

## STUDY THE ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE!

The Second National Conference of our Party was held last fall under the slogans "Deeper among the masses -- Build the Marxist-Leninist Party!" and "Carry forward the struggle against racism and national oppression -- Work for proletarian leadership!" It had two purposes: It discussed and helped systematize the particular methods of work needed to implement the revolutionary line of the Second Congress of our Party in the present conditions of the capitalist offensive and the temporary ebb in the mass movement; and it was aimed at deepening the line of our Party on one particular, but quite important, front of the revolutionary struggle, namely, the struggle against racism and national oppression. The Conference presented much valuable

material summing up the work of our Party, examining some of the history of the mass upsurge of the 1960's, dealing with certain long-term controversies in the American communist movement and providing orientation for the revolutionary struggle.

The resolutions of this conference were published in the December 1, 1984 issue of the Workers' Advocate. In order to allow a deeper study of the views of the conference, the Supplement, starting with this issue, will contain a series of articles further elaborating its work.

In this issue we shall begin the series on the Second National Conference by reprinting two of the speeches that were given there. <>

## CARRY FORWARD THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM AND NATIONAL OPPRESSION -- WORK FOR PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP

Below we publish the speech at the Second National Conference which served as a general introduction to the series of speeches on particular aspects of the struggle against racism and national oppression. It has been edited for publication and certain omissions have been indicated.

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Comrades, I want to make a few introductory re-

marks on that aspect of the Conference dealing with the struggle against racism and national oppression. This Conference focuses on the black liberation movement, and there's several important reasons for doing so.

One reason is that there is a potentially explosive situation among the black people. In recent years, the struggle of the black people, and of the other oppressed nationalities, has not reached the great proportions or the revolutionary intensity that it had in the 1960s. As with the other mass movements, the black people's movement remains inconsistent, sporadic, and scattered. Nonetheless, there is a deep ferment working among the masses that at every point threatens to break out in renewed struggle.

We've pointed out that today all of the objective conditions are moving in the direction of throwing the working masses into struggle. And this is nowhere more true than among the black people and among the other oppressed nationalities. The vicious moves of the capitalists to shift the burden of the economic crisis onto the working masses is hitting the oppressed nationalities especially hard. What is more, the Reaganites are trying to take revenge on the black people for their dynamic struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s, and racism and segregationism are central features of the reactionary mood that is motivating the bourgeoisie today. These, and other conditions, are propelling the oppressed nationalities into motion.

Just in August, in Waynesboro, Georgia, we saw another small scale rebellion burst out against a brutal racist police murder. This struggle, and the

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# The Workers' Advocate Supplement



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Middle East to protect U.S. interests. Their only quibble with the Reagan over support for the fascist El Salvadoran government has been for a bogus certification of human rights progress.

We have reached the conclusion that to strengthen the fight against Reaganite reaction we must look at the question of classes in society. Historically the working people have produced the goods for society yet the rich have reaped the benefits of the workers' labor. Any improvements in working conditions, salaries or education for working families have been secured only through struggle against the bourgeoisie. The rich hate to see the working people demand anything that cuts into their parasitic profits and lifestyles, just as they were humiliated to be forced to open the doors of the universities to the children of poor and working families. The Student believes that the working class is the most dynamic, powerful and progressive fighting force against the rich because of the inherent contradictions between the workers and the rich. Therefore we stand for building a mass movement in solidarity with the working people.

To defend the gains of the 1960's against Reagan's reactionary attacks we must resort to mass actions such as demonstrations, marches and independent publication and distribution of our views. We prefer mass action instead of acts by individuals or bureaucrats because mass action draws as many progressive people as possible to participate; mass action publicly destroys the myth that students don't care about peace and justice anymore; and most importantly mass action serves to politicize the participants and observing sympathizers.

## **BUILD A MOVEMENT INDEPENDENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY!**

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### **SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

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other sporadic demonstrations and battles with the police and racist gangs that have taken place from time to time over the last several years, show the anger and the spirit of defiance that is boiling just below the surface among the black masses. These are the signs that if not this year, then eventually, the black liberation movement will again reemerge with all of its revolutionary sweep and vitality. And so it is important that we pay attention to this movement today, even when it is still weak and undeveloped, to help organize the masses and to gain influence, where we can, so the Party will be in the position to lead the movement forward in a revolutionary direction.

It is also important that we work to carry forward the struggle against racism and national oppression as one of the important means for uniting

Fellow activists and friends! Today there is a lull in the anti-war, anti-racist movement. The Student believes this is a result of the treachery of the Democratic Party and their social-democratic forces who are intent on spreading pessimism and defeatism. We therefore call upon all progressives in the Boston/Cambridge area to form an independent movement which is in solidarity with the working class and poor and to break with the Democratic Party. We must, above all, not forget the precious lessons of history. For history points a shining path forward on how we can fight the Reaganism of the Democrats and their Republican bedfellows. For history shows how to the fight the U.S. war preparations in Central America.

History shows that it was not through the benevolence of the Democrats that the rich left Viet Nam or that the rich gave concessions to the black people. No! It was the mass movements of working people, oppressed nationalities and students that forced the rich to make these concessions. However, as the mass movements dropped, the rich began their rampage to take back everything which they were forced to give. The Democrats and Republicans are both parties of the rich. They do not have the interests of the working people at heart. The only way to fight is through organizing a mass movement. The fighting youth of Watts, Newark, Detroit, waged powerful struggles against the rich to smash Jim Crow racism. They shed their blood so that we would continue their struggle forward and onward to fight all forms of exploitation. We call on progressive people to build the mass movement against U.S. imperialism and racism, in solidarity with the working class and independent of the Republicans and Democrats. <>

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the working class, for welding together the workers of all nationalities for the class struggle against the capitalist offensive. Brutal racial discrimination is one of the central features of Reaganite reaction. It is a weapon not only for driving down the conditions of the black people, but it is also a means for dividing the workers, for splitting up the working class, and thereby weakening the general movement against capitalist reaction. If we are to organize our class, if we are to solidify its ranks for the class struggle, then we must devote attention to the anti-racist struggle.

Even our struggle against reformism demands that we pay attention to the anti-racist movement. It is a significant fact that today the bourgeoisie is giving a lot of promotion to Jesse Jackson and other black reform spouting misleaders. This testifies to the bourgeoisie's concern about the ferment among the black masses, and of the bourgeoisie's desire to head off the struggle of the black masses, to divert

their anger into the safe harbors of the Democratic Party. But Jesse Jackson, Harold Washington, and other such figures have a broader significance than just for the black peoples movement. They are also being touted as the champions of the anti-war movement and of other progressive struggles, and as the most important leaders of the general fight against the Reaganite offensive. It is essential that we expose them, that we undermine their influence, if we are to rally the working people for the fight against the capitalist offensive.

So, comrades, for these and other reasons it's quite important for our Party to pay attention to the movement of the black people and of the other oppressed nationalities.

This conference will go into some of the more recent experience of our Party in the anti-racist struggle. It will also sum up certain aspects of the black liberation movement from the 1960s and early 70s. And it will deal with deepening our theoretical understanding of certain questions of orientation for the anti-racist movement.

At the 2nd Congress, we passed a powerful resolution that analyzed the movements against racism and national oppression and provided quite a clear orientation for our Party's work in these movements. At this conference we want to give more elaboration of the experience and thinking behind the orientation adopted at the 2nd Congress. At the same time we will try to develop the discussion on a couple of questions that we were not yet ready to fully resolve at the time of the 2nd Congress.

So I want to briefly go through different presentations that will be made and touch on some of the significance of them. I'm not going through these in the order that they're being given, but in a different manner.

### **THE PARTY WORKS ACTIVELY IN THE ANTI-RACIST MOVEMENT AND SEEKS TO GUIDE IT IN A REVOLUTIONARY DIRECTION**

The 2nd Congress resolution points out that the Party actively fights against racism and national oppression, that it stands shoulder to shoulder with the fighting masses, and from that position it works to guide the movement in a revolutionary direction. This I think is quite an important point. When the masses go into motion they do not come forward with ready made Marxist-Leninist clarity. They come forward not only with the spirit to struggle but they also frequently bring with them all kinds of backward ideological baggage. Our Party pays attention to uniting with the fighting spirit of the masses and carefully, and quite patiently, guiding them to direct their struggle against the capitalist system and the capitalist state; to give them a class perspective and orient the movement in an independent direction, separate from and against the

Democratic Party and the black misleaders.

[The speech then referred to the recent experience of the Party in working with activists who came up in the struggle against racism, in assisting them and in fostering a Marxist-Leninist, pro-party trend among them.]

There will also be a speech on the Black Panther Party and how the American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist) dealt with it. Here is an example of a petty bourgeois revolutionary trend that came up in the movement and gained wide influence and popularity. While it cannot be said that the tactics of the ACWM(M-L) towards the Black Panthers were perfect in every regard, this experience does show the importance of not standing aloof from such trends. No matter how rotten the leadership was, the Panthers did gain a mass following and the youth who joined it had a deep revolutionary sentiment. The ACWM(M-L) recognized the significance of such a force and worked to win them over to a proletarian perspective.

While the Panthers had their own particularity, if we look at this question in the broad sense, it is similar to the questions raised at the 2nd Congress about left social-democracy. Frequently the activists coming up are moving away from reformism and towards an anti-imperialist and revolutionary perspective. It is important that we find the way to get close to them, to get their ear, so that our criticism of the reformist and petty bourgeois perspective that still has them in its grips will have its impact, so that we can in fact guide them forward.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZING THE BLACK WORKERS**

The 2nd Congress resolution also emphasized the class differentiation taking place in the black people's movement and in this regards the importance of organizing the black workers. The vast majority of the black people are workers. They are the most consistent and resolute fighters against national oppression, they form the backbone of the anti-racist movement, and they play an important role in the class struggle of the proletariat as a whole. Experience has shown the importance of organizing the black workers, on the one hand, and of encouraging the struggle against the sellout bourgeois elements in the black people's movement, on the other hand. In this regards, there are three speeches of particular interest that will be presented to the Conference.

The first speech, which the comrade already mentioned, is on our work at Roswell Park Hospital. This speech sums up our experience in organizing the black workers against racism in the workplace and also into the general workers' struggle; it points out the role of this work at the workplace in assisting our work in the general anti-racist movement;

and it goes into the question of the struggle against a black bourgeois nationalist trend headed up, or around, a figure by the name of Arthur Eve. So this is one of the speeches on this question.

The second speech comes from the experience of the 1960s and early 70s. In that period -- this is particularly the late 1960s and early 70s -- a black workers' movement came up as part of the general workers' movement; it was inspired by the black liberation struggle, and it came up fighting against racism in the factories. This speech centers on the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit is one of the manifestations, one of the organizations that came up in this movement. It probably has the largest reputation, was most widely known during that period, and it's of particular interest because in many regards the League of Revolutionary Black Workers represented both what was the best in the movement and what was the worst in it. So we'll have a speech on the League which deals with the particular organization of the black workers movement, but the speech will also go into that movement in general, and draw various conclusions from that experience that will help to orient our work in the future.

So besides these two speeches, if time permits, we'll also have a brief speech on the history of Jesse Jackson and his organization, called PUSH, that shows that its history is one of being based on the biggest of the black bourgeoisie and that the creation of PUSH represented a turn to the right even away from the traditions of the civil rights movement towards an even more profoundly bourgeois approach to the black peoples movement.

So these three speeches deal with the question particularly of the question of the class differentiation in the movement, and the important question of the necessity of organizing the black workers.

## ON NATIONALITY ORGANIZATION

The 2nd Congress resolution pointed out the importance of ensuring that the workers of all nationalities are incorporated into class organizations of the proletariat. Now this is quite significant.

Lenin teaches, and our experience has shown us, that the working class must be inspired by the highest ideals of proletarian internationalism and that the organizations of the workers, if they are to truly unite the workers and organize them as a class, must be unitary organizations, that is they must bring together workers from every nationality and in fact facilitate the organization of the workers as a class. I think this point is fairly clear.

But there are a series of questions that arise as to our view towards nationality organization. Should there be special organizations to fight racism, or organizations of the black people's movement, you could say; organizations of the movements

of other oppressed nationalities; of the immigrant communities; and so forth? Should such organizations exist? If they should exist, should these organizations be composed solely of the members of that oppressed nationality? And, even if we are most interested in organizations that pull together the working masses from various nationalities, there is still the question of what attitude should we take to nationality organizations that arise spontaneously in the course of definite struggles and definite movements?

These and other questions come up. For some time our Party has, in practice, recognized a role for nationality organization as an auxiliary form of organization. For example, we supported, saw a role for, and assisted the development of the Caribbean Progressive Study Group. But we had not worked out, in general form, in what circumstances we believe nationality organization plays a positive role and how we should work with such an organization. For this reason the 2nd Congress resolution was only able to speak to the question of incorporating workers of all nationalities into the proletarian organizations, but we weren't able to also formulate the question of our view towards nationality organization. Since the 2nd Congress, there's been further study on the question, further work to sum up our own experience, to look into the classics, and so forth.

At this conference, many of the speeches will in fact touch on this question -- the speeches that deal with certain questions of history of the black peoples movement and certain of the speeches that deal with the questions of our direct experience. But there are two speeches that especially deal with this question.

One speech is directly on the question of nationality organization. This speech sums up our direct experience; it sums up the general experience in the movement, especially in the 1960s, and looks at the question as it arose earlier in the communist movement; and it deals with some of the classic teachings on the question of nationality organization. It arrives at certain general conclusions on under what conditions we would support nationality organization and what direction, in general, should be given to such organizations.

Besides this speech there is also a speech on the history and the experience of the CPSG which, in detailing this direct experience, shows some lessons on this organization and the work with nationality organization.

So comrades, I should note here, before I go on, that the CC does not propose that this conference come to a resolution on the question of the nationality organization. Rather, the aim is to use the conference to initiate this discussion, so that it can be further deepened, following the Conference, in the local areas. And then later we will take a decision on the question.

[The speech then passed onto another subject and introduced the question of certain longstanding theoretical controversies in the American communist movement concerning the black people's movement.]

### **CARRY FORWARD THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM AND NATIONAL OPPRESSION**

So, Comrades, in brief terms this is the content of the Conference on the question of the struggle against racism and national oppression.

The various speeches that will be presented provide a very rich treasure house of revolutionary experience. This experience, when summed up and concentrated, fully confirms the correctness of the resolutions of the 2nd Congress of our Party. And, moreover, what this experience shows is the vital necessity of following the orientation and tactical approaches provided in the 2nd Congress resolutions if we are to lend our voice to the struggle against racism and national oppression, if we are to assist the masses to get organized and to advance on the

revolutionary road.

Today the Reaganites are on a vicious racist crusade against the black people and against all of the oppressed nationalities. But there is a ferment growing deep within the heart of the oppressed masses. The experience of the 1960's showed the profound revolutionary potential of this force. We must work to tap that revolutionary potential.

The struggle against racism and national oppression is a vital struggle against the current capitalist offensive. But, what is more, if we organize this struggle, if we establish our Party deep among the masses of the oppressed nationalities and if we guide their struggle forward, then the black liberation movement and the revolutionary movements of the other oppressed nationalities can play an important role in preparing and unleashing the socialist revolution.

To this end we raise the fighting slogans of this period: **Carry forward the struggle against racism and national oppression — Work for proletarian leadership!** <>

### **SPEECH ON THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARY BLACK WORKERS**

Below we publish the full text of the following speech delivered at the Second National Conference of the Marxist-Leninist Party in fall 1984. It has been edited for publication.

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In this speech, I would like to talk about the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. First I want to introduce the League so that comrades are familiar with it.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers was a movement that came up among black workers in Detroit, especially in the auto industry, in the period right after the Detroit rebellion of 1967. Beginning in 1968 a series of black workers' organizations emerged in Detroit area factories which called themselves "revolutionary union movements", such as DRUM—Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement at Chrysler's Dodge Main assembly plant, ELRUM at Chrysler's Eldon Ave. Gear and Axle plant, FRUM at Ford Rouge, etc. These organizations agitated on and launched a number of wildcat strikes and other actions against racial discrimination in the plants, against institutional racism within the UAW, against murderous working conditions, and against the persecution of workers.

The League was formed as a coordinating umbrella group of the different Revolutionary Union Movements in early 1969. The League also put out a newspaper and agitated on and organized struggles on a series of other fronts in the black community in Detroit. The League in its general program claimed to stand for an anti-capitalist revolution, one they said

would be organized under the leadership of the black working class.

The League was active through 1971-2 at which time it collapsed amidst factional strife. Remnants of the League went into the Marxist-Leninist movement and became part of the neo-revisionist trend through the Black Workers Congress and the Communist League. Another remnant, around Ken Cockrel, formed the local "municipal socialist" social-democratic trend in Detroit called DARE, the Detroit Alliance for a Rational Economy, which liquidated itself a couple of years ago.

The League is long dead and gone. But it is worthwhile taking a closer look at the phenomenon that it represented. The League was part of a general phenomenon that came up in the late 1960's of a black workers' movement. The League reflected militant black workers organizing against racism in the plants and unions. It reflected black workers taking a fighting stand against capitalist exploitation. The League also saw the black workers taking up an important role in the general black people's movement. As well, within this trend of the black workers' movement that came up at that time, the League in particular reflected a section of the black workers turning towards Marxism-Leninism and socialism, despite the confused nature of the ideology of the League.

Thus the League is useful to study as a historical phenomenon from the black movement of the 1960's. The issue is not so much that a specific organization like the League will repeat itself again. No, the League was very much a product of