicable for the oppressed Black Nation in the Black Belt South. But it does not necessarily prove the existence of a "Black colony." Likewise, the importation of Black slaves by the system of colonialism does not necessarily prove the existence of a "domestic colony." What it does prove is that African peoples were colonized and their national development disrupted by the various colonial powers. But the imported Black slaves who were concentrated in the south did not constitute a "domestic colony" annexed by the U.S. Chinese people, too, were imported for slave-type labor, but this did not make them a colony nor an oppressed nation within the US.

If one were to address the Native American peoples, then one can see how their "homeland"—today known as the entire United States, including the Black Belt South—was annexed and the Native peoples reduced to a status of colonized peoples whose national development has been disrupted. Likewise, the southwest, originally Mexican territory, was annexed by the US. In this case, too, therefore, one may argue that the Chicano question may be a national-colonial question.

However, the oppressed Black Nation is not an annexed territory in the classical colonial sense. The 1930 Resolution of the Comintern on the Black question explains the following:

"It is not correct to consider the Negro zone of the South as a colony of the United States. Such a characterization of the Black Belt could be based in some respects only upon artificially construed analogies, and would create superfluous difficulties for the clarification of ideas. In rejecting this estimation, however, it should not be overlooked that it would be none-the-less false to try to make a fundamental distinction between the character of national oppression to which the colonial peoples are subjected and the yoke of other oppressed nations. Fundamentally, national oppression in both cases is of the same character, and is in the Black Belt in many respects worse than in a number of actual colonies."⁵

A study of Black history reveals not that a colony exists, but that an oppressed Black Nation was forged inside the US as a result of the years of slavery, the plantation system, and the defeat of the Reconstruction period by the developing US bourgeoisie. The defeat of the slavocracy and the emancipation of the Black slaves in the bourgeois democratic Civil War gave rise to the period known as

Reconstruction in the South. For the northern white bourgeoisie, the abolition of chattel slavery cleared the way for unchallenged capitalist penetration of the South and the capturing of a market under its complete domination. For Blacks, the brief period of Reconstruction allowed for the growth of democracy, of a Black bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, proletariat, a peasantry, etc. The beginnings of self-government in the Black Belt, a feature of democracy and self-determination, were allowed. Black nationhood was developing. However, this democratic process that was taking place in the South struck fear in the hearts of the victorious northern bourgeoisie.

The northern bourgeoisie sought victory over the slavocracy not with the purpose of genuinely emancipating the Blacks and allowing them to practice self-government and allowing the democratic growth of their nationhood, but in order to sweep away the slavocracy which was a hindrance to the expansion of capitalism. By 1877, the Hayes-Tilden gentlemen's agreement was passed which turned over the management of the South to the rising white bourgeois class of cotton traders, merchants, and manufacturers. This Southern bourgeoisie was dependent on the large-scale cotton plantations and was tied to the big financial-industrial centers of the northeast. The 1880's and 1890's brought about the transition of competitive capitalism into monopoly capitalism, i.e., imperialism. The South, the world's largest cotton market with *colonial-type* semi-feudal relations still in existence, was of extreme importance to the young imperialist bourgeoisie of the north. With the Hayes-Tilden agreement, Reconstruction came to an end. Northern capital, with the aid of the Southern white bourgeoisie, began to infuse "new blood" into the plantation system of the former slavocracy. The white landlords of the South became the indispensable ally of northern capitalism, whose object was to hold exclusive monopoly of the world's greatest source of raw cotton, and to maintain its cheap production for northern textile manufacturers.

The Morgans, Rockefellers, DuPonts, Mellons, et. al., became the real owners of the South. Aside from maintaining the semi-feudal agrarian system by financing the landlords' plantation system, imperialism began to develop industry that sought to plunder and extract the rich raw materials of the South, e.g., coal, oil, iron, rubber, etc.

The crushing of Reconstruction once again led to the enslavement of the nascent Black nation in the South. The process of class differentiation that was intensified during Reconstruction,

developing against the background of Jim Crow oppression, and in conditions of continued majority concentration of Blacks in the Black Belt, formed the objective conditions for the emergence of an oppressed and “captive” Black Nation. At the root of Black national oppression was the backward agrarian economy typical of colonial oppression. It is for this reason that one can say that the Black Belt is like a kind of “domestic colony” of American imperialism, made to function as the raw material appendage of the latter. The *character* of the oppression of Blacks in no sense differed from that of other colonial peoples. However, this does not mean that therefore the Black Nation *is* a colony. As the Comintern stated, “such a characterization...could be based... upon artificially construed analogies, and would create superfluous difficulties for the clarification of ideas.”

The characterization of the oppressed Black nation as a “domestic colony” has led many revolutionary nationalists to advance “independence” as the central slogan of the Black Liberation Movement.

(2) *Independence as Central Slogan.* Muhammad Ahmad correctly states that the slogan of self-determination is a bourgeois-democratic slogan. And then he continues with the following:

“But what is the dialectical/historical materialist Black proletarian demand? It is a demand that could not be achieved under capitalism, a demand that could be achieved short of armed struggle. It is the socialist demand, the demand of *national independence*... Thus, the right to Self-Determination would be the mass line and National Independence by any means necessary, the New African Communist Party line. The Right of Self-Determination is the petty-bourgeois demand and national independence the revolutionary demand.”

Today, with the fetish and bourgeois interpretation of the struggle for self-determination, we can understand the phenomenon of revolutionary nationalists counterposing the slogan of national independence to the slogan of self-determination. Today, we have the US imperialists supporting the “right to self-determination” of Cuba, Afghanistan, Poland, the Ukraine, etc., from “Soviet Communism.” We have French imperialism supporting the “right to self-determination” of Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, etc., from Yankee Imperialism. We also have Red Russian Imperialism supporting the “right to self-determination” of Latin American countries, African countries, etc., from western imperialism. In the US, we have practically the entire US “left” and the liberal sectors of the imperialist bourgeoisie

supporting “self-determination for Black people,” i.e., the right to have a few reforms and Black politicians. Yes, it is true that this democratic slogan has been bastardized and coopted even by imperialists. The slogan of national independence, when contrasted to the bourgeois reformist distortion of “self-determination,” can most certainly seem to be, or actually indeed be, a revolutionary slogan.

However, from the Marxist-Leninist perspective, it is theoretically wrong to identify national independence as a *revolutionary socialist* slogan in opposition to the democratic slogan of self-determination.

Stalin states: “When speaking of the right to self-determination, the leaders of the Second International did not as a rule even hint at the right to secede—the right to self-determination was at best interpreted to mean the right to autonomy in general... the vague slogan of self-determination was converted from an instrument for the liberation of nations, for achieving equal rights for nations, into an instrument for taming nations, an instrument for keeping nations in subjection to imperialism.” He affirms that the “vague slogan of the right of nations to self-determination has been replaced by the clear revolutionary slogan of the right of nations and colonies to secede, to form independent states.”⁶ Lenin too states clearly that, “If, in our political agitation, we fail to advance and advocate the slogan of the *right to secession, we shall play into the hands, not only of the bourgeoisie, but also of the feudal landlords and the absolutism of the oppressor nation.*”⁷

Marxism-Leninism teaches that the *socialist interpretation of the democratic right of nations to self-determination means the right to secession.* But it is wrong to conclude that secession itself, or, “national independence” is by itself a “socialist” slogan. NATIONAL independence is a national-democratic slogan that must be subordinated to the socialist revolution.

Actually, national independence is only one aspect, the fullest expression, of the right to self-determination. But another expression of self-determination is regional autonomy or federation with the former dominant nation. That is, self-determination can take the form of secession, regional autonomy, or federation. And it is up to the nation itself to decide in which form it seeks to implement its right to self-determination. Upholding the right to secession “is not equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states.” In fact, communists from the oppressed nations must, in

particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organizational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation.”⁸

While the communists of the oppressor nation must rally the proletariat to unconditionally uphold the right to secession of oppressed nations, the communists of the oppressed nations must unconditionally uphold the right for voluntary unity with the proletariat of the oppressor nation. Such dual communist tactics are implemented with the objective of uniting the workers of all nationalities in the fight to overthrow imperialism and establish socialism.

Applied to the Black National question in the US, we believe that the Comintern’s slogan on the Black Nation is still appropriate today. The CI considered “the right of self-determination of the Negroes as the *main slogan* of the Communist Party in the Black Belt...”⁹ The CI explained the right to self-determination to mean: (a) confiscation of the landed property of the white landowners and capitalists for the benefit of the Black farmers; (b) the establishment of state unity of the Black Belt; (c) and the complete and unlimited right of the Black majority to exercise governmental authority in the entire territory of the Black Belt, as well as to decide upon the relations between their territory and other nations, particularly the US. The overthrow of the class rule of the white bourgeoisie in the Black Belt is unconditionally necessary in order for Blacks to determine how they wish to implement their right to self-determination. This, however, also means the overthrow of US imperialist rule in the Black Belt. Hence, part of the struggle for self-determination of the Black nation is the struggle to rid the Black Belt of US armed forces. This is the communist interpretation of the struggle for self-determination of the Black Nation.

In upholding the right to secession of the Black Nation, the CI states: “...some misunderstanding has arisen from the failure to make a clear distinction between the demand for ‘right of self-determination’ and the demand for governmental separation, simply treating these two demands in the same way. However, these two demands are not identical. Complete right to self-determination includes also the right to governmental separation, but does not necessarily imply that the Negro population should *make use of this* right in all circumstances, that is, that it must actually separate or attempt to separate the Black Belt from the existing governmental federation with the United States. If it desires to separate, it must be free to do so; but if it prefers to remain federated with the United States it must also be

free to do that. This is the correct meaning of the idea of self-determination, and it must be recognized quite independently of whether the United States is still a capitalist state or whether a proletarian dictatorship has already been established there.”¹⁰

The development of a Black movement around the slogan of the right to self-determination would actually create proper conditions for the broad Black masses to decide how they wish to implement this right. The advocacy of federation or the advocacy of independence, while not taking into account the broad sentiments of the Black masses, is to actually violate this right to self-determination. Today objectively there does exist a struggle for self-determination. However, because the Black movement is dominated by the bourgeois national reformists, this struggle is left at a fight for civil rights, against racial discrimination, for voting rights, and for governmental posts. What has been neglected or just liquidated is the right to secession, the right to state unity of the Black Belt, and the confiscation of the landed property of the white landlords and bourgeoisie. But these national reformist leaders, because they do not pose the proper slogan clearly, i.e., the right to self-determination, that is, the right to secession of the Black Nation, the broad Black masses are left ignorant of their right to secession and are left tailing the Black reformist bourgeoisie.

The opposite error is the actual advocacy of national independence today. We do not oppose the right of Black revolutionaries to agitate for national independence. However, we do not consider this to be the central slogan to guide the Black Liberation Movement. What does advocacy of national independence actually mean today? Does this mean that a protracted national liberation struggle through armed struggle should begin right away? That a “Republic of New Africa” be declared by a few Black revolutionaries in some “liberated territory” in the Black Belt without the consent of the Black masses? That it is possible to begin “expropriations,” “armed struggle,” and set up a government without the participation of the Black proletariat and toilers? But what if the majority of the Black proletariat and toilers would prefer regional autonomy or federation? Would they be accused of having “colonized mentality”?

A movement around the slogan of self-determination for the Black Nation would be aimed at imperialism., upholding the right to secession, but would not implement this right until it was generally agreed upon by the Black masses and when it would be determined

that it would actually facilitate the destruction of US imperialism. Today, the advocacy of national independence can lead, and has led, many Black revolutionaries to actually implement this slogan through some version of protracted people's liberation warfare. This is in fact one of the principal arguments for the Black Liberation Army or the Freedom Fighters.

We believe that today, the proper slogan is Self-Determination for the Black Nation, and not national independence. The movement for self-determination must be led by the Black proletariat in order to ensure its final victory and merger with the proletarian revolution in the US. However, we repeat, we do not deny the right of Black revolutionaries to agitate for national independence. Likewise, if national independence is embraced by broad Black masses and proceeds in a progressive anti-imperialist direction, it would be our duty to support such a movement.

But today, we do believe that the Comintern's demand of self-determination as the central slogan for Black Liberation is still applicable.

(3) *The Building of a Black Communist Party.* In order to guarantee the achievement of national independence of the "Black colony," Muhammad Ahmad, as well as other revolutionary nationalists, advocates the formation of a Black Communist Party. Such an objective is the result of complete disgust with, and distrust of, the national chauvinism of the white "left." The failures and national reformist politics of the various Maoist multinational organizations have led many Black revolutionaries to conclude that their only salvation lies in the organization of only Black communists. In this respect, we agree that it is most especially the responsibility of Black communists and revolutionaries to begin to address this historical problem and fight for the development and implementation of a correct Bolshevik line and policy in regard to the formation of an organization of professional revolutionaries and its relationship to the Black movement, an organization that will truly act as a vanguard, which will struggle for the Black proletariat to assume hegemony of the Black Liberation Movement, and unite with the rest of the multi-national proletariat *on an equal basis*, in the fight for socialism in the US.

We agree with Muhammad Ahmad that since the early 1960's there have been several Black formations with rich experiences that need to be summed up today. Groups such as SNCC, the Black Panther Party, League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Black Workers'

Congress, Black Liberation Army, Republic of New Africa, the African People's Party, the Revolutionary Workers League, etc. There have also been united front type formations like the African Liberation Support Committee, the National Black Assembly, and today's National Black United Front and the National Black Independent Political Party. We would only add that comrades should also examine some of the positive and negative experiences of the old CPUSA (while it was still in the Comintern) with the Black Liberation Movement.

Such activity today requires Black communists and revolutionaries to get together in (a) a journal or publication whose purpose is to conduct debate, discussion, analysis, topical exposures, while providing organizational leadership to the Black movement, and (b) participating jointly in the *actual* organization of the Black proletariat and national revolutionary movement today. The discussion and debate must be brought to every rank-and-file member of a mass organization and should not remain solely in the minds of the few leading intellectuals. Let it be broad and democratic. Only the careerists would fear such democratic activity.

But an aim must be agreed upon. The object of such activity is to develop a correct line and policy to guide the Black Liberation Movement. This process should include all the Black revolutionaries and communists who agree that an oppressed Black Nation exists and has the right to secession. In this respect, we agree that the swamp of revisionists, Trotskyites, social democrats, and the chauvinist Maoists, etc., must be excluded from this process. Too many experiences have occurred where their activities have been solely to provoke and disrupt any attempts by Black revolutionaries to organize themselves and the Black masses. We know that Yankee Imperialism and its opportunist agents have a stake in preventing the organization of a Black revolutionary movement.

Hence, in the absence of a true Bolshevik Party that would have a correct Program for Socialist Revolution, a correct Program on the National Question in the US, a Party of the multi-national proletariat, the Bolshevik League supports the possibilities, and even the necessity, for some formation of Black revolutionaries and communists whose objectives are to advance the Black Liberation struggle and to merge it with the socialist revolution in the US. We do not expect Black revolutionaries to trust any revolutionary communist multi-national organization just on the basis of its declarations. Such unity

and mutual trust will develop only in the course of joint struggle in the debate and mass work, and against all forms of opportunism.

However, we do differ with the views of Muhammad Ahmad and several Black revolutionaries who have concluded that the only guarantee for success of the Black Liberation Movement in the US is the separation of the advanced detachment of the Black proletariat from the rest of their class brothers and sisters—the whites, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Dominicans, Asians, Native Americans, immigrants, etc.—into a Black Communist Party.

On the basis of the historical experiences of the international workers' and communist movement—from Russia to the US to Europe to Africa to Asia to Latin America—the separation of one section of the proletariat within one state boundary into a separate party is a harmful and dangerous policy.

We all agree that the October Revolution led by Lenin's and Stalin's Bolshevik Party is the model for proletarian revolution in our epoch. By now we all should know how Russia, more than the US, was a prison-house of nations. Key in the success of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution was the formulation of a Marxist National Program. The Bolshevik Party was actually called the "Russian Bolshevik Party." Why? Because the principal rulers of the *one* dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in this prison-house of nations were from the great-Russian nation. This dictatorship of the bourgeoisie enslaved the Ukrainians, Georgians, Jews, Arabs, etc., etc. More than 13 oppressed nations existed within the state boundaries of Russia. And this does not include the numerous oppressed national minorities and peoples. The phenomenon of many nationals of a particular oppressed nation dispersed in other areas outside of their homeland was also very prevalent. Yet, one Russian Bolshevik Party united and led workers of all nationalities in the October Revolution.

Lenin commented: "The Great-Russian and Ukrainian workers must work together, and, as long as *they live in a single state* (our emphasis—BL), act in the closest organizational unity and concert."¹¹

Stalin, the actual architect of the Bolshevik policy on the National Question, stated: "We have to still settle the question of how to organize the proletariat of the various nations into a single, common party. One plan is that the workers should be organized on national lines—so many nations, so many parties. That plan was rejected by the Social-Democrats (i.e., the communists—BL).

Experience has shown that the organization of the proletariat of a given state on national lines tends only to destroy the idea of class solidarity. All the proletarians of all the nations in a given state must be organized in a single, indivisible proletarian collective.”¹²

Elsewhere, Stalin states: “We know where the demarcation of workers according to nationalities leads to. The disintegration of a united workers’ party, the splitting of trade unions according to nationalities, aggravation of national friction, national strike-breaking, complete demoralization within the ranks of Social-Democracy... The only cure for this is organization on the basis of internationalism. To unite locally the workers of all nationalities of Russia into *single, integral* collective bodies, to unite these collective bodies into a *single* party—such is the task.”¹³

In outlining this task, Stalin makes note of the importance of such a proletarian party taking into account the National Program and particularities of the regions where the various oppressed nations exist. He states: “It goes without saying that a party structure of this kind does not preclude, but on the contrary presumes, wide autonomy for the *regions* within the single integrated party.”¹⁴ In order to further understand the correct organizational relations within a Bolshevik Party, one must have a correct grasp and understanding of the Bolshevik principles of democratic centralism. (We caution the reader not to view democratic centralism in the way that the various Maoist formations implemented it.)

In the same article, Stalin continues: “When the workers are organized according to nationality they isolate themselves within their national shells, fenced off from each other by organizational barriers. The stress is laid not on what is *common* to the workers but on what distinguishes them from each other. In this type of organization the worker is *primarily* a member of his nation: a Jew, a Pole, and so on.”¹⁵

In the formulation of this *internationalist policy*, the Bolsheviks had to combat the *bourgeois nationalist policy* of the Jewish workers, known as the Bund. The Bund, too, preceded their organizational advocacy for a separate Party with a wrong analysis of Jewish nationhood. (See Stalin’s “Marxism and the National Question.”) This Bundist deviation was defeated by the Bolsheviks. Again, the Bolshevik policy led all the nations within Russia in the successful armed insurrection against the imperialist-bourgeois dictatorship, an experience from which we need to learn more.

In the US, there also are other oppressed nations aside from the Black Nation. The Chicanos in the Southwest form an oppressed nation. Native Americans, too, are oppressed peoples fighting for self-determination. Then there are the numerous oppressed national minorities. But there only exists one bourgeois state apparatus that acts in unison in maintaining the national oppression of all these nationalities.

If the Black proletariat has a right to a separate communist party, should not the Chicanos, Native Americans, and other nationally-oppressed proletarians also have their own communist parties? Imagine the following scenario in an auto plant in Detroit. The Black worker belongs to his Black Communist Party. The Chicano worker belongs to his Chicano Communist Party, the Native American worker belongs to his Native Communist Party. The Puerto Rican may belong to the already existing Puerto Rican Socialist Party (which exists in the US due to the revisionist theory of a divided Puerto Rican Nation in the US). The white worker belongs to his American Communist Party. Let us say an injustice occurs to a group of Black workers. The Black Party mobilizes for a strike action. But the other “communist” parties disagree with the tactics and so they refuse to join “in solidarity” with the Black Party. The Blacks go at it alone, while the others maybe scab on the strike. All that exists is really nationalism and divisions. The only one who benefits from this is the capitalist owner. The motto “workers of all nationalities, unite” is transformed into a joke.

Also, such division will not resolve the problems of chauvinism of the white workers. On the contrary, it could further fan the flames of chauvinism. Likewise, such division will not resolve the problem of narrow nationalism amongst the oppressed nationalities. The various versions of bourgeois nationalism become predominant, rather than proletarian internationalism.

One may argue, “all the various parties can establish a coordinating united front!” No thanks. One need only recall the “Rainbow Coalition” of the late 1960’s that sought to unite the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords Party, the Brown Berets, the Asians, the Patriot Party, the white SDS, etc., to examine how short-lived such nationalist association would be.

Even if one were to narrow the concept of a Black Communist Party to be only in the Black Belt, there would still be fundamental problems. Would the white proletarians in the Black Belt also be

members of this Black Communist Party? If not, then we would assume that the white proletarians would belong to the American Communist Party. Then, there would still be the problem of two parties in the Black Belt. But then, how about if the whites were to belong to a Black Communist Party in the Black Belt or the South? It may become possible that whites would make up the majority or equal numbers with the Blacks. Then what actual problem would this resolve in terms of guaranteeing Black Liberation?

The Black proletariat has a great double historical mission. The Comintern stated it as follows: "The Negro working class has reached a stage of development which enables it, if properly organized and well led, to fulfill successfully its double historical mission: (a) to play a considerable role in the class struggle against American imperialism as an important part of the American working class; and (b) to lead the movement of the oppressed masses of the Negro population."¹⁶

In order to defeat US imperialism in the Black Belt, in the Southwest, and throughout the US, the multi-national proletariat must unite in one "army," with one "general staff." A war cannot be won with many "national headquarters." In order to overthrow imperialism, we need one true multi-national Bolshevik Workers Party with a correct Bolshevik Program, strategy, tactics, and organizational principles.

In the struggle to develop the Black national revolutionary movement, and unite it with the proletarian revolution to overthrow American capitalism, it is the responsibility of all revolutionary communists to combat the various opportunist deviations that can deroute our struggle. The Bolshevik League considers the struggle against national chauvinism and racism and support of self-determination for the oppressed Black Nation a most important component for the accomplishment of socialism in the US. Without paying proper attention to the Black national movement, the struggle for socialism in the US will be an impossibility.

However, in the struggle to develop the leading role of the Black proletariat in the Black revolutionary movement, we call on the Black communists and revolutionaries to beware and fight against any bourgeois nationalist and separatist tendencies that would hinder the objective of overthrowing imperialism, liberating the oppressed nations, and the uniting of the proletariat and toilers of all nationalities in the struggle to construct socialism.

We present the above remarks with the outlook of spreading this

debate and discussion. We believe that more of this type of activity must continue in the US.

Notes

1. *Program, Theses and Resolutions of the VIth Congress*, reprinted by *International Correspondence*, p. 105. 2. All references to Muhammad Ahmad's positions are taken from the articles printed in this book, unless otherwise specified. 3. "On the National Question: The Struggle for a Scientific Approach to Black Liberation in the US," *Class Struggle*, Summer 1980. 4. "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'," *Collected Works*, 19:242, International Publishers, 1942. 5. *Resolutions on the Negro Question*, 1930, Sec. II, 5. 6. "Concerning the Presentation of the National Question," *Works*, 5:53. 7. "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *LCW* 20:412. 8. *LCW*, 22:146, 148. 9. *Resolutions...*, 1930, Sec. 11,6. 10. *Ibid.*, Sec. 11,8. 11. "Critical Remarks on the National Question," *LCW*. 20:33. 12. "The Seventh (April) Conference of the RSDLP-B," *Works*, 3:58. 13. "Marxism and the National Question," *Works*, 2:377-8. 14. *Ibid.* p. 378. 15. *Ibid.* p. 379. 16. *Resolutions...*, 1928, Sec. 1.

**Statement and Correspondence
Regarding the Black National Movement**

by Muhammed Ahmad

The Role of Black Marxist-Leninists in the Black Liberation Movement

Following are a statement (written in the spring of 1982) and a letter (written in the summer of 1982) by Muhammad Ahmad.

These are some notes on the subject of building a clandestine scientific revolutionary black Marxist-Leninist movement within the black Liberation Movement. It is hoped that this movement will culminate with the development of a clandestine black Marxist-Leninist Party, National Liberation Front along with the formations already in existence.

There have been many attempts to build a black revolutionary party in the black liberation movement. The Black Revolutionary Party is seen as a necessary step of guiding the black liberation movement to a revolutionary goal of self-determination and socialism and catalyze the entire proletariat in the U.S. towards revolution. There is much history of the development towards building a black revolutionary party which we need to sum up in the near future. But briefly speaking, the process to build the black revolutionary party began in 1962 and reached its climactic stage by 1972. The era from 1972 to 1982 has been the lull period giving way to the re-organization or rebuilding period from 1982 onwards.

Several weaknesses of previous attempts to build the Black Revolutionary Party were due to:

1. Immature and lack of creative application of the science of Marxism-Leninism both politically and militarily.
2. Lack of building a consistent Black Revolutionary press to build the party.
3. Lack of scientific economic planning/application of Marxism-Leninism to unique situation of New Africans inside the U.S.
4. Immature application of protracted people's war and lack of a flexible policy towards party building.

Rather than describe all the various attempts at party building we would like to talk about the *process of party building*. Most successful parties have taken time *to train* their cadre before engaging in major confrontations with the state. This is a basic for the Leninist Party. But lacking a sufficient understanding of Leninism we failed to scientifically apply this. Secondly, successful parties have also concentrated on base building in a specific town or region of their country and then expanded; have chosen a specific sector of the population to first recruit and train and had a specific plan for stages of growth. *Also, they have incorporated the labor process in the dynamic of their party building*. There are several things we must do. Spread Marxist-Leninist ideas in a creative way so that our people can comprehend the theory, science and art. Create a process that leads to creating the conditions that a clandestine black Marxist-Leninist party can come into being.

These notes take the position that all efforts thus far in the last 20 years was pre-party development.

What we need to do is a scientific demographic, statistical analysis of New Africans in the U.S. Then we can see what we have to work with, where our greatest potential lies, strengths and weakness, etc. a really creative approach that is. But briefly speaking the following breaks down. Blacks presently make up 11.7% of the total population of the U.S. There are approximately 27 million blacks in the U.S. of which (15 million) 52% are living in the South. There are approximately 8.6 million blacks in the labor force (five million in the South, 3 million in the North in the 10 major urban areas). There are 750,000 black prisoners in the U.S., there are 1,062,000 black college students of which 848,000 are in white colleges, and 214,000 are in the black colleges. It is the position of this writer that Marxist movements are essentially revolutionary intellectual movements that fuse with the proletariat/peasantry and in order to be successful, these movements *must take firm roots among the future intelligentsia*. Therefore, it is imperative that the initial process begin among black college students, to train with a *systematic plan of party building* to go into a *specific region* to build a base for the eventual emergence—through action of the party.

So the process of building black Marxist-Leninist/Rev. Nat. study circles among black college students is vitally important. Through the study of data the party building plan can take more concrete shape. What is that? First, the goal to build a black revolutionary

press in the target area. This entails training revolutionary writers, reporters, editors, journalists, whose life time mission will be to do this even though this may not be their job.

Next is the goal of “fusing”: what is this? This means training cadre to go into a town/given area, make an assessment, “get a job”; *establish a social network*, join local “respectable” organizations, church, etc., and eventually build “local” cadre through “informal political network, he/she establishes; fused to strategic *“labor process”* of given town or region.

So we have to say a process has to be established. That is socialist activities of New African communists should consist:

1. Spreading by propaganda the teachings of scientific socialism. We must train political theoreticians who can re-write or write the basic concepts of scientific socialism in New African language that flows in harmony with the “psychic pulse beat” (Nommo) of the New African Nation. Until this is done scientific socialism will just remain a lifeless dogma of the isolated petty bourgeois black radical intelligentsia/intellectual proletariat.

So this means the theory writing of basic ideas that the New African worker can relate to because it is “broken down in his experience.”

2. Spreading among black workers a proper understanding of the present social and economic system, how it works, domestic colonialism (national oppression), race, class and sex analysis; the understanding of the various classes, nations in U.S. society, of their interrelations, of the struggle between these classes, nations, of the role of the New African working class, working class of other oppressed nations/national minorities and of the entire multi-national proletariat in the U.S. imperialist state, the past and future of capitalism and the “We Will Win” paradigm in simplified terms, the connection of the BLM (Black Liberation Movement—Ed.) to the world socialist revolution.

This will take a different form of writing, sometimes mass and sometimes semi-mass. But many times it will be agitational. There are some very good attempts being carried out presently at this level.

3. An understanding of the historical task of international socialism, contradictions in the socialist movement, the transition from socialism to communism; (the fact that communism doesn’t and can’t exist until the total overthrow of international capitalism and the elimination of the class system) and the historical mission of the New

African working class, in particular within the contemporary period of world history in regards to the overthrow of world capitalism.

Because New African Marxists are young theoretically, we have failed in the 70's and 80's to fuse Marxism-Leninism with the daily lives of New African workers. Marxism-Leninism has thus far been applied mechanically and not creatively. For examples of creatively applying theory to fuse with the mass spontaneous struggles of the black working/underclass, the 1960's should be reviewed by New African communists. While we were weaker theoretically, we were sounder in practical organizing. Two organizations that should be studied for approach are the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) and the Black Workers Congress (BWC). So our main task after forming a New African Communist nuclei is combining propaganda with agitation among black workers (advanced and intermediate) dealing with the present political conditions in the country and the present level of development of the masses (backward element) of black workers. This is important because for New African Communists to draw correct assessments, strategy and tactics, we must know where the majority of black workers heads are at (political consciousness) and not assume they are where we would hope for them to be.

Okay, let's look at our present situation; the real situation as it is: the situation New African/Communists have to deal with. The political consciousness of our people is at low ebb at a time when they are being physically, politically, militarily and economically assaulted by either the legal or illegal army of the racist/capitalist ruling class. 60% of New African youth are unemployed but how many New African communists are organizing black unemployment, or marches? The KKK has increased its military aggression (offensive) against the black nation, particularly in the black belt south, but how many New African communists are establishing para-military units or mass defense units? The other factor is the factor of growing fascism (rightward turn) and the fact that white comrades have not built a base among white workers yet.

So the process of party building should begin on a local area in the national territory. First, we have to understand that we, as New African communists have to bear the responsibility of "fusing in," that is working with, constantly projecting political ideas into the proletariat. So, New African communists have to place heavy emphasis on developing a *local Black workers newsletter* which speaks

specifically to their level of consciousness. This newsletter should be systematically given out at the concentrated work sites. Also, the newsletter will be expanding workers opinion (consciousness) by showing the inter-relation of things. We should move very slow but very methodical. So after developing the initial nuclei, New African communists should develop New African workers nuclei whose purpose after intensive ideological training would be to develop both New African communists and the intermediate and backward sections of the New African working class. This may take from 2 years to 3 1/2 years preparation work. New African communists engage in point of production work because it is of strategic importance, to build the labor power to effectively paralyze the system. But political consciousness of New African workers is tied to the fact that all New Africans face racial exploitation, therefore, political consciousness is also very much tied to the political consciousness of mass struggle presently taking place. So after initial development the question of "fusion" is utmost of importance.

So the tasks of New African Marxist-Leninists in this period is a dread one. It is to join in the motion to build a National Black United Front, but to understand unless a black revolutionary party is in firm existence with thousands of cadres and a mass revolutionary (political) black workers organization developing, that motion cannot be effectively advanced to its historical conclusion, one of self-determination and class struggle. *So the secondary task of New African Communists is to build a black workers organization and to politicalize (train) the broad sectors of the community through the existence and motion to build the mass black political party.*

Our task is to merge our activities with the practical, everyday questions of working class life, to help the workers understand these questions, to draw the workers attention to the most important abuses, employers more precisely and practically, to develop among the workers consciousness of their solidarity, consciousness of the common interests and common cause of all the... workers as a united working class that is part of the international army of the proletariat.¹

A central goal of New African communists is to organize study circles among Now African workers (particularly in the national territory to establish secret connections between them and the clandestine New African communist cadre; to publish and distribute literature particularly geared to New African workers, to eventually connect centers, to agitate among New African workers and train a body

of revolutionary New African trade union agitators.

Now comes the key question: where to concentrate our work. This is very important for New African communists, particularly in the national territory because there are incorrect ideas about base building particularly among some nationalists who have a pro-1970's economists approach to base building.

First, New African communists need to understand that the Maoist model of basing the revolutionary organization on the rural proletariat/peasantry in rural areas just will not work in Amerikkka because our people's organizational strength is in the urban inner city areas. Second, it is important to defeat the concept of revolutionary lumpen proletariat being the vanguard and mobile guerrillas advancing the struggle. This leads to illusion and delusion. It is small, narrow, "advanced armed cadre" thinking. It is not correctly applying the military science of Marxism-Leninism based on the "objective materialist" conditions, political consciousness of the vast majority of the black proletariat. *New African communists must be good at drawing unorganized and backward workers permanently into the ranks of the party.*

Socialist Revolution is both an art and a science. Therefore, the organizational assessment of New African communists of where to proceed must be based on scientific data, trends and motion... The general flow of internal expanding capital is in the migration of industry from the North to the Sunbelt/Southwest/mid-Southeast section of the country. Some of the reasons for this are that runaway shops are escaping higher wages demanded by unions for their workers in the northeastern and north central sections of the country. At the same time the central concentration of the increasingly important petroleum industry draws capital to the mid- southwest to interlock, invest and reinvest. One industry gives birth to and expands another industry in many cases. This is happening as the telecommunications (computer, etc.) concentrates around the petroleum industry to make it more efficient.

Therefore, as industry migrates to the south, sometimes rural south, the black rural proletariat is rapidly displaced from the land and migrates to large southern cities to look for work. The highest concentration of New Africans in the next ten to twenty years will be in the major southern cities. It is here in the southern cities that you find a high concentration of black workers working in factories (sweat shops) for low wages, usually non-unionized. It is here that

great potential lies. New African communism must not dissipate its forces; it must concentrate its activities on the *urban southern black proletariat*. It is the urban black proletariat who are most prone to accept scientific socialism, revolutionary nationalist ideas; is the most developed intellectually, politically and by virtue of its numbers and concentration in the country's future/presently developing political centers holds strategic balance of untapped power.

The creation of a dynamic revolutionary organization among factory black urban workers in the south in particular and in the north in general, is therefore the first and most urgent task confronting New African socialism today. But, while recognizing the necessity of concentrating our forces we do not in the least wish to suggest that the New African communists should ignore other strata of the New African proletariat and working class. Usually a New African factory worker comes into direct contact with the rural population through the New African factory worker's family line in the country.

Both economic and political agitation are equally necessary to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat; both economic and political agitation are equally necessary for guiding the class struggle of the... workers, because every class struggle is a political struggle. But arousing the class consciousness of the workers, by organizing, discipling and training them for united action and for the fight for the ideals of Social-Democracy, both kinds of agitation will enable the workers to test their strength on immediate issues and immediate needs to wring partial concessions from their enemy and thus improve their economic conditions, compel the capitalists to reckon with the strength of the organized workers, compel the government to extend the worker's rights, to pay heed to their demands and keep the government in constant fear of the hostility of the masses of workers led by a strong Social-Democratic organization.²

While New African Communists do not feel it is strategic at this time to send their forces into rural areas, they do feel the rural areas (especially in the black belt South) are very important. So New African Communists will try to bring about an awareness among the advanced black urban workers, seasonal rural workers and rural semi-proletariat, so when these workers come in contact with the more backward strata of the black proletariat, they will educate them with the ideas of national oppression, race and class struggle, socialism and the political road to national liberation in general and the particular role the black proletariat will play in accomplishing that task. In

the rural areas New African Communists will emphasize political economy; building of parallel politico-economic/cultural institutions, rather than emphasis on overtly taking over the superstructure/political apparatus. The reasons for this thinking is multi. First, the counter-revolutionaries are strongly entrenched in the rural area. Any political challenge is immediately seen as a threat and they politically go outside the existing political structure either through terror/legal/economic/ political means to keep blacks from having power. Examples of this can be seen with the shifting of power to county/regional boards, rise of KKK terror, the cutting off of economic aid to areas where blacks gain political control, the frame of black politicians, elected officials; e.g. Eddie Carthan, former mayor of Tuchula, Miss.

So while folks can be politicalized through an independent black political party, the actual moving for seizure of political power in the rural areas in essence constitutes a struggle to create a “liberated areas (base) of the provisional Republic of New Africa. So to prepare the masses for that quantitative leap in struggle, a tactical protracted plan has to be carried out in the rural areas first. What form should that plan take? It should emphasize the building of economic coops centered around retention of black ownership of land, developing a collective work process (socialism in practice); the integration of an independent “black” market between town (city) and countryside (selling of food stuff) to urban consumers. Also, black land development on a scientific basis for the producing of food stuffs, natural materials, to the international market of the Third World and also investment and building of industry from Third World tied to the domestic market. The New African Cultural Revolution movement is also very important to the rural areas. By changing the lifestyle of people in the rural areas, New African Communists will also change the people’s consciousness and will prepare them to support their right to self-determination and struggle for national independence. Within this is preventive health, acupuncture, herbs, Tai Chi, scientific diet, literacy campaigns and political/cultural education. Also important is the development of community militias and the systematic dissemination of Wu Shu (War Arts).

Legal Struggle and Mass Armed Resistance, Transitional Stages: Our National Liberation revolutions for Reparations, self-determination and independence has taken many zig zag forms and had several high tides and setbacks. The 1960’s one day will be recorded

as the first mass revolutionary (insurrectionary) period and the 1970's as the lull aftermath era. It is important for cadres to understand that before another mass revolutionary movement can occur, that can be sustained to transforming into mass armed resistance against the state stage, the legal means of struggle must be exhausted, *at least in the minds of our people first*.

Reform struggles under capitalism to improve the lives and conditions of the people are important in themselves. They should not be seen merely as a means to an end. The struggle for reforms limits the capitalists in their relentless drive to intensify exploitation of the working class. Material gains in our share of the social product and advances in democratic rights give workers a stronger base from which to fight.

At the same time, revolutionaries have objectives beyond immediate reforms. We know that capitalism is fundamentally incapable of satisfying even many of the most immediate requirements of the people, especially in times of periodic recession and high unemployment, and because of capitalism's inherent drive for greater productivity and profitability. Revolutionaries at the same time can and must have patience to unite with the masses of people who as yet do not share our perspective but who are making justifiable and important demands that arise out of the logic of capitalist oppression.³

The movement for national democratic human rights cannot be achieved within the framework of U.S. monopoly capitalist imperialism. But our people must struggle to change *institutional racism* and class oppression within the present system in order to understand the system cannot survive without race and class oppression, and that only violent overthrow of the capitalist state can achieve human rights and self-determination. This means black revolutionaries must master all forms of struggle, including mass legal struggle. Transitional political demands are very key for raising the consciousness of the proletariat. Presently the demand for *Proportional Political Representation* for Afro-Americans in the political system, particularly in the South, unionization of black workers in the South, Economic Democracy, democratic rights at the workplace and an Economic Bill of Rights for the Poor are key political demands to advance the struggle forward.

Master all forms of organization of the proletariat without exception and all forms (fields) of the movement, of the struggle. Forms of the movement: parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, legal and

illegal. Learn to adapt oneself to rapid changes from some of the movement to others, or to supplement some forms with others. Learn to combine legal forms with illegal, parliamentary with extra-parliamentary forms...⁴

Cadres should be in the forefront of building independent political parties particularly in the national territory (south) and registering the masses to vote. By breaking the political allegiance of the black nation with the two capitalist parties, the struggle for national independence and reparations can be able to advance. Also, through the formation of mass people's parties, the question of Reparations for War Crimes committed against the black nation by the U.S. imperialist government and self-determination for the domestically oppressed nations can emerge inside the political and public communication process.

This along with mass agitation for human rights, *Reparations* and self-determination could lead to a mass black national independence movement and another revolutionary period.

Methods of proceeding:

Agitation among the advanced sections of the black proletariat is the accurate way to arouse the entire black proletariat. The dissemination of socialist ideas and ideas of national oppression, race and class struggle among urban workers will inevitably cause those ideas to flow to smaller and wider areas. Essentially it means these ideas taking deep root among the more "politically aware" elements and spreading, throughout the consciously aware of the black workers and of the New African revolution.

"Advanced workers are the future cadre of the Communist Party. They are the practical leaders of the reform struggles who may not be the most politically sophisticated or well read, but are conscious of the class nature of their battle, are consistent in their commitment, and open to Communist ideas. The struggle to win the advanced workers to communism forges the material link between reform and revolution and is decisive in building Marxist-Leninist leadership in mass struggles for reform. In winning the advanced, it is essential that communists not substitute themselves for the advanced workers as leaders of reform struggles, nor remove advanced workers from their base by isolating them in the tasks of theoretical development and party building... This can only happen in the course of uniting most closely with these workers and other advanced elements to provide assistance and direction to the struggles that they are prepared to

undertake.

“Because the political level of even the ‘advanced’ is not high, our ability to develop strategies to unify the advanced with the great number of potentially organizable ‘middle’ forces around issues that advanced workers do see as the needs of their class.”⁵

While concentrating all its forces on activity among factory workers, New African Communists are ready to support and unite with other black revolutionaries. In forming alliances, New African communists do not feel that alliances can, should or will lead to compromises or concessions on matters of theory, program or slogan. Convinced that the doctrine of scientific socialism, national oppression, race and class struggle is the only revolutionary theory that can serve as the beacon for the revolutionary movement, New African Communists will exert every effort to spread this doctrine, to guard it against false interpretation and will combat every attempt to steer the black working class from its revolutionary mission.

In order to do this, propaganda should be directed primarily toward winning advanced workers to wage a protracted struggle for national independence of the provisional Republic of New Africa and communism, but at the same time it must be understandable and appealing to the broad “middle forces” as well. This approach requires a consistent and responsible approach to the question of working with reformist leaders. In attempting to do so, we will find a real test of our political maturity and flexibility—and also perhaps of the strength of our understanding of and commitment to our political principles. In general, New African Communists’ approach to working with reformist leaders should be to unite with their positive aspects, whether substantial or merely superficial public rhetoric. In the latter case, New African Communists’ support reflects what people believe the leaders stand for and part of our strategy must be to push the contradiction between assertion and action. In conducting propaganda among the workers, New African Communists deal with the practical political problems of the masses. Simultaneously with the dissemination of scientific socialism, New African Communists constantly propagate the “*We Will Win*” paradigm (struggle for national independence through armed struggle/general strikes) among the black working class.

New African Communists strive to spread an understanding of New Africans’ relationship to the system; domestic colonialism (internal colony), race, class and sex oppression; what it means, the

necessity to overthrow it and the impossibility of waging a successful struggle for the workers' cause without achieving self-determination and national independence from the capitalist system. In conducting agitation among black workers on their immediate economic demands, New African Communists inseparably link this with agitation of the immediate political needs of New African people. Black political power and proportional representation take on a new light within this context.

“Just as there is no issue affecting the life of the workers in the economic field that must be left unused for the purpose of economic agitation, so there is no issue in the political field that does not serve as a subject for political agitation.”⁶

In this respect New African Communists constantly try to show by leadership that the black liberation movement should try to alter structural changes in the labor market. This can be advanced by organizing black workers to wage scientific economic and “political” struggle at the workplace. By doing this, the black liberation movement will also be affecting other workers to see the true class contradictions within the U.S. imperialist state.

The question of colonialism, national, race and class oppression: The majority of communists in the U.S. now agree that New Africans are an oppressed “nation within a nation,” but very few, including New African Communists, believe New Africans constitute a colonized nation within a nation (an internal domestic colony) within the U.S. imperialist state. Having clarity on this point is very important because it will help New African Communists to correctly apply the mass line and fully integrate themselves with the New African masses. When one understands that New Africans constitute a “colony” of a new type (internal colony), then one can understand the socio/psycho-dynamics of the New African masses' thoughts, actions and behaviors.

So far in the history of progressive movements within the imperialist state only petty bourgeois and revolutionary nationalists have mastered these dynamics and created black nationalist mass movements that encompassed millions within a broad movement.

Domestic colonialism also provides a rational basis for understanding the present and increasing self-destructive behavior of black people. Only approaching the subject from the Fanonian view of what happens to colonized people can black people's behavior crisis be scientifically explained. Also by applying the internal colonial model

with its psychodynamics, explanations are given for false class consciousness for both colony and oppressor nation and lack of national consciousness on the part of the black proletariat. Therefore, the black liberation movement when viewed from the internal colony model is viewed as a *protracted national liberation revolution* having its own independent laws or development independent of the oppressor nation proletariat.

This does not mean the interest of the New African national liberation revolution coincide with the interest of the oppressor nation proletariat, but also means at times its interest based on material relationships (base) may also conflict meeting head on. Thus it is when New Boundaries advances the view that most Marxists are weak on the theory of Land Use (value) and (hat it is the basis of New African oppression, we have a context in which to draw scientific conclusions from its theory. Also, we are better able to understand the permanent underemployment of New Africans, keeping them as a marginal sector of the proletariat: an *underclass*. Thus the dual (split) labor market theory fits into a historical materialist context. It aids New African Communists to understand that within this context they must also be nationalists, demanding national independence (through armed struggle) for the colonial captive New African nation.

Self-Determination or National Independence?

In order for New African Communists to lead New Africa to socialist revolution they must know how to concretely and creatively transform the petty bourgeois demands of our nation into revolutionary demands.

Much of the oppressor nation left agree that New Africa has the right to self-determination. But for New African Communists the question is much more fundamental. How does the demand for the Right to Self-Determination become a practical slogan? First, New African Communists must realize that the Right to Self-Determination is a bourgeois democratic demand. It is a demand that all social strata of New Africa can be united around. But what is the dialectical historical materialist black proletarian demand? It is a demand that could not be achieved under capitalism, a demand that could be achieved short of armed struggle. It is the socialist demand, the demand of *national independence*. Thus, if New African Communists are to be the vanguard and leadership of New Africa, it is not enough to advocate the right to self-determination; they must have a clear

revolutionary political position on what shape, form self-determination should take. Thus the right to self-determination would be the mass line and national independence by any means necessary, the New African communist party line. The right of self-determination is the petty bourgeoisie demand and national independence the revolutionary demand. So while New African Communists would develop a broad liberation front around the right of self-determination, they will organize and mobilize the New African proletariat, the provisional Republic of New Africa and the Army to struggle for independence. Thus the New African National Liberation Revolution, which is a bourgeois revolution, would have direction of where the revolution must go. These are some of the historical tasks of New African Communists.

The International Context of the New African Revolution

One of the main reasons efforts have failed in the past has been due to the lack of black Marxist-Leninists to creatively apply the science of scientific socialism to the unique situation here, understand that New Africans are a domestic colony that have produced its Army and government. These formations have been existing for over a ten-year period.

By correctly applying the national question (internal colony). New African Communists see the need to have a New African Communist Party that within this context political organization must be “national” in form and international in context.

So the role of New African Communists is to prepare the black proletariat to seize state power. In an era where the imperialists are threatening world war and the Ultra-Right is threatening race war, New African Communists must address the questions of Peace and the dialectic of turning events into its opposite. Do New African Communists want peace? Yes, but the only peace NAC know is to organize the people to seize national independence and overthrow capitalism through armed struggle, armed insurrection. New African Communists want an armed “peace” movement. In order for New Africa to be politically re-educated and united with the Third World and World socialist revolution they must have a vehicle, an organization to carry the mandate out: a black communist party. Only such a party can develop a strong internationalist trend, focusing turning the imperialist war into a civil war and the impending “race” civil war (KKK attack) into a revolutionary war.

“The Black Nation will be a bastion of opposition to imperialist war. If properly led, there is a possibility a real struggle for power can emerge in the Black Nation. To prepare for this today, a strong internationalist current must be built within the Black National Movement.”⁷

It is important that in developing the international current that special attention be given to black youth and young black soldiers. The key question at this point is the building of black Marxist-Leninist cells, fusing them with the masses. The question of revolutionary civil war is an impending one, the forces of counter-revolution are growing and increasing their military offensive against our nation. But there is a possibility the trend can be reversed. But New African Communists must prepare for the worst.

“In the Black Nation, civil war may take the form of a national revolutionary war, especially if the proletariat as a whole is still under the sway of chauvinism while Black opposition to the war is mounting. Given the lack of preparedness of the proletariat, the treachery of the various reformist and ‘revolutionary’ leaders, and the existence of strong national sentiments among much of the Black masses, such a scenario must be considered as a real possibility. Thus debate today on such questions is extremely urgent to gain clarity on the questions of the imperialist war and the national question.”⁸

So the most important thing for New African Communists to do ideologically is to develop a creative theoretical framework of struggling for national independence without the support of the majority of white workers. Unity of the oppressed nations domestically and some white allies, along with support of the majority of the people of the world, is the guarantee for the success of our national liberation revolution.

Sundiata Acoli, in *Some Solutions or Things to Do*, describes:

“The Black Nation may arrive at socialism after breaking free and independent of a weakened U.S. imperialism, or at the climax of a multi-nationalist, socialist revolution that destroys U.S. imperialism and results in self-determination for the Black Nation—or perhaps by some route between the two. The path taken by the Black Nation depends upon several conditions, one being the attitudes and actions of oppressed whites toward socialist revolution and self-determination for oppressed domestic nations during U.S. decline.”⁹

These are some of the burning questions that face us in the task in building a black Marxist-Leninist movement. New African

communists have the task of awakening the national and class consciousness among the New African proletariat, to organize a revolutionary black working class movement, to develop fusion, live links with black workers through propaganda and agitation, and to unite the various New African Marxist-Leninist collectives into a single New African Marxist-Leninist Party.

Build the Black Communist Party!
Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!

May 19, 1982

Notes:

1. V.I. Lenin, *On Building the Bolshevik Party: Selected Writings 1894-1905*, (Liberator Press, Chicago. Ill.) p. 37. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. 3. Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee, *Confronting Reality Learning from the History of our Movement*, p. 12. 4. Stalin, *On Strategy and Tactics* (New York, 1924) p. 25. 5. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 13-14. 6. *Op. Cit.*, p. 40. 7. *Workers' Tribune*, no. 5-6, Jan-Feb. 1982, p. 50. 8. *Ibid.*, p. 50. 9. Sundiata Acoli, *Some Solutions or Things to Do* (SIBS, Atlanta, Georgia, 1982) p. 4.

The Black Liberation Movement at the Crossroads: Organize Revolutionary Black Workers and the Black Unemployed

The recent articles in *Workers' Tribune* (i.e. *WT* no. 9—BL) on the struggle for a Black National Revolutionary Movement are a step in the right direction for New African Communists in developing a practical (tactical) line for the Black Liberation Movement.

The following are notes on the line that is advancing among different forces.

In the late 1970's the Black Liberation Movement began to slowly re-group from the state's (U.S. imperialism) attacks waged against it in the 1960's and early 70's. The United League of Mississippi successfully fought the KKK, United Fronts and Coalitions formed and mobilized against police murders and racist mayors. The Nation of Islam re-organized as a collective force, the Republic of New Africa and the African People's Party survived despite a continuous ten-year onslaught by the State against them. Revolutionary Nationalists became a leading viable force, mobilizing some 5,000 New Africans to march on the U.N. to demand prisoner of war status government with the crime of Genocide against the New African and oppressed nations of the world.

As the 80's approached, the mass movement of the black liberation movement seemed once again on the rise. The Miami rebellion (an embryo insurrection) and the general call for a National Black United Front and a National Black Independent Political Party, both of which have formed and are *concrete positive* developments in the black liberation movement, gave the appearance the movement was advancing at a faster pace than it actually was.

But at the same time, with obvious compliance with the military-intelligence-industrial complex, a powerful politically sophisticated *illegal-para-military* right-wing army numbering at least 2,000,000 began to surface. It has terrorized hundreds if not thousands in the last ten years with little or no publicity.

Such a counter-revolutionary military onslaught caught many New Africans by surprise because, for even many revolutionaries failed to realize that bourgeois democracy is a dictatorship of the

bourgeoisie.

As the impending crisis for imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, is mounting, the right-wing element of the bourgeoisie has gained hegemony in the monopoly capitalist class circles and is opting for either fascism, military dictatorship, genocide or any combination of these to ward off the internal contradictions which the international capitalist crisis is producing.

As a result, racism (national chauvinism) is again being fanned to further divide the U.S. proletariat (which is already divided) using “*Reborn Christianity*” as its cover for a “*Native-born Amerikkkan style Nazis movement*.”

With this crisis, the new African Nation is grossly affected. Black youth are 60 to 80% unemployed. As the crisis gets worse, unemployment among New Africans will increase. Thus we find at a time of re-emergence of Black National formations, the New African Nation is facing its worst crisis since the late 1880’s.

But What is the Weakness in the Black Liberation Movement?

The central weakness in the black liberation movement is there is *no tactical plan of action* for black revolutionaries inside the imperialist U.S. and *no theoretical guide*; Marxist, dialectical materialist approach addressing the “real”, unique conditions New Africans face, described in terms New Africans understand. There is no Malcolm X style in the New African communist movement.

Before the New African proletariat can fulfill its historical task as leader of the black liberation movement, it must be awakened to both its national and class interest.

Being a proletariat of a colonized nation in the belly of the beast (U.S. imperialism), the New African proletariat will not move in its own interests unless it *consciously understands its interests as a proletariat of an oppressed nation*. Mao calls this “National Consciousness” or what we have called *Revolutionary Nationalism*. *It is only when having reached a collective level of conscious revolutionary nationalism will the New African proletariat be able to develop a clear class consciousness.*

What is meant by that? What is meant, is, for the New African proletariat to see its true class interest; the New African Nation’s oppression being the greatest strength of U.S. imperialist finance capital it must first develop a *collective consciousness* and its (New African proletariat) specific needs and organize around the power the New

African working class has being the *most oppressed sector of the proletariat in the U.S. imperialist state*, along with other oppressed nations held in captivity inside the Amerikkkan empire.¹

New Africans, particularly New African workers, must be taught the potential revolutionary economic, political and military *power* they have and their relationship to the cause of the international proletariat and the world socialist revolution.

Since 40% of all capital investment in the world is planned for the Southern U.S. with the aim of extraction of super-profits from the Black Nation, then the conscious organization of the New African proletariat particularly in the Black belt south against extraction of surplus value is the *central anti-thesis* to capitalism and U.S. imperialism in the present period.²

So the central task for New African communists is organizing the New African proletariat/underclass (unemployed) into special formations to fight for their national and class interests.³

Until that occurs the black liberation movement will constantly flounder.

What is the Objective/Subjective Situation and How do We Proceed to Develop a Broad Mass Proletarian Line?

“According to Bureau of Census statistics for 1978, there were 25,467,000 Black people of all ages in this country, 11.7% of the total population. In 1977, 8.31 million were employed.”⁴

According to *Workers' Tribune*, no. 3, June-July, 1981, “Black Workers, the Black Nation and the Black Liberation Movement” p. 4, about 33 percent of all Black workers are unionized, while only 26 percent of white workers are unionized. Black and other oppressed nationality workers make up 40% of the laborers unions, 37 percent of the Service Employees Union, 30 percent of the Food and Commercial Workers and 30 percent of AFSCME, the largest public workers union in the U.S.. While in 1960, only 6 percent of the AFL-CIO was Black, today the figure is 17 percent.

The question New African communists must address is 33%, approximately 2.5 million New African workers, are in unions controlled by the labor aristocracy (bureaucrats) who don't represent New African workers' class or national interests. Then it is necessary to organize a revolutionary black caucus movement inside these unions to push these unions in a revolutionary direction and also to form a national black workers organization which represents the national

and class interests of the New African proletariat, to lead the black liberation movement in a revolutionary direction, linking its common interests with the revolutionary sectors of the proletariat inside the U.S. imperialist state, the Third World and international proletariat in general. Each have a different character and the forms of unity may come in various phases of development.

So, the majority of New African workers are still not unionized, a question the New African communist movement must seriously address. At the same time as unemployment is increasing, a sector of the New African proletariat has fallen victim to “Bourgeois cultural genocide” and are becoming “lumpenized”. Estimates published recently state that 1/3 of all Black men in Amerikkka are narcotics users. Approximately 1 million New African youth between the ages of 11 and 19 make a living from their participation in the Drug Traffic and are not in the labor market. Approximately 3 million black people are part of the Drug Traffic (selling drugs). *Black on black crime is the highest ever in the history of the black nation.* This says something about the subjective conditions of New Africans.

While the objective conditions exist for the highest level of mass revolutionary organization, i.e., cutbacks in social services, high unemployment, mass racist attacks, blatant police brutality and a rapid move towards fascism/genocide, New Africans cannot collectively organize because of the low level of their “national” consciousness.

So with the impending crisis on the horizon. New African revolutionaries need to address themselves to creating the special organizational forms that fit the masses’ objective and subjective needs.

In the present period, the black unemployed should be organized and mobilized into *unemployment councils* which could be part of a *national black workers’ organization* that raises a tactical program of action.

Part of a tactical black workers unemployed program could be:

1. Recognition of the right of all workers to unemployment insurance.
2. The expansion of benefits and cessation of all cutbacks. Benefits paid by employers and the government.
3. Simplify all laws and rules on unemployment insurance and the elimination of bureaucracy.
4. Elimination of racism at the workplace.
 - a. racism in terms of hiring.
 - b. promotions.
 - c. unequal pay.

- d. harassment and unfair treatment.
 - e. firing.
 - f. sexual abuse of black women on the job.
5. Demand equal pay of black women workers to male workers.
 6. Demand Affirmative Action in the skilled trades.
 7. Demand Affirmative Action in the skilled and unskilled unions.
 8. Elimination of racist seniority (quota) system implemented by employers and supported by unions in relation to promotions and layoffs.
 9. Oust all reactionary union bureaucrats.
 10. Organize the un-organized (non-union shops).
 11. Complete benefits to the elderly.
 12. Complete benefits to welfare recipients.
 13. Restitution to ex-black soldiers forced to fight in U.S. imperialism's racist wars.
 14. Prisoner of war status for captured Black Liberation Army soldiers and their immediate release to a socialist country.
 15. The immediate release of all political prisoners.
 16. Rights of all immigrants to the same benefits as native born workers.
 17. An end to all rules for disqualifying the unemployed from benefits.
 18. Maternity grants of 26 weeks with access to these at any time during pregnancy. The same rights for adoptive parents.
 19. End to all waiting restrictions.
 20. No penalty in the case of firing and in the case of voluntary leaving because of the unsuitability of work.
 21. Staffing of the unemployment centers from among the unemployed.
 22. Continuation of benefits during illness or injury without penalty.
 23. An end to the chauvinism, harassment, and racism practiced by unemployment agencies towards oppressed nationalities and immigrants.
 24. Unemployment centers staffed by bi-lingual workers.
 25. Struggle for full workers' democracy in regard to all decisions affecting their working conditions and environment.

Creating mass proletarian organizational forms in which the advanced class-conscious workers can surge forth to leadership and propel the *self-organization* of the New African proletariat is

important in this period. Also along with this development, which should be based around agitation and actions, is political socialist education. This often-neglected arena of struggle, “the ideological struggle,” will become increasingly sharper in the forthcoming period. The ideological front, like the cultural front and the economic, military and political fronts, are very important. *It is precisely developing a clear ideological line that can help guide actions (Lenin).*

For 20 years since the early 60's, from the days of SNCC, BPP, League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), Black Workers Congress (BWC), BLA, RNA, New Communist movement, African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) to the present NBUF, NBIPP, there has been a lot of mobilizing and organizing of the New African Nation. *What has been lacking is comprehensive ideological cohesion and internal education in the black liberation movement.* This weakness gives rise to ultra-leftism which sometimes takes the form of adventurism, sectarianism or right-wing tailism of the mass movement or petty bourgeois leadership.

By working with the New African proletariat in an organized/systematic way in organizational forms “*workers control*”, New African revolutionaries will also have a form in which to *learn from* the masses; an arena to “*listen*” to the masses, learn and re-learn how to correctly address the *needs* of the masses.

At the same time this organizational arena will give New African revolutionaries a chance to concretely address the question of how do you take day to day issues and relate them to the theory of proletarian internationalism?

Internationalism, We Will Win: One Struggle, Many Fronts

Revolutionary actions most often propel the black liberation movement forward, even though they usually catch many revolutionaries by surprise, because just like in the 60's when there was a general lack of understanding of the inter-relationship between politics and culture; in the 1970's the same kind of separation between legal/illegal (armed struggle) work occurred. The question of armed struggle (people's war), which involves the entire people of an oppressed nation, is increasingly being understood.

Since last year when the 1st Plenary Session on Black Self-Determination was held in New York, December 4th to 6th sponsored by the National Black Human Rights Coalition, an ever increasing

struggle is sharpening around the national question.

Responding to the already developing people's war inside the U.S. imperialist state by the armed vanguards of the oppressed nations and white revolutionaries, over 400 people met May 28-30 this year in Denver, Colorado at the *National Conference Against Repression*.

All called for unity: *One Struggle. Many Fronts*, which calls for an understanding of the "actual" character of internationalism inside the imperialist state and also outside of it. It means New African workers need a "fresh" non-sectarian approach and education to revolutionary internationalism.

This socialist internationalist perspective is very important for the developing New African proletarian leadership. Only if New Africans see the world correctly, knowing the revolutionary forces, know their true friends and allies, will New Africans be able to see their enemies.

The legacy has been left by brother Malcolm X for New African revolutionaries to deal with "socialist education" of the masses where *Independence and Socialism for Puerto Rico and Socialist Reunification of Mexico. Support for the FLNC (Congolese National Liberation Front), Support for the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and elimination of Zionist control of the black liberation movement*, becomes just as meaningful for the New African on the block as when the BLA strikes a blow, because it's *One Struggle. Many Fronts!*

Nor will it matter whether China, the Soviet Union, Albania, Cuba or whoever supports or doesn't support any struggle, because New Africans will have a line of their own: *We will win by any means necessary*. The principal enemy of New Africans is the US imperialist state and we (New Africans) call on all freedom loving progressive people of the world to unite to destroy the empire. It is this political understanding that will carry the black liberation movement towards victorious New African liberation.

Dare to Struggle! Dare to Win!

Notes:

1. Rally Comrades, Vol. 2, No. 4, August, 1982, p. 2. 2. *Workers Tribune*, July-August 1982, p. 3. 3. Ibid. 4. Build the Black Liberation Movement (Revolutionary Workers Headquarters), Chicago, Illinois, 1981, p. 40.

**Resolutions of the
Communist
International
on the
Negro Question**



Resolutions of the Communist International on the Negro Question

I. Resolution of the Communist International, October, 1928

1. The industrialization of the South, the concentration of a new Negro working class population in the big cities of the East and North and the entrance of the Negroes into the basic industries on a mass scale, create the possibility for the Negro workers, under the leadership of the Communist Party, to assume the hegemony of all Negro liberation movements, and to increase their importance and role in the revolutionary struggle of the American proletariat.

The Negro working class has reached a stage of development which enables it, if properly organized and well led, to fulfill successfully its double historical mission: (a) to play a considerable role in the class struggle against American imperialism as an important part of the American working class; and (b) to lead the movement of the oppressed masses of the Negro population.

2. The bulk of the Negro population (86 per cent) live in the southern states; of this number 74 per cent live in the rural districts and are dependent almost exclusively upon agriculture for a livelihood. Approximately one-half of these rural dwellers lives in the so-called "Black Belt," in which area they constitute more than 50 per cent of the entire population. The great mass of the Negro agrarian population are subject to the most ruthless exploitation and persecution of a semi-slave character. In addition to the ordinary forms of capitalist exploitation, American imperialism utilizes every possible form of slave exploitation (peonage, share-cropping, landlord supervision of crops and marketing, etc.) for the purpose of extracting super-profits. On the basis of these slave remnants, there has grown up a super-structure of social and political inequality that expresses itself in lynching, segregation, Jim-Crowism, etc.

Necessary Conditions for National Revolutionary Movement

3. The various forms of oppression of the Negro masses, who are concentrated mainly in the so-called "Black Belt," provide the necessary conditions for a national revolutionary movement among the Negroes. The Negro agricultural laborers and the tenant farmers feel the pressure of white persecution and exploitation. Thus, the agrarian

problem lies at the root of the Negro national movement. The great majority of Negroes in the rural districts of the South are not “reserves of capitalist reaction,” but potential allies of the revolutionary proletariat. Their objective position facilitates their transformation into a revolutionary force, which, under the leadership of the proletariat, will be able to participate in the joint struggle with all other workers against capitalist exploitation.

4. It is the duty of the Negro workers to organize through the mobilisation of the broad masses of the Negro population the struggle of the agricultural laborers and tenant farmers against all forms of semi-feudal oppression. On the other hand, it is the duty of the Communist Party of the U. S. A. to mobilize and rally the broad masses of the white workers for active participation in this struggle. For that reason the Party must consider the beginning of systematic work in the south as one of its main tasks, having regard for the fact that the bringing together of the workers and toiling masses of all nationalities for a joint struggle against the landowners and the bourgeoisie is one of the most important aims of the Communist International, as laid down in the resolutions on the national and colonial question of the Second and Sixth Congresses of the Comintern.

For Complete Emancipation of Oppressed Negro Race

5. To accomplish this task, the Communist Party must come out as the champion of the right of the oppressed Negro race for full emancipation. While continuing and intensifying the struggle under the slogan of full social and political equality for the Negroes, which must remain the central slogan of our Party for work among the masses, the Party must come out openly and unreservedly for the right of Negroes to national self-determination in the southern states, where the Negroes form a majority of the population. The struggle for equal rights and the propaganda for the slogan of self-determination must be linked up with the economic demands of the Negro masses, especially those directed against the slave remnants and all forms of national and racial oppression. Special stress must be laid upon organizing active resistance against lynching, Jim-Crowism, segregation and all other forms of oppression of the Negro population.

6. All work among the Negroes, as well as the struggle for the Negro cause among the whites, must be used, based upon the changes which have taken place in the relationship of classes among the

Negro population. The existence of a Negro industrial proletariat of almost two million workers makes it imperative that the main emphasis should be placed on these new proletarian forces. The Negro workers must be organized under the leadership of the Communist Party, and thrown into joint struggle together with the white workers. The Party must learn to combine all demands of the Negroes with the economic and political struggle of the workers and the poor farmers.

American Negro Question Part of World Problem

7. The Negro question in the United States must be treated in its relation to the Negro questions and struggles in other parts of the world. The Negro race everywhere is an oppressed race. Whether it is a minority (U.S.A., etc.), majority (South Africa) or inhabits a so-called independent state (Liberia, etc.), the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism. Thus, a common tie of interest is established for the revolutionary struggle of race and national liberation from imperialist domination of the Negroes in various parts of the world. A strong Negro revolutionary movement in the U.S.A. will be able to influence and direct the revolutionary movement in all those parts of the world where the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism.

8. The proletarianization of the Negro masses makes the trade unions the principal form of mass organization. It is the primary task of the Party to play an active part and lead in the work of organizing the Negro workers and agricultural laborers in trade unions. Owing to the refusal of the majority of the white unions in the U.S.A., led by the reactionary leaders, to admit Negroes to membership, steps must be immediately taken to set up special unions for those Negro workers who are not allowed to join the white unions. At the same time, however, the struggles for the inclusion of Negro workers in the existing unions must be intensified and concentrated upon, special attention must be given to those unions in which the statutes and rules set up special limitations against the admission of Negro workers. The primary duty of the Communist Party in this connection is to wage a merciless struggle against the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, which prevents the Negro workers from joining the white workers' unions. The organization of special trade unions for the Negro masses must be carried out as part and parcel of the struggle against the restrictions imposed upon the Negro workers, and for their admission to the white workers' unions. The creation of separate Negro unions should in no way weaken the struggle in the old unions for the admission of

Negroes on equal terms. Every effort must be made to see that all the new unions organized by the left wing and the Communist Party should embrace the workers of all nationalities and of all races. The principle of one union for all workers in each industry, white and black, should cease to be a mere slogan of propaganda, and must become a slogan of action.

Party Trade Union Work Among Negroes

9. While organizing the Negroes into unions and conducting an aggressive struggle against the anti-Negro trade union policy of the A. F. of L., the Party must pay more attention than it has hitherto done to the work in the Negro workers' organizations, such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Chicago Asphalt Workers Union, and so on. The existence of two million Negro workers and the further industrialization of the Negroes demand a radical change in the work of the Party among the Negroes. The creation of working-class organizations and the extension of our influence in the existing working-class Negro organizations, are of much greater importance than the work in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Pan-African Congress, etc.

10. The American Negro Labor Congress continues to exist only nominally. Every effort should be made to strengthen this organization as a medium through which we can extend the work of the Party among the Negro masses and mobilize the Negro workers under our leadership.

11. The importance of trade union work imposes special tasks upon the Trade Union Unity League. The T.U.U.L. has completely neglected the work among the Negro workers, notwithstanding the fact that these workers are objectively in a position to play a very great part in carrying through the program of organizing the unorganized. The closest contact must be established between the T.U.U.L. and the Negro masses. The T.U.U.L. must become the champion in the struggle for the rights of the Negroes in the old union, and in the organizing of new unions for both Negroes and whites, as well as separate Negro unions.

White Chauvinism Evidenced in the American Party

12. The C. E. C. of the American Communist Party itself stated in its resolution of April 30, 1928, that "the Party as a whole has not

sufficiently realized the significance of work among the Negroes.” Such an attitude toward the Party work among the Negroes is, however, not satisfactory. The time is ripe to begin within the Party a courageous campaign of self-criticism concerning the work among the Negroes. Penetrating self-criticism is the necessary preliminary condition for directing the Negro work along new lines.

13. The Party must bear in mind that white chauvinism, which is the expression of the ideological influence of American imperialism among the workers, not only prevails among the different strata of the white workers in the U.S.A., but is even reflected in various forms in the Party itself. White chauvinism has manifested itself even in open antagonism of some comrades to the Negro comrades. In some instances where Communists were called upon to champion and lead in the most vigorous manner the fight against white chauvinism, they instead yielded to it. In Gary, white members of the Workers’ Party protested against Negroes eating in the restaurant controlled by the Party. In Detroit, Party members, yielding to pressure, drove the Negro comrades from a social given in aid of the miners’ strike.

While the Party has taken certain measures against these manifestations of white chauvinism, nevertheless those manifestations must be regarded as indications of race prejudice even in the ranks of the Party, which must be fought with the utmost energy.

14. An aggressive fight against all forms of white chauvinism must be accompanied by a widespread and thorough educational campaign in the spirit of internationalism within the Party, utilizing for this purpose to the fullest possible extent the Party schools, the Party press and the public platform, to stamp out all forms of antagonism, or even indifference among our white comrades toward the Negro work. This educational work should be conducted simultaneously with a campaign to draw the white workers and the poor farmers into the struggle for the support of the demands of the Negro workers.

Tasks of Party in Relation to Negro Work

15. The Communist Party of the U.S.A., in its treatment of the Negro question must all the time bear in mind this twofold task:

(a) To fight for the full rights of the oppressed Negroes and for their right to self-determination and against all forms of chauvinism, especially among the workers of the oppressing nationality.

(b) The propaganda and the day-to-day practice of international

class solidarity must be considered as one of the basic tasks of the American Communist Party. The fight—by propaganda and by deeds—should be directed first and foremost against the chauvinism of the workers of the oppressing nationality as well as against bourgeois segregation tendencies of the oppressed nationality. The propaganda of international class solidarity is the necessary prerequisite for the unity of the working class in the struggle.

“The center of gravity in educating the workers of the oppressing countries in the principles of internationalism must inevitably consist in the propaganda and defense by the workers of the right of separation by the oppressed countries. We have the right and duty to treat every socialist of an oppressing nation, who does not conduct such propaganda, as an imperialist and as a scoundrel.” (Lenin, from selected articles on the national question.)

16. The Party must seriously take up the task of training a cadre of Negro comrades as leaders, bring them into the Party schools in the U.S.A. and abroad, and make every effort to draw Negro proletarians into active and leading work in the Party, not confining the activities of the Negro comrades exclusively to the work among Negroes. Simultaneously, white workers must specially be trained for work among the Negroes.

17. Efforts must be made to transform the *Negro Champion* into a weekly mass organ of the Negro proletariat and tenant farmers. Every encouragement and inducement must be given to the Negro comrades to utilize the Party press generally.

Negro Work Part of General Work of Party

18. The Party must link up the struggle on behalf of the Negroes with the general campaigns of the Party. The Negro problem must be part and parcel of all and every campaign conducted by the Party. In the election campaign, trade union work, the campaigns for the organization of the unorganized, anti-imperialist work, labor party campaign, International Labor Defense, etc., the Central Executive Committee must work out plans designed to draw the Negroes into active participation in all these campaigns, and at the same time to bring the white workers into the struggle on behalf of the Negroes' demands. It must be born in mind that the Negro masses will not be won for the revolutionary struggles until such time as the most conscious section of the white workers show, by action, that they are fighting with the

Negroes against all racial discrimination and persecution. Every member of the Party must bear in mind that “age-long oppression of the colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers, has given rise to a feeling of bitterness among the masses of the enslaved countries as well as a feeling of distrust toward the oppressing nations in general and toward the proletariat of those nations.” (See Resolution on Colonial and National Question of Second Congress.)

19. The Negro women in industry and on the farms constitute a powerful potential force in the struggle for Negro emancipation. By reason of being unorganized to an even greater extent than male Negro workers, they are the most exploited section. The A. F. of L. bureaucracy naturally exercises toward them a double hostility, by reason of both their color and sex. It therefore becomes an important task of the Party to bring the Negro women into the economic and political struggle.

20. Only by an active and strenuous fight on the part of the white workers against all forms of oppression directed against the Negroes, will the Party be able to draw into its ranks the most active and conscious Negro workers—men and women—and to increase its influence in those intermediary organizations which are necessary for the mobilization of the Negro masses in the struggle against segregation, lynching, Jim-Crowism, etc.

21. In the present struggle in the mining industry, the Negro workers participate actively and in large numbers. The leading role the Party played in this struggle has helped greatly to increase its prestige. Nevertheless, the special efforts being made by the Party in the work among the Negro strikers cannot be considered as adequate. The Party did not send enough Negro organizers into the coal fields, and it did not sufficiently attempt, in the first stages of the fight, to develop the most able Negro strikers and to place them in leading positions. The Party must be especially criticized for its failure to put Negro workers on the Presidium of the Pittsburgh Miners’ Conference, doing so only after such representation was demanded by the Negroes themselves.

22. In the work among the Negroes, special attention should be paid to the role played by the churches and preachers who are acting on behalf of American imperialism. The Party must conduct a continuous and carefully worked out campaign among the Negro masses, sharpened primarily against the preachers and the churchmen, who are the agents of the oppressors of the Negro race.

Party Work Among Negro Proletariat and Peasantry

23. The Party must apply front tactics for specific demands to the existing Negro petty bourgeois organizations. The purpose of these united front tactics should be the mobilizing of the Negro masses under the leadership of the Party, and to expose the treacherous petty bourgeois leadership of those organizations.

24. The Negro Miners Relief Committee and the Harlem Tenants League are examples of joint organizations of action which may serve as a means of drawing the Negro masses into struggle. In every case the utmost effort must be made to combine the struggle of the Negro workers with the struggle of the white workers, and to draw the white workers' organizations into such joint campaigns.

25. In order to reach the bulk of the Negro masses, special attention should be paid to the work among the Negroes in the South. For that purpose, the Party should establish a district organization in the most suitable locality in the South. Whilst continuing trade union work among the Negro workers and the agricultural laborers, special organizations of tenant farmers must be set up. Special efforts must also be made to secure the support of the sharecroppers in the creation of such organizations. The Party must undertake the task of working out a definite program of immediate demands, directed against all slave remnants, which will serve as the rallying slogans for the formation of such peasant organizations.

Henceforth the Communist Party must consider the struggle on behalf of the Negro masses, the task of organizing the Negro workers and peasants and the drawing of these oppressed masses into the proletarian revolutionary struggle, as one of its major tasks, remembering, in the words of the Second Congress resolution, that "the victory over capitalism cannot be fully achieved and carried to its ultimate goal unless the proletariat and the toiling masses of all nations of the world rally of their own accord in a concordant and close union."

LENINISM AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was wrongly interpreted, and not infrequently it was narrowed down to the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International went so far as to convert the right of self-determination into a right to cultural autonomy, *i.e.*, they would accord to the oppressed nation the right to have its own cultural institutions while the

dominant nation would retain all political power in its own hands. The result was that the idea of self-determination was in danger of becoming a means for justifying annexations rather than a means of fighting against annexations. This confusion has now been cleared up. Leninism has broadened the conception of self-determination, and interprets it as the right of the oppressed peoples in dependent countries and colonies to complete separation, as the right of nations to independent existence as states. This has precluded the possibility of annexations being justified on the grounds that the right of self-determination merely means the right to autonomy. The very principle of self-determination was thus changed from a means to deceive the masses, that it undoubtedly was in the hands of the social-chauvinists during the imperialist war, into an instrument for exposing all imperialist designs or chauvinist machinations, a means of political education of the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

“Formerly, the question of the oppressed nations used to be regarded purely as a question of law. Solemn proclamations of ‘national equality under the law’ and innumerable declarations about the ‘equality of nations’ were common stock-in-trade of the parties of the Second International, which served to gloss over the sheer mockery of talking about ‘equality of nations’ under imperialism while one group of nations (a minority) lives upon the backs of another group of nations whom they exploit. This bourgeois legalist point of view on the national question has now been completely exposed. Leninism brought the national question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to the solid ground of facts and declared that pronouncements about the ‘equality of nations’ which are not reinforced by the direct support of the proletarian parties to the liberation movement of the oppressed nations are meaningless and false. In this way the question of the oppressed nations became a question of rendering support and assistance, real and continuous, to the oppressed nations in their struggle against imperialism, their struggle for real equality of nations, and for their independent existence as states...” J. Stalin, from *Foundations of Leninism*.

II. Resolution of the Communist International, October, 1930

1. The Communist Party of the United States has always acted openly and energetically against Negro oppression and has thereby won increasing sympathy among the Negro population. In its own ranks, too, the Party has relentlessly fought the slightest evidences of white chauvinism, and has purged itself of the gross opportunism of the Lovestoneites. According to the assertions of these people, the "industrial revolution" will sweep away the remnants of slavery in the agricultural South, and will proletarianize the Negro peasantry, so that the Negro question, as a special national question, would thereby be presumably solved, or could be put off until the time of the socialist revolution in America. But the Party has not yet succeeded in overcoming in its own ranks all underestimation of the struggle for the slogan of the right of self-determination, and still less succeeded in doing away with all *lack of clarity* on the Negro question. In the Party discussion the question was often wrongly put and much erroneous counterpoising of phases of the question occurred: thus, for instance: Should the slogan of social equality *or* the slogan of the right of self-determination, of the Negroes be emphasized? Should only propaganda for the Negroes' right of self-determination be carried on, or should this slogan be considered as a slogan of action? Should separatist tendencies among the Negroes be supported or opposed? Is the Southern region, thickly populated by Negroes, to be looked upon as a colony, or as an "integral part of the national economy of the United States," where presumably a revolutionary situation cannot arise independent of the general revolutionary development in the United States?

In the interest of the utmost clarity of ideas on this question, the Negro question in the United States must be viewed from the standpoint of its peculiarity, namely, as the question of an *oppressed nation*, which is in a peculiar and extraordinarily distressing situation of national oppression not only in view of the prominent *racial distinctions* (marked difference in the color of skin, etc.), but above all, because of considerable *social antagonism* (remnants of slavery). This introduces into the American Negro question an important, *peculiar* trait which is absent from the national question of other oppressed peoples. Furthermore, it is necessary to face clearly the inevitable distinction between the position of the Negro in the *South* and in the

North owing to the fact that at least three-fourths of the entire *Negro* population of the United States (12,000,000) live in compact masses in the South, most of them being peasants and agricultural laborers in a state of semi-serfdom, settled in the "Black Belt" and constituting the majority of the population, whereas the Negroes in the northern states are for the most part industrial workers of the lowest categories who have recently come to the various industrial centers from the South (having often even fled from there).

The struggle of the Communists for the *equal rights* of the Negroes applies to all Negroes, in the North as well as in the South. The struggle for this slogan embraces all or almost all of the important special interests of the Negroes in the North, but not in the South, where the main Communist slogan must be: *The Right of Self-Determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt* These two slogans, however, are most closely connected. The Negroes in the North are very much interested in winning the right of self-determination of the Negro population of the Black Belt and can thereby hope for strong support for the establishment of true equality of the Negroes in the North. In the South the Negroes are suffering no less, but still more than in the North from the glaring lack of all equality; for the most part the struggle for their most urgent partial demands in the Black Belt is nothing more than the struggle for their equal rights, and only the fulfillment of their main slogan, the right of self-determination in the Black Belt, can assure them of true equality.

1. The Struggle for the Equal Rights of the Negroes

2. The basis for the demand of equality of the Negroes is provided by the *special* yoke to which the Negroes in the United States are subjected by the ruling classes. In comparison with the situation of the other various nationalities and races oppressed by American imperialism, the yoke of the Negroes in the United States is of a peculiar nature and particularly oppressive. This is partly due to the historical past of the American Negroes as imported slaves, but is much more due to the still existing slavery of the American Negro which is immediately apparent, for example, in comparing their situation even with the situation of the Chinese and Japanese workers in the West of the United States, or with the lot of the Filipinos (Malay race) who are under colonial repression.

It is only a Yankee bourgeois lie to say that the yoke of Negro slavery has been lifted in the United States. Formally it has been

abolished, but in practice the great majority of the Negro masses in the South are living in slavery in the literal sense of the word. Formally, they are "free" as "tenant farmers" or "contract laborers" on the big plantations of the white land owners, but actually they are completely in the power of their exploiters; they are not permitted, or else it is made impossible for them to leave their exploiters; if they do leave the plantations, they are brought back and in many cases whipped; many of them are simply taken prisoner under various pretexts and, bound together with long chains, they have to do compulsory labor on the roads. All through the South, the Negroes are not only deprived of all rights, and subjected to the arbitrary will of the white exploiters, but they are also socially ostracized, that is. they are treated in general not as human beings, but as cattle. But this ostracism regarding Negroes is not limited to the South. Not only in the South but throughout the United States, the lynching of Negroes is permitted to go unpunished. Everywhere the American bourgeoisie surrounds the Negroes with an atmosphere of social ostracism.

The 100 per cent Yankee arrogance divides the American population into a series of castes, among which the Negroes constitute, so to speak, the caste of the "untouchables." who are in a still lower category than the lowest categories of human society, the immigrant laborers, the yellow immigrants, and the Indians. In all big cities the Negroes have to live in special segregated Ghettoes (and of course, have to pay extremely high rent). In practice, marriage between Negroes and whites is prohibited, and in the South this is even forbidden by law. In various other ways, the Negroes are segregated, and if they overstep the bounds of the segregation they immediately run the risk of being ill-treated by the 100 per cent bandits. As wage earners, the Negroes are forced to perform the lowest and most difficult work; they generally receive lower wages than the white workers and do not always get the same wages as white workers doing similar work, and their treatment is the very worst. Many American Federation of Labor trade unions do not admit Negro workers in their ranks, and a number have organized special trade unions for Negroes so that they will not have to let them into their "good white society."

This whole system of "segregation" and "Jim-Crowism" is a special form of national and social oppression under which the American Negroes have much to suffer. The origin of all this is not difficult to find: this Yankee arrogance towards the Negroes stinks of the disgusting atmosphere of the old slave market. This is downright

robbery and slave whipping barbarism at the peak of capitalist “culture.”

3. The demand for equal rights in our sense of the word, means not only demanding the same rights for the Negroes as the whites have in the United States at the present time, but also demanding that the Negroes should be granted all rights and other advantages which we demand for the corresponding oppressed classes of whites (workers and other toilers). Thus in our sense of the word, the demand for equal rights means a continuous work of abolishment of all forms of economic and political oppression of the Negroes, as well as their social exclusion, the insults perpetrated against them and their segregation. This is to be obtained by constant struggle by the white and black workers for effective legal protection for the Negroes in all fields, as well as actual enforcement of their equality and the combating of every expression of Negrophobia. One of the Communist slogans is: Death for Negro lynching!

The struggle for the equal rights of the Negroes does not in any way exclude recognition and support for the Negroes’ right to their own special schools, government organs, etc., wherever the Negro masses put forward such national demands of their own accord. This will, however, in all probability occur to the great extent only in the Black Belt. In other parts of the country the Negroes suffer above all from being shut out from the general social institutions and not from being prohibited from setting up their own national institutions. With the development of the Negro intellectuals (principally in the “free” *profession*) and of a thin layer of small capitalist business people, there have appeared lately not only definite efforts for developing a purely national Negro culture, but rather outspoken bourgeois tendencies towards Negro nationalism. The broad masses of the Negro population in the big industrial centers of the North are, however, making no efforts whatsoever to maintain and cultivate a national aloofness. They are, on the contrary, working for assimilation. This effort of the Negro masses can do much in the future to facilitate the progressive process of amalgamating the whites and Negroes into *one* nation, and it is under no circumstances the task of the Communists to give support to bourgeois nationalism in its fight with the progressive assimilation tendencies of Negro working masses.

4. The slogan of equal rights of the Negroes *without a relentless struggle in practice against all manifestations of Negrophobia on the part of the American bourgeoisie* can be nothing but a deceptive

liberal gesture of a sly slave owner or his agent. This slogan is in fact repeated by “socialist” and many other bourgeois politicians and philanthropists, who want to get publicity for themselves by appealing to the “sense of justice” of the American bourgeoisie in the individual treatment of the Negroes, and thereby side-track attention from the one effective struggle against the shameful system of “white superiority”: from the *class struggle against the American bourgeoisie*. The struggle for equal rights for the Negroes is, in fact, one of the most important parts of the proletarian class struggle of the United States.

The struggle for equal rights for the Negroes must certainly take the form of common struggle by the white and black workers.

The increasing unity on the various working class elements provokes constant attempts of the part of the American bourgeoisie to play one group against another, particularly the white workers against the black, and the black workers against the immigrant workers, and vice versa, and thus to promote the divisions within the working class, which contribute to the bolstering up of American capitalist rule. The Party must carry on a ruthless struggle against all these attempts of the bourgeoisie and do everything to strengthen the bonds of class solidarity of the working class on a lasting basis.

In the struggle for equal rights for the Negroes, however, it is the duty of the *white* workers to march *at the head* of this struggle. They must everywhere make a breach in the walls of segregation and “Jim-Crowism” which have been set up by bourgeois slave-market morality. They must most ruthlessly unmask and condemn the hypocritical reformists and bourgeois “friends of Negroes” who, in reality, are only interested in strengthening the power of the enemies of the Negroes. They, the white workers, must boldly jump at the throat of the 100 per cent bandits who strike a Negro in the face. This struggle will be the test of real international solidarity of the American white workers.

It is the special duty of the revolutionary Negro workers to carry on tireless activity among the Negro working masses to free them of their distrust of the white proletariat and draw them into the common front of the revolutionary class struggle against the bourgeoisie. They must emphasize with all force that the first rule of proletarian morality is that no worker who wants to be an equal member of *his class* must ever serve as a strike breaker or a supporter of bourgeois politics. They must ruthlessly unmask all Negro politicians corrupted or

directly bribed by American bourgeois ideology, who systematically interfere with the real proletarian struggle for equal rights for the Negroes.

Furthermore, the Communist Party must resist all tendencies within its own ranks to ignore the Negro question as a national question in the United States, not only in the South but also in the North. It is advisable for the Communist Party in the North to abstain from the establishment of any special Negro organizations, and in place of this to bring the black and white workers together in common organizations of struggle and joint action. Effective steps must be taken for the organization of Negro workers in the Trade Union Unity League and revolutionary trade unions. Underestimation of this work takes various forms: lack of energy in recruiting Negro workers, in keeping them in our ranks and in drawing them into the full life of the trade unions, selecting, educating and promoting Negro forces to leading functions in the organizations.

The Party must make itself entirely responsible for the carrying through of this very important work. It is most urgently necessary to publish a popular mass paper dealing with the Negro question, edited by white and black comrades, and to have all active followers of this paper grouped organizationally.

II. The Struggle for the Right of Self-Determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt

5. It is not correct to consider the Negro zone of the South as a colony of the United States. Such a characterization of the Black Belt could be based in some respects only upon artificially construed analogies, and would create superfluous difficulties for the clarification of ideas. In rejecting this estimation, however, it should not be overlooked that it would be none the less false to try to make a fundamental distinction between the character of national oppression to which the colonial peoples are subjected and the yoke of other oppressed nations. Fundamentally, national oppression in both cases is of the same character, and is in the Black Belt in many respects worse than in a number of actual colonies. On one hand the Black Belt is not in itself, either economically or politically, such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States. But on the other hand, this zone is not, either economically or politically, such an integral part of the whole United States as any other part of the country. Industrialization in the Black Belt is not, as is generally

the case in colonies, properly speaking, in contradiction with the ruling interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which has in its hands the monopoly of all the industry; but insofar as industry is developed here, it will in no way bring a solution to the question of living conditions of the oppressed Negro majority, nor to the agrarian question, which lies at the basis of the national question. On the contrary, this question is still further aggravated as a result of the increase of the contradictions arising from the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation of the Negro peasantry and of a considerable portion of the Negro proletariat (miners, forestry workers, etc.) in the Black Belt, and at the same time, owing to the industrial development here, the growth of the most important driving force of the national revolution, the black working class, is especially strengthened. Thus, the prospect for the future is not an inevitable dying away of the national revolutionary Negro movement in the South, as Lovestone prophesied, but on the contrary, a great advance of this movement and the rapid approach of a revolutionary crisis in the Black Belt.

6. Owing to the peculiar situation in the Black Belt (the fact that the majority of the resident Negro population are farmers and agricultural laborers and that the capitalist economic system as well as political class rule there is not only of a special kind, but to a great extent still has pre-capitalist and semi-colonial features), the right of self-determination of the Negroes as the *main slogan* of the Communist Party in the Black Belt is appropriate. This, however, does not in any way mean that the struggle for equal rights of the Negroes in the Black Belt is less necessary or less well founded than it is in the North. On the contrary, here, owing to the whole situation, this struggle is even better founded: but the form of this slogan does not sufficiently correspond with the *concrete* requirements of the liberation struggle of the Negro population. Anyway, it is clear that in most cases it is a question of the daily conflicts of interest between the Negroes and the white rulers in the Black Belt on the subject of infringement of the most elementary equality rights of the Negroes by the whites. Daily events of the kind are: all Negro persecutions, all arbitrary economic acts of robbery by the white exploiters ("Black Man's Burden") and the whole system of so-called "Jim-Crowism." Here, however, it is very important in connection with all these concrete cases of conflict to concentrate the attention of the Negro masses not so much on the general demands of mere equality, but much more on some of the revolutionary *basic demands* arising from

the concrete situation.

The slogan of the right of self-determination occupies the central place in the liberation struggle of the Negro population in the Black Belt against the yoke of American imperialism. But this slogan, as we see it, must be carried out only in connection with two other basic demands. Thus, there are three basic demands to be kept in mind in the Black Belt, namely, the following:

(a) *Confiscation of the landed property of the white landowners and capitalists for the benefit of the Negro farmers.* The landed property in the hands of the white American exploiters constitutes the most important material basis of the entire system of national oppression and serfdom of the Negroes in the Black Belt. More than three-quarters of all Negro farmers here are bound in actual serfdom to the farms and plantations of the white exploiters by the feudal system of "share cropping." Only on paper and not in practice are they freed from the yoke of their former slavery. The same holds completely true for the great mass of black contract laborers. Here the contract is only the capitalist expression of the chains of the old slavery, which even today are not infrequently applied in their natural iron form on the roads of the Black Belt (chain gang work). There are the main forms of present Negro slavery in the Black Belt, and no breaking of the chains of this slavery is possible without confiscating all the landed property of the white masters. Without this revolutionary measure, without the agrarian revolution, the right of self-determination of the Negro population would be only a Utopia or, at best, would remain only on paper without changing in any way the actual enslavement.

(b) *Establishment of the state unity of the black Belt.* At the present time this Negro zone—precisely for the purpose of facilitating national oppression—is artificially split up and divided into a number of various states which include distant localities having a majority of white population. If the right of self-determination of the Negroes is to be put into force, it is necessary wherever possible to bring together into one governmental unit all districts of the South where the majority of the settled population consists of Negroes. Within the limits of this state there will of course remain a fairly significant white minority which must submit to the right of self-determination of the Negro majority. There is no other possible way of carrying out in a democratic manner the right of self-determination of the Negroes. Every plan regarding the establishment of the Negro state with an

exclusively Negro population in America (and of course, still more exporting it to Africa) is nothing but an unreal and reactionary caricature of the fulfillment of the right of self-determination of the Negroes, and every attempt to isolate and transport the Negroes would have the most damaging effect upon their interests. Above all, it would violate the right of the Negro farmers in the Black Belt not only to their present residences and their land, but also to the land owned by the white landlords and cultivated by Negro labor.

(c) *Right of self-determination.* This means complete and unlimited right of the Negro majority to exercise governmental authority in the entire territory of the Black Belt, as well as to decide upon the relations between their territory and other nations, particularly the United States. It would not be right of self-determination in our sense of the word if the Negroes in the Black Belt had the right of self-determination only in cases which concerned *exclusively* the Negroes and did not affect the whites, because the most important cases arising here are bound to affect the whites as well as Negroes. First of all, true right to self-determination means that the Negro majority and not the white minority in the entire territory of the administratively united Black Belt exercises the right of administering governmental, legislative, and judicial authority. At the present time all this power is concentrated in the hands of the white bourgeoisie and landlords. It is they who appoint all officials; it is they who dispose of public property; it is they who determine the taxes; it is they who govern and make the laws. Therefore, *the overthrow of this class rule* in the Black Belt is unconditionally necessary in the struggle for the Negroes' right to self-determination. This, however, means at the same time the overthrow of the yoke of American imperialism in the Black Belt on which the forces of the local white bourgeoisie depend. Only in this way, only if the Negro population of the Black Belt wins its freedom from American imperialism even to the point of deciding *itself* the relations between its country and other governments, especially the United States, will it win real and complete self-determination. One should demand from the beginning that no armed forces of American imperialism should remain on the territory of the Black Belt.

7. As stated in the letter of the Political Secretariat of the ECCI of March 16, 1930, the Communists must "*unreservedly* carry on a struggle" for the self-determination of the Negro population in the Black Belt in accordance with what has been set forth above. It is

incorrect and harmful to interpret the Communist standpoint to mean that the Communists stand for the right of self-determination of the Negroes only up to a certain point but not beyond this, to, for example, the right of separation. It is also incorrect to say that the Communists are only to carry on propaganda or agitation for the right of self-determination, but not to develop any activity to bring this about. No, it is of the utmost importance for the Communist Party to reject any such limitation of its struggle for this slogan. Even if the situation does not yet warrant the raising of the question of uprising, one should not limit oneself at present to propaganda for the demand. "Right to Self-Determination," but should organize mass actions, such as demonstrations, strikes, tax boycott movements. etc.

Moreover, the Party cannot make its stand for this slogan dependent upon any conditions, even the condition that the proletariat has the hegemony in the national revolutionary Negro movement or that the majority of the Negro population in the Black Belt adopts the Soviet form (as Pepper demanded), etc. It goes without saying that the Communists in the Black Belt will and must try to win over all working elements of the Negroes, that is, the majority of the population, to their side and to convince them not only that they must win the right of self-determination but also that they must make use of this right in accordance with the Communist program. But this cannot be made a *condition* for the stand of the Communists in favor of the right of self-determination of the Negro population. If, or so long as, the majority of this population wishes to handle the situation in the Black Belt in a different manner from that which we Communists would like, its complete right to self-determination must be recognized. This right we must defend as a free democratic right.

8. In general, the Communist Party of the United States has kept to this correct line recently in its struggle for the right of self-determination of the Negroes, even though this line—in some cases—has been unclearly or erroneously expressed. In particular, some misunderstanding has arisen from the failure to make a clear distinction between the demand for "right of self-determination" and the demand for governmental separation, simply treating these two demands in the same way. However, these two demands are not identical. Complete right to self-determination includes also the right to governmental separation, but does not necessarily imply that the Negro population should *make use of this* right in all circumstances, that is, that it must actually separate or attempt to separate the Black Belt from the

existing governmental federation with the United States. If it desires to separate, it must be free to do so: but if it prefers to remain federated with the United States it must also be free to do that. This is the correct meaning of the idea of self-determination, and it must be recognized quite independently of whether the United States is still a capitalist state or whether a proletarian dictatorship has already been established there.

It is, however, another matter if it is not a case of the *right* of the oppressed nation concerned to separate or to maintain governmental contact, but if the question is treated on its merits: whether it is to work for state separation, whether it is to struggle *for this* or not. This is another question, on which the stand of the Communists must *vary* according to the concrete conditions. If the proletariat has come into power in the United States, the Communist Negroes will not come out for but *against* separation of the Negro Republic from federation with the United States. But the *right* of the Negroes to governmental separation will be *unconditionally realized* by the Communist Party: it will unconditionally give the Negro population of the Black Belt freedom of choice even on this question. Only when the proletariat has come into power in the United States the Communists will carry on propaganda among the working masses of the Negro population against separation, in order to convince them that it is much better and in the interest of the Negro nation for the Black Belt to be a free republic, where the Negro majority has complete right of self-determination but remains governmentally federated with the great proletarian republic of the United States. The bourgeois counter-revolutionists, on the other hand, will then be interested in boosting the separation tendencies in the ranks of the various nationalities in order to utilize separatist nationalism as a barrier for the bourgeois counter-revolution against the proletarian dictatorship.

But the question at the present time is not this. As long as capitalism rules in the United States the Communists cannot come out against governmental separation of the Negro zone from the United States. They recognize that this separation from the imperialist United States would be preferable, from the standpoint of the national interests of the Negro population, to their present oppressed state, and therefore, the Communists are ready at any time to offer all their support if only the working masses of the Negro population are ready to take up the struggle for governmental independence of the Black Belt. At the present time, however, the situation in the national

struggle in the South is not such as to win mass support of the working Negroes for this separatist struggle: and it is not the task of Communists to call upon them to separate, without taking into consideration the existing situation and the desires of the Negro masses.

The situation in the Negro question in the United States, however, may undergo a radical change. It is even probable that the separatist efforts to obtain complete state independence of the Black Belt will gain ground among the Negro masses of the South in the near future. This is connected with the prospective sharpening of the national conflicts in the South, with the advance of the national revolutionary Negro movement, and with the exceptionally brutal fascist aggressiveness of the white exploiters of the South, as well as with the support of this aggressiveness by the central government authority of the United States. In this sharpening of the situation in the South, Negro separatism will presumably increase, and the question of independence of the Black Belt will become the question of the day. Then the Communist Party must also face this question and, if the circumstances seem favorable, must stand up with all strength and courage for the struggle to win independence and for the establishment of a Negro republic in the Black Belt.

9. The general relation of Communists to separatist tendencies among the Negroes, described above, cannot mean that Communists associate themselves at present, or generally speaking, during capitalism, indiscriminately and without criticism with all the separatist currents of the various bourgeois or petty bourgeois Negro groups. For there is not only a national-revolutionary, but also a reactionary Negro separatism, for instance, that represented by Garvey. His Utopia of an isolated Negro state (regardless of whether in Africa or America, if it is supposed to consist of Negroes only) pursues only the political aim of diverting the Negro masses from the real liberation struggle against American imperialism.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the "right of self-determination" slogan is a truly revolutionary slogan only in connection with the demand for complete separation. *The question of power is decided not only through* the demand of separation, but just as much through the demand of the *right* to decide the separation question and self-determination in general. A direct question of power is also the demand of confiscation of the land of the white exploiters in the South, as well as the demand of the Negroes that the entire Black Belt be amalgamated into a state unit.

Hereby, every single fundamental demand of the liberation struggle of the Negroes in the Black Belt is such that—if once thoroughly understood by the Negro masses and adopted as their slogan—it will lead them into the struggle for the overthrow of the power of the ruling bourgeoisie, which is impossible without such revolutionary struggle. One cannot deny that it is just possible for the Negro population of the Black Belt to win the right to self-determination during capitalism; but it is perfectly clear and indubitable that this is possible only through successful revolutionary struggle for power against the American bourgeoisie, through *wresting* the Negroes' right of self-determination from American imperialism. Thus, the slogan of right to self-determination is a real slogan of national rebellion which, to be considered as such, need not be supplemented by proclaiming struggle for the complete separation of the Negro zone, at least not at present. But it must be made perfectly clear to the Negro masses that the slogan "right to self-determination" includes the demand of full freedom for them to decide even the question of complete separation. We demand freedom of separation, real right of self-determination, wrote Lenin, "certainly not in order to 'recommend' separation, but on the contrary, in order to facilitate and accelerate the democratic rapprochement and unification of nations." For the same purpose. Lenin's party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, bestowed after its seizure of power on all the peoples hitherto oppressed by Russian Tsarism, the full right to self-determination, including the right of complete separation, and achieved thereby its enormous successes with regard to the democratic rapprochement and voluntary unification of nations.

10. The slogan for the right of self-determination and the other fundamental slogans of the Negro question in the Black Belt do not exclude but rather pre-suppose an energetic development of the struggle for concrete *partial demands* linked up with the daily needs and afflictions of wide masses of working Negroes. In order to avoid, in this connection, the danger of opportunist back-slidings. Communists must above all remember this:

(a) The direct aims and partial demands around which a partial struggle develops are to be linked up in the course of the struggle with the revolutionary fundamental slogans brought up by the question of power, in a popular manner corresponding to the mood of the masses. (Confiscation of the big landholdings, establishment of governmental unity of the Black Belt, right of self-determination of the Negro

population in the Black Belt.) Bourgeois-socialist tendencies to oppose such a revolutionary widening and deepening of the fighting demands must be fought.

(b) One should not venture to draw up a complete program of some kind, or a system of “positive” partial demands. Such programs on the part of petty-bourgeois politicians should be exposed as attempts to divert the masses from the necessary hard struggles by fostering reformist and democratic illusions among them. Every positive partial demand which might crop up is to be considered from the viewpoint of whether it is in keeping with our revolutionary fundamental slogans or whether it is of a reformist or reactionary tendency. Every kind of national oppression which arouses the indignation of the Negro masses can be used as a suitable point of departure for the development of partial struggles, during which the abolition of such oppressions, as well as their prevention through revolutionary struggle against the ruling exploiting dictatorship, must be demanded.

(c) Everything should be done to bring wide masses of Negroes into these partial struggles. This is important—and not to carry the various partial demands to such an ultra-radical point that the mass of working Negroes are no longer able to recognize them as *their own*. Without a real mobilization of the mass-movements—in spite of the sabotage of the bourgeois reformist Negro politicians—even the best Communist partial demands get hung up. On the other hand, even some relatively insignificant acts of the Ku Klux Klan bandits in the Black Belt can become the occasion of important political movements provided the Communists are able to organize the resistance of the indignant Negro masses. In such cases, mass movements of this kind can easily develop into real rebellion. This rests on the fact that—as Lenin said “Every act of national oppression calls forth resistance on the part of the masses of the population, and the tendency of every act of resistance on the part of oppressed peoples is the national uprising.”

(d) Communists must fight in the *forefront* of the national-liberation movement and must do their utmost for the progress of this mass movement and its revolutionization. Negro Communists must *clearly dissociate* themselves from all bourgeois currents in the Negro movement, must indefatigably oppose the spread of the influence of the bourgeois groups on the working Negroes. In dealing with them they must apply the communist tactic laid down by the Sixth C.I. Congress with regard to the colonial question, in order to

guarantee *the hegemony of the Negro proletariat* in the national liberation movement of the Negro population, and to coordinate wide masses of the Negro peasantry in a steady fighting alliance with the proletariat.

(e) One must work with the utmost energy for the establishment and consolidation of *Communist Party organizations* and revolutionary *trade unions* in the South. Furthermore, immediate measures must be taken for the organization of proletarian and peasant *self-defense* against the Ku Klux Klan. For this purpose the Communist Party is to give further instructions.

11. It is particularly incumbent on Negro Communists to criticize consistently the half-heartedness and hesitations of the petty-bourgeois national-revolutionary Negro leaders in the liberation struggle of the Black Belt, exposing them before the masses. All national reformist currents as, for instance, Garveyism, which are an obstacle to the revolutionization of the Negro masses, must be fought systematically and with the utmost energy. Simultaneously, Negro Communists must carry on among the Negro masses an energetic struggle against nationalist moods directed indiscriminately against all whites, workers as well as capitalists, Communists as well as imperialists. Their constant call to the Negro masses must be: *Revolutionary struggle against the ruling white bourgeoisie, through a fighting alliance with the revolutionary white proletariat!* Negro Communists must indefatigably explain to the mass of the Negro population that even if many white workers in America are still infected with Negrophobia, the American proletariat, as a class, which owing to its struggle against the American bourgeoisie represents the only truly revolutionary class, will be the only real mainstay of Negro liberation. Insofar as successes in the national-revolutionary struggle of the Negro population of the South for its right to self-determination are already possible under capitalism, they can be achieved only if this struggle is effectively supported by proletarian mass actions on a large scale in the other parts of the United States. But it is also clear that “only a victorious proletarian revolution will *finally decide* the agrarian question and the national question in the South of the United States, in the interest of the predominating mass of the Negro population of the country.” (*Colonial Theses of the Sixth World Congress*)

12. The struggle regarding the Negro question in the North must be linked up with the liberation struggle in the South, in order to endow the Negro movement throughout the United States with the

necessary effective strength. After all, in the North, as well as in the South, it is a question of the real emancipation of the American Negroes, which has in fact never taken place. The Communist Party of the United States must bring into play its entire revolutionary energy, in order to mobilize the widest possible masses of the white and black proletariat of the United States, not by words, but by deeds, for real effective support of the struggle for the liberation of the Negroes. Enslavement of the Negroes is one of the most important foundations of the imperialist dictatorship of United States capitalism. The more American imperialism fastens its yoke on the millions-strong Negro masses, the more must the Communist party develop the mass struggle for Negro emancipation, and the better use it must make of all conflicts which arise out of the national difference, as an incentive for revolutionary mass actions against the bourgeoisie. This is as much in the direct interest of the proletarian revolution in America. Whether the rebellion of the Negroes is to be the outcome of a general-revolutionary situation in the United States, whether it is to originate in the whirlpool of decisive fights for power by the working class, for proletarian dictatorship, or whether on the contrary the Negro rebellion will be the prelude of gigantic struggles for power by the American proletariat, cannot be foretold now. But in either contingency it is essential for the Communist Party *to make an energetic beginning now—at the present moment—with the organization of joint mass struggles* of white and black workers against Negro oppression. This alone will enable us to get rid of the bourgeois white chauvinism which is polluting the ranks of the white workers in America, to overcome the distrust of the Negro masses caused by the inhuman barbarous Negro slave traffic still carried on by the American bourgeoisie—inasmuch as it is directed even against all white workers—and to win over to our side these millions of Negroes as active fellow-fighters in the struggle for the overthrow of bourgeois power throughout America.