

## Outline for Panel Presentation on the Black Nation Thesis

### 1st Presentation:

- I. Political History and Significance of Black Nation Thesis
- II. Exposition of Black Nation Thesis

### I. Political History and Significance of Black Nation Thesis

- A. Centrality of struggle for Marxist-Leninist analysis of nature of Black oppression
  - 1. Pragmatist and anti-theoretical legacy of communist movement
  - 2. History of theoretical confusion and muddle on question of Black oppression in communist movement
  - 3. Fusion line's downplaying of theoretical tasks
- B. Development of Black Nation Thesis by Comintern -- 1928 - 1930 and adoption by CPUSA
  - 1. Positive impact on communist movement's practice in anti-racist struggle
  - 2. Break with liquidationist line of earlier period and recognition of struggle against racism as revolutionary struggle
  - 3. Line spoke to conditions of Blacks in 1930's -- had some basis in material reality of plantation system
  - 4. Oriented the Party for the first time towards work in the South
  - 5. Line theoretically flawed in its application of national framework of analysis to oppression of Blacks in U.S.
- C. Dropping of Black Nation Thesis by CPUSA in 1950's and adoption of a national minorities/equal rights framework coincides with Party's descent into revisionism
- D. Adoption of the line by the new communist movement in the 1970's as part of anti-revisionist critique.
  - 1. Shallowness of theoretical work accompanying resurrection of the line
  - 2. Line no longer retaining any basis in material reality
- E. Anti-revisionist/Anti-left opportunist Trend's theoretical work on this question
  - 1. Generally struggle for theoretical clarity unsystematized. Consequently, Trend activists hold all kinds of vague, and sometimes contradictory formulations
  - 2. PWOC's line a coherent presentation of Black Nation Thesis with variant: The Black Nation was dissolved with the break-up of the plantation system in the 1950's
  - 3. Critical scrutiny of Black Nation Thesis as the beginning point for systematizing line struggle

## II. Exposition of the Black Nation Thesis

- A. Need for a reconstruction of the line in its "best case" version
- B. Roots of the line in Stalin's formulation on nationhood
- C. Main elements of the line:
  - 1. Historical view of the Civil War as a second bourgeois democratic revolution and of Reconstruction having been betrayed by the bourgeoisie. The failure to grant bourgeois democratic rights to the freedman as the basis for the forging of the Black nation
  - 2. Black Belt as the territory of the Black nation determined by concentration of majority Black population
  - 3. Economic analysis of plantation system as the economic base of the Black nation. Class differentiation as the signal of its emergence. Semi-feudal character of the plantation system
  - 4. Political program:
    - a. Self-determination for the Black Belt. Confiscation of plantation property and land distribution. State unity of the Black Belt. Two-stage revolution.
    - b. Equal rights for Blacks in the North and in non-Black Belt South