

BLACK LIBERATION
&
PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION



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Black Liberation

And

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**BOLSHEVIK LEAGUE OF THE U.S.
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INTRODUCTION

The question of which road the Black Liberation Movement should take has been hotly debated. It has become especially sharp as the crisis of imperialism continues to intensify.

The wave of terror killings against both Black children and adults, from Buffalo to Atlanta to Salt Lake City, reflects a general upsurge of open racism and chauvinism. Among various acts of fueling this chauvinist fire, the failure of the courts to deal harshly with the KKK scum who randomly shot at Black women in Chattanooga, Tennessee, shows that the capitalist state apparatus is actively encouraging this wave of terror.

The solutions of the ruling class to astronomical Black unemployment is to bring back legalized discrimination by reducing the minimum wage for Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and other oppressed nationality youth. Beyond this, they offer either the military or jail. And as the preparations for a new imperialist war continue, we can be sure that Black people will be important targets of the chauvinist hysteria that is whipped up to herd the masses into supporting imperialist war.

All this is leading to an upsurge by the working class and Black and other oppressed peoples. Exactly when and where it will come, we cannot predict. Mass spontaneous rebellions, like the summer 1980 rebellion in Miami's Black community, already are indications of a tendency in that direction.

But the spontaneity of such rebellions, the lack of clear long-range goals or even "short range tactical plan, reveals the greatest obstacle holding back all those exploited and oppressed, including Black people: the absence of revolutionary leadership. By this, we are not referring to the crisis that has split and weakened the pitiful reformist Black "leaders" who are financed and promoted by the banks and corporations. We are referring to the dominance of petty bourgeois and bourgeois nationalist and reformist forces who falsely claim to be "revolutionary", "anti-imperialist", and, sometimes even "communist". It is these forces who prevent the oppressed from organizing themselves, and who divert them down a path that only benefits a narrow elite of petty bourgeois and bourgeois Blacks. What remains absent is a truly revolutionary, vanguard Marxist-Leninist party that can lead the masses to overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with socialism.

Such a party could lead a successful proletarian revolution only if it provided a revolutionary solution to the national oppression all oppressed peoples face. This means fighting consistently against all forms of national oppression, and upholding

the right of nations to self-determination, that is, the freedom of political secession. Genuine Communists are internationalists and stand for the closest revolutionary unity of the workers of all countries, without exception. This can only be accomplished voluntarily, through free and uncoerced union. Hence, upholding the right to self-determination cannot encourage chauvinism or nationalism, but only the fraternal solidarity and national confidence among the working and toiling masses of the world.

These principles have long ago been applied to the situation of Black people in the U.S. In 1928 and 1930, the Communist International passed resolutions on the Black national question. These resolutions, directly inspired by the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, explain how Black people in the Black Belt South constitute an oppressed nation with the right to self-determination, and Black People elsewhere an oppressed national minority. We have reprinted these resolutions in a separate pamphlet (see ad page to obtain it), since the various opportunists prefer to see these essential revolutionary guides remain out of print and otherwise almost impossible to find. Certain specific features of Black national oppression have changed in the many years since these resolutions were written, such as the destruction of the plantation system. Today the vast majority of Black people are exploited as wage workers and reside in urban, not rural, areas. Yet the basic analysis and path laid out for the Black Liberation struggle still remains valid.

In order to combat all the chauvinist, reformist, and nationalist illusions spread about the source of the oppression of Black people and its solution, the Bolshevik League is reprinting several articles from past issues of *Bolshevik Revolution* about Black national oppression and the Black movement. These articles are aimed at workers, oppressed people, and progressives of all nationalities, to educate them to our internationalist, communist analysis. They especially expose the opportunists who are leading the Black movement down the path of capitulation with imperialism, and thus to defeat. Also reprinted is a position paper we submitted to a conference in Atlanta in October, 1980, to plan for a mass national conference of Black workers. We trust these articles, which are only the beginning of our analysis on the Black national question, will be a first step to defeating chauvinism, national reformism, and nationalism. As with all our literature, comments and criticisms are welcome.

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES AND
OPPRESSED PEOPLES UNITE!
November, 1980

Black National Oppression and Capitalism

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The founding conference of the National Black United Front is being held under the conditions of an increasingly grave general crisis of the imperialist system. Black working people are bearing a major brunt of the economic crisis that has already thrown millions of workers out of work, and continues to slash the living standards of the vast majority of the population. The rival imperialist blocs, one led by the U.S. and the other led by Russia, are arming to the teeth in preparation for new world war. In the U.S., there are signs that the growing crisis is leading to an upsurge in spontaneous activity of the working and oppressed people. The rebellion in the Black community of Miami against police tyranny is one indication of the potential of a more leftward, radical swing of the masses.

Yet what stands out most sharply as the main factor holding back the working class and oppressed peoples is the absence of leadership and organization. The trade union leaders are paid servants of their capitalist bosses. The old-line civil rights leaders like Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson, Vernon Jordan, etc., are discredited as having no other program than to say "cool it". The phoney "leftist" parties of Maoists, trotskyites, and the like have proved to be nothing but middle-class reform clubs that enthusiastically support the war preparations of the U.S., Russia, China, France, Canada and all their allies and vassals. All the above have been rejected by the most politically advanced workers, oppressed peoples, and political activists.

It is in this context that the Black United Front comes forth and promises to be a "new vehicle" for the masses to replace the discredited leaders with a new organization. The Black United Front (BUF) says it will fight in the interests of "Black people from all economic, political, social and educational backgrounds with the goal of formulating a Human Rights Agenda." Many black working people, along with workers and oppressed people of various other national groups, are looking to the National Black United Front to lead the struggle to end oppression and to accomplish the goal of its slogan of "organizing for victory in the 80's."

The question arises: Can the Black United Front do what it promises? Does it offer a solution to the oppression

it says it opposes? Examining the dominant politics in the Black' United Front reveals that rather than posing a solution to the crisis of the decaying system of capitalism rather than offering a plan for what it calls "a radical rearrangement of the social order", the BUF offers little more than band-aid solutions that leave the source of oppression and exploitation intact.

Black National Oppression Can not Be Ended Under Capitalism

Let us start with the concept of a "human rights agenda". The idea of "human rights" has been put forward for centuries by capitalists to give the illusion that under capitalist "democracy", there is equality for all, for oppressor and oppressed alike, for exploiter and exploited alike. Yet the answer to this deceptive and hypocritical slogan of "human rights" is not to demand equality and democracy for all classes, all humans. This is impossible. All declarations of formal equality are absolutely meaningless under capitalism, where a tiny handful of rich financiers control the wealth, property, and power of the society, and live off the labor of the majority of the people. Calling for "human rights" continues the illusion that there is a common interest between capitalist and worker, between oppressor nations and oppressed nations, between slave-owner and slave. The slogan of "human rights" blurs the irreconcilable nature of the contradiction between exploiters and exploited. This is why it was put forth by the imperialist representative Carter, since it fostered such illusions. It is not in the interest of Black working people or any other working people to join in a chorus of deception with the likes of Carter.

A similar illusion is put forward regarding the interests of the various classes among the Black people. It is not true that their fundamental interests are the same. On the contrary, the fundamental interests of Black workers are in direct opposition to the fundamental interests of the Black bourgeoisie in the U.S. and even some sections of the Black petty bourgeoisie. This is because the basic reason for the tremendous oppression of Black working people has been and is the capitalist system itself. The Black bourgeoisie and some of the Black petty bourgeoisie merely want to get into this system, and therefore demand some reforms that will guarantee them a privileged position. The basic interests of Black workers, poor farmers, and other exploited Black people require not a few reforms, but the complete overthrow and abolition of the capitalist system in order for them to be emancipated, emancipated.

The exploitation of Black people has always been a cornerstone of the capitalist system. In explaining the development of capitalism, Karl Marx said:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the con-

quest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moment of primitive accumulation." (*Capital*, Vol. 1, International Publishers, 1975 edition, p. 751)

Black slave labor enforced by murder and terror was a major source of the profits of the early capitalists. Only when slavery came into contradiction with the requirements of profit-seeking by industrial capitalism was it abolished, and not out of any humanitarian or moral impulses or sympathy with the numerous slave revolts. In fact, soon after the ending of slavery in the U.S. the Northern capitalists restored the power and wealth of the former slave owners in the South. They reversed the bourgeois-democratic gains of the Reconstruction period, and jointly instituted a semi-slave system of plantations and sharecropping. This was not out of malice or pure prejudice, but solely to maintain Black labor as cheap labor. The institutions of the segregationist Jim Crow system in the South was mandated by the transition of capitalism from its competitive stage, to the stage of imperialism and the dominance of monopolies.

With the rise of imperialism came an intensification of national oppression as the imperialists strove to grab super-profits by exporting capital to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The 1898 war between the U.S. and Spain resulted in the U.S. annexing the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guam. Around the same time the U.S. conquered Hawaii. This brutal national oppression was not limited to overseas adventures. In the U.S. Black people were mainly concentrated in the Black Belt South, in the former slave areas. Forcibly kept from assimilating into American capitalist society, the Black people in the Black Belt were forged into an oppressed nation by the crushing yoke of imperialism. Following the analysis put forward by Lenin and Stalin, the Communist International in 1928 and 1930 put forward resolutions explaining oppression of the Black nation and calling for its liberation from imperialism and upholding its right to self-determination.

While there have been important changes in some forms of class oppression facing Black working people, the oppressed Black nation continues to exist today. Migrations to industrial jobs in the north and west, especially for war production during both world wars, merely meant that Black working people were to be exploited as cheap labor more in factories rather than on farms. The development of agribusinesses and more mechanized, monopolized farm production further ruined the poor Black farmers and drove millions into the cities all over the U.S. looking for work, so often in vain. Because of greater export of capital to the South and industrialization that took place, especially after World War II, the old Jim Crow system of official segregation, which was part of the agrarian plantation system, was replaced with an unofficial system of national oppression more in keeping with the requirements of industrial life. The Northern imperialists encouraged the Civil right movement, especially after the Supreme Court decision in 1954 outlawing segregation, in order to break the hold of the Southern landowners and capitalists who benefited from the old system. The Northern financiers bankrolled bourgeois and petty bourgeois reformists like the NAACP and Martin Luther

King, to keep the lid on the Black masses by advocating non-violence, reliance on courts and elections, etc. The result of the civil rights movement was that a few bourgeois and petty bourgeois Blacks got into privileged positions within the imperialist system, but nothing fundamentally changed for the Black masses. For example, segregated Miami became desegregated Miami. We have seen how much real change that has meant.

Again, the industrialization that has taken place in the Black Belt and the economically forced dispersment of many Black people out of the Black Belt has neither eased national oppression nor erased the existence of the Black nation. There is still a core area of about 80 adjoining or nearly adjoining counties of Black majority, with many more of near Black majority. This area includes parts of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington D.C. As an oppressed nation, it is a haven for capitalists to export capital and reap super-profits. For example, a 1979 report issued by the Conference of State Manufacturers Associations listed the three states with the best "business climates" in the U.S., that is, the best potentials for maximum profits, as Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Eight out of the top 12 states were Southern states with large Black populations. North Carolina, South Carolina, and Mississippi were three of the top four states with the lowest percentage of unionized labor for non-agricultural workers. South Carolina had the least work stoppages while North Carolina had the lowest weekly wage. Is this coincidence? Of course not. All it means is that the Black nation continues to be held in chains as a source of cheap labor and super-profits for the bourgeoisie.

The condition of the Black masses outside the Black Belt is not much better. Crowded into urban ghettos, the Black people outside of the Black Belt constitute an oppressed national minority long denied equality by the capitalist system. The ghettos are centers of unemployment, slums, drugs—and rebellions. Modern day lynch law became known as police brutality and murder.

So long as capitalism exists it needs cheap labor, and for this reason so long as capitalism exists there will be the national oppression of Black people. The whole system of national oppression rests on the economic subjugation of the Black nation and the Black working people outside the nation. Thus, only by overthrowing the capitalist system, only by abolishing private property, only by replacing production for profit with production for use, and only by instituting a socialist system can the national oppression of Black people be eliminated. Only then will there be equality of nations and an end to all class and national oppression. Likewise, only by overthrowing the rule of imperialism in the Black nation can that oppressed nation achieve true liberation. Otherwise, without the overthrow of imperialism, the slogan of self-determination remains a meaningless, empty phrase.

The Bankruptcy of National Reformism

It is significant that the theme of overthrowing imperialism is entirely absent from the B.U.F. Instead, the emphasis is upon trying to reform imperialism, trying to secure equality within its framework. Along with this, the special conditions of the Black nation in the Black Belt are not raised, nor is the question of self-determination even raised. The platform of the Black United Front is so vague that it only can be interpreted as being

reformist. Trying to reform the nature of imperialism is futile enough at any time. Any partial concessions won in the course of struggle can easily be taken away so long as the bourgeoisie rules. Yet advancing such a reformist strategy and promising "victory in the 80's" is particularly diversionary at this time.

The entire world capitalist system is in the throes of a grave economic crisis. The economies of imperialist countries including the U.S., Russia, Canada, and others have begun to collapse. In the U.S., the bourgeoisie is not preparing for another round of reforms like the "New-Deal" or the "Great Society", neither of which solved the economic crises of their times. The capitalist system is so beset with so many crisis piled up upon each other, including recession, inflation, energy problems, intensified struggle for markets and the possibility of a trade war, weakness of banks, etc., that they have no "normal" or peaceful way out of this general crisis. The U.S. is hit hard by this crisis as it is particularly in decline as an imperialist power. Confrontation with the Russian-led bloc is coupled with a growing split within its own bloc. The situations in Iran and Afghanistan, along with the resumption of the draft and the boost in military spending, all show that the only "solution" the imperialists have to offer to this crisis is that of war to repartition the world. In talking about the 80's, the question of war and the attitude towards it must be emphasized. But the Black United Front proceeds as if capitalism can still somehow stabilize itself and overcome its crisis so we all can fulfilled the "American dream."

What we thus see is an approach that does not address the realities posed by this system. This makes us wonder just what the attitude of some sections of the Black United Front will be to imperialist war. The attitude of the class-conscious proletariat is to try to prevent imperialist war by overthrowing imperialism. If this cannot be done before a war, the proletariat and all other exploited and oppressed people must turn the imperialist war into a civil war. A pacifist response will only serve to disarm the proletariat precisely at the time it can seize power. Our policy must be to arm the proletariat and disarm the bourgeoisie. All those who truly oppose the national oppression of Black people will support such a revolutionary position. Also, no support will be given to any other imperialists, including the Russian imperialists who falsely pose as "communist", who just want to take over and exploit what the U.S. today controls.

instead of this, we see the bankrupt line of national reformism. In the movement of all oppressed nations and national minorities, there is both a national revolutionary and a national reformist line. The latter wants to gain some reforms and secure a place within the imperialist system. The attention giver, by the Black United Front to electing bourgeois Black officials is another indication of this national reformism. The experiences of Newark, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Detroit, Washington, Gary and Birmingham, which all have Black mayors, show, just like the much-heralded "gains" of the civil rights movement, nothing has changed for the Black workers. The only ones who benefit are a few middle class Blacks.

Herein lies another problem with the Black United Front—its distinctly middle class orientation. Just reviewing the list of workshops at its founding conference verifies this. Out of almost 20 workshops, there is one on Black workers, and that one will focus on the issue of Black trade unionists. What about the *majority* of Black

workers, who, like all workers, are not in unions? Also, incredibly, there is no workshop on the unemployed. How can this problem not be placed as a special topic facing Black people? Yet other workshops focus on such issues as a 'ijji bank, the media, college students, performing arts and graphics, and electoral politics. It appears once again that the Black United Front is in practice mainly appealing to a middle class base. While it is true that the Black petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie are also driven down by the crisis of imperialism, it is also true that they respond to the crisis from the standpoint of their own *class* interests. Their interest is not to overthrow imperialism, but to try to become part of it. For example, in the 1950's and 1960's, when the NAACP had already established all its connections to the bourgeoisie, a new generation of Black petty bourgeois leaders arose to try to get their own share. King was the most prominent of these. The political leaders of King's movements, such as his close associates Andrew Young and Jesse Jackson, have long since parlayed their leading of street marches into sharing in the fruits of imperialist plunder. Young, a member of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, regularly visits Africa as a U.S. trade representative.

Today a new generation of petty bourgeois and bourgeois Blacks are trying to take this same path. Yet because of the severity of the present capitalist crisis, the door to the parasitic riches of imperialism is often closed to them. So, like Young and Jackson twenty years earlier, they take to the streets in demonstrations, trying to build a mass following as a bargaining chip to be traded to the bourgeoisie for some guaranteed privileges for a few middle class Blacks. Such a policy is not necessarily the result of a conscious betrayal of the interests of the Black masses, but rather the natural outcome of the pursuit of a petty bourgeois and bourgeois class world outlook. In any case, all those who really stand for the basic interests of the Black working masses must break with such politics. At this point, it appears that the Black United Front is designed especially to appeal to such politics and class interests, rather than to break with them.

Rather than combating national reformism, the so-called "communist" groups are adapting themselves to it. Roth the League of Revolutionary Struggle, which includes Amiri Baraka, and the Communist Party (M-L), which includes Harry Haywood, raise absolutely no exposure of national reformism and in fact unite with it. This should not be surprising, as both these groups also support the "theory of the three worlds" and the preparations of the U.S., Nato, and China for a new imperialist war. Despite what they claim, these groups are really petty bourgeois social-chauvinists that support their "own" bourgeoisie.

Another phoney "communist" group that supports national reformism is the Maoist Communist Workers Party (CWP). The problem with the Black church, they say, is that "there is no Khomeini in sight." ("Black Scholar," March April 1980, p. 55, article by CWP leaders Nelson Johnson and Phil Thompson). In other words, they want the Black movement to be under the hegemony of petty bourgeois and even, possibly semi-feudal elements, just as the Iranian Islamic "revolution" is, which has viciously attacked the rights of workers, oppressed nationalities, women, and revolutionaries. Some model! CWP's politics differ from the other opportunists only in that they are more part of the frenzied section of the petty bourgeoisie driven mad by the crisis of imperialism. Their suicidal

confrontation with the Klan last year in Greensboro only demonstrated the futility of their politics.

Bourgeois Nationalism or Proletarian Internationalism

Alongside the national reformism that dominates the Black United Front is bourgeois nationalism, especially in the form of Pan-Africanism. Since capitalism is at the root of the oppression of Black people, there is a common interest between the workers and oppressed peoples of all nationalities. Yet there is no common interest, as we have shown, between the Black proletariat and the Black bourgeoisie. Rather than promoting the solidarity between the workers of all countries, bourgeois nationalism and Pan-Africanism promotes unity of all classes of Black people, the unity of the exploiters and exploited. Rather than emphasizing the need for the hegemony of the Black proletariat, bourgeois nationalism and Pan-Africanism in reality promote the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Pan-Africanism in particular downplays the extremely influential role the Black proletariat in the U.S. can have on the national movements in Africa, where the proletariat is less developed.

In contrast to bourgeois nationalism, genuine communists promote proletarian internationalism. The solidarity of the workers of all countries can only be built on a voluntary basis. This requires absolute recognition of the equality of all nations, irreconcilable opposition to all national oppression, and recognition of the right to self-determination of nations, that is, the right to political separation. Through these principles, under Lenin and Stalin the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a Socialist Federation of nations was built. An international communist movement located in every continent and in every corner of the globe was built. That capitalism has been restored in the USSR only means that socialism must be rebuilt and the entire imperialist system be smashed.

The bourgeois and petty bourgeois politics of Black nationalism and Pan-Africanism usually point to the widespread white chauvinism among white workers and their relatively better living standards than Black workers. These are facts. But Marxist-Leninists only conclude from this that, in the absence of a Proletarian Party

modeled after the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin, class consciousness is extremely low among all workers including white workers. The relatively better economic conditions and less oppressive political situation that many white workers have does not mean that they are not also exploited or have a stake in maintaining national oppression and imperialism. On the contrary, except for a minority bribed upper stratum, the entire proletariat, including most white workers, has no interest in imperialist war, national oppression, or maintaining this system. It is the task of the class-conscious leaders of the proletariat to educate all workers of their *class* interest and to combat all bourgeois and petty bourgeois illusions and prejudices so common in bourgeois society.

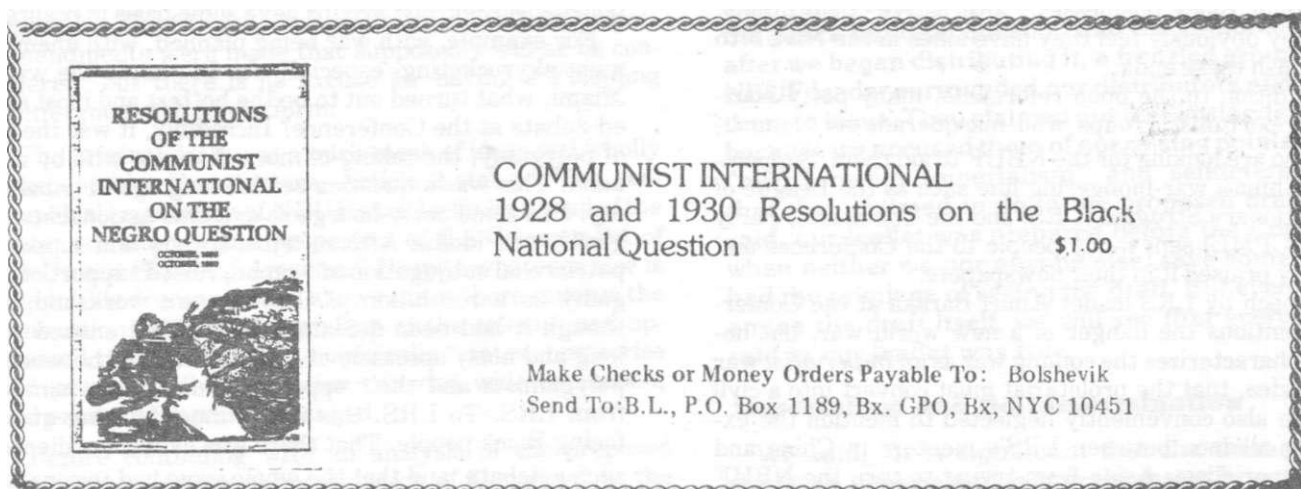
The Road Ahead

National reformism and bourgeois nationalism will not free Black people. Instead, they will only further their oppression and suffering. The only path to ending national oppression is the path of proletarian revolution, of socialism. The advent of imperialist war will make even clearer just what the solution to class and national oppression is.

To travel successfully along this path, it is true that new leadership and a new organization is needed. But that organization must be a revolutionary general staff of the entire working class, a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party with clear ideology, a revolutionary program, and solid organization. The central task for all those who truly desire to end not only the oppression of Black people, but the exploitation of all working and downtrodden peoples, is to construct such a party to lead the working people to victory.

In the wake of the deepening economic crisis and the steps to imperialist war, we will see more rebellions like the spontaneous rebellion in Miami's Black community. In the struggles against particular manifestations of class and national oppression, the enemy must be clearly identified: the imperialist system. National reformism and bourgeois nationalism only divert the struggle of Black people away from the actual source of national oppression. We call on all workers and oppressed peoples to take up the banner:

Workers of All Countries, Unite!



On The Black United Front Conference

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The Founding Conference of the National Black United Front (NBUF) was held in Brooklyn, N.Y. from June 26 to June 29. Many different views on the direction of the Black liberation movement were put forth, as the conference was attended by numerous varieties of Pan-Africanists, nationalists, Maoists, clergy, politicians, other political activists, along with some genuine Communists and a few workers. Over 1,000 people from many parts of the U.S. attended, although the great bulk were from the Northeast and the New York area.

The establishment of this new national organization, which may play an extremely influential role in the struggle of Black people against national oppression, demands the attention of all genuine Communists and class-conscious workers.

Some sections and representatives of the ruling class are clearly looking to the NBUF to play the role of a sort of "left wing" of the national reformist current in the Black national movement. For example, an editorial in the New York *Amsterdam News*, long a voice of Black national reformism, noted the demise and discrediting of many of the old reformist civil rights groups, and said, "It is into that void that NBUF thrusts its banner and joins the ongoing battle—joining with our welcome and best wishes." (July 5, 1980, p. 14) Forces like this want the NBUF to be merely the latest nation-wide group to divert the Black national movement away from the revolutionary struggle against imperialism and onto a reformist path. They also want the NBUF to take a nationalist path that has workers of various nationalities tailing after the bourgeoisie of their nationality and fighting other workers, instead of uniting as a class in the fight for socialism. The likes of the *Amsterdam News* give their "best wishes" to the NBUF because they have already assigned it the role of providing a "radical" mask for the Black capitalist line of building Black businesses, "alternative" institutions, etc. They obviously feel they have allies in the NBUF to accomplish these ends.

In addition to the open reformists, many petty bourgeois opportunist groups who masquerade as "communist" also are looking for the NBUF to aid them. Supporters of China's war-mongering line such as the League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS) and the Communist Party (M-L) (CPML) sent many people to the Conference and gleefully praised it in their newspapers.

A speech by LRS leader Amiri Baraka at the Conference mentions the danger of a new world war, but nowhere characterizes the coming war as an *imperialist* war on all sides, that the proletariat must convert into a civil war. He also conveniently neglected to mention the expanding alliance between LRS's mentors in China and U.S. imperialism. Aside from trying to turn the NBUF into an appendage of China's war plans, such forces want to take over the NBUF and drive out everyone else, as

many opportunist groups have done, such as in CP M-L's takeover and virtual destruction of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF).

The NBUF Conference also was attended by other opportunist forces who prefer making the NBUF an appendage of the Russian war machine, promoting their own version of the "third world", including Cuba, Angola, Grenada, etc. All these forces seem confident that they have an audience in the NBUF for their activity in favor of imperialist war.

But it is not just the bourgeoisie and their petty bourgeois opportunist representatives that want to determine the future of the NBUF. The proletariat, too, has a direction it wants and needs the NBUF to take. The most class-conscious representatives of the fundamental revolutionary interests of the proletariat want the NBUF to work to overthrow the system of imperialism; to oppose all imperialist war preparations and all members of imperialist blocs; to uphold the right to self-determination including the right to secession for the Black nation in the Black Belt South; and to stand for the unity of the workers of all nationalities in the battle against all class and national oppression. The interests of the proletariat will also not be served by the formation of another national reformist petty bourgeois group. There is no need for another obstacle to socialist revolution.

Petty-bourgeoisie Debates Polygamy

What happened at the NBUF Conference can only be called disappointing in regards to the direction some of the leaders of the NBUF seem set on taking. While the NBUF leadership is by no means monolithic, some of its leaders appear to be fulfilling the role assigned to it by the *Amsterdam News*, the various opportunists, and others. Their hopes of making the NBUF another impotent, petty bourgeois reformist groups have some basis in reality.

For example, with war being planned, with unemployment skyrocketing, especially for Blacks, in the wake of Miami, what turned out to be the hottest and most spirited debate at the Conference? Incredibly, it was the issue of polygamy, the taking of more than one wife by a husband. This was a question settled long ago in tribal society. But some petty bourgeois extreme nationalists, who glorify and idolize African tribal society and support its patriarchal subjugation of women, raised support of polygamy as a resolution of the women's workshop, even though it had been defeated there. What ensued was a long and noisy spectacle of furious "debate" between the polygamists and their opponents, many of whom were from LRS. To LRS, this was a most burning question facing Black people. That there was even an audience for such a debate, and that the whole issue had to come up at all, shows just how far removed so many of the forces in NBUF are from the real burning issues facing the masses

of Black people and the whole proletariat.

Democracy Restricted at Conference

Besides serving as a diversion, the polygamy debate also raised the issue of the restriction of democracy at the conference by some forces in the leadership. The women's workshop leader felt absolutely no obligation to report to the Conference the real resolution passed, simply because she opposed it. Another area that showed that some NBUF leaders wanted to minimize the participation of the membership at the Founding Conference was the dispute over the structure of the Conference and the proposed constitution and by-laws.

Much of the essential business of the Conference was scheduled to take place in the day-time during the Thursday and Friday sessions. The evenings were reserved for speeches. This format made it most difficult for many working people to participate fully. The Saturday session was the only convenient time for workers, but this was after two key days of discussion and decisions. It was raised that many people had put in much time and energy to attend and prepare for this Conference, and not just to listen to speeches, and that therefore more time be given to debate. As it was, the schedule was constantly changed throughout the course of the Conference, with time for workshops cut. Upon hearing these suggestions, Baraka rushed to the microphone and denounced those making the suggestions as opposed to speeches on Black liberation! Such demagoguery was aimed at stifling discussion even further. It found a receptive audience, and the move to open up the Conference a bit was squashed.

The proposed "constitution, by-laws and structure of the NBUF", a long, detailed document, was only distributed to the participants at the Conference itself even though the Conference was planned months ago. Given the time limitations and the political problems with this document, there was no way the participants could adequately consider or amend it. While some who originally designed this document wanted to ram it through, they had to retreat on this particular issue. The Conference voted to adopt a temporary structure until next year's Conference. Still, the Founding Conference of the NBUF passed without passing principles of unity. As we said in our leaflet at the Conference (reprinted in this issue), the NBUF had a vague platform before the Conference. Now, after the Conference, its platform is still as vague. Amendments were made that supposedly will all be considered, but there is no excuse for having a Founding Conference with no platform.

The original draft was a mish-mosh of ideas and wholly unacceptable. For starters, Article 2 states, "The geographical boundaries of NBUF shall be limited to all of the states, territories and properties of the Government of the United States of America." Despite whatever else is said in this document, this shows the authors endorse the annexation by U.S. imperialism of the colonies and oppressed nations the bourgeoisie calls "states, territories and properties." This section received wide opposition, and presumably will be changed.

Before continuing with an analysis of the proposed draft, let us return to the question of democracy at the Conference.

Attempt to Suppress the Bolshevik League

The Bolshevik League desired to participate in the NBUF Conference in order to fight for proletarian internationalist politics. We also desired to abide by the rules of the Conference. Before the Conference, as was stated on a brochure distributed before the Conference, we inquired about making a presentation at the Conference and having a literature table. We were told by an NBUF leader in charge of such matters that multinational groups could not participate in the conference that they most likely would not have "room" for literature

literature tables from these groups, that only Black people were allowed to participate, not even other oppressed nationalities, (and if one's spouse was not Black the NBUF representative began to question why a Black had married someone of another nationality!), and that Blacks who were members of multinational groups could only come as individuals or as a Black caucus of that group. We proceeded thinking such information was correct, since it came from the source the official NBUF brochure gave. As much as we disagreed with this narrow nationalist approach, we were not going to upset the rules of the conference.

What happened was entirely different. Several multinational groups participated in the Conference and had representatives make presentations (but just Black representatives, of course). Such groups as LRS, CP(M-L), and the Communist Workers party (CWP) all spoke. Apparently there was one set of rules for some groups that some leaders liked, and another set of rules for other groups. And it is no coincidence that all these fake "communist" groups that fit some people's liking are all supporters of the counterrevolutionary "theory of the three worlds." Again, these three worldists, who have praised and supported butchers like Mobutu, Sadat, and Pol Pot, apparently have some friends among some NBUF leaders. Further, among the multinational, if only in name, groups that had literature tables were LRS, CP (M-L), CWP, RCP, and League for Proletarian Revolution (another three worldist sect). Finally there were Latins, Asians, and even a white person at the Conference, this shows there was quite a bit of back-room maneuvering before the Conference.

Even so, the B.L. prepared a leaflet before the conference had begun to explain the Bolshevik position on the Black national question and the conference. Soon after we began distributing it, a frenzied group led by a NBUF leader surrounded our distributors and ordered them to leave. They claimed our leaflet slandered them because we accused them of not raising points, such as "overthrowing imperialism" and self-determination, that they claimed to do in the proposed draft. As we said, our leaflet was prepared before the Conference, when neither we nor anyone else, save some leaders, had the privilege of seeing the draft. But even if we examine the draft itself, we will see that everything we said in our leaflet was true.

Imperialism and Self-determination

We said, "It is significant that the theme of overthrowing imperialism is entirely absent from the Black united front. Instead the emphasis is on trying to reform

imperialism, trying to secure equality within its framework. In the proposed draft number 4 of the principles of unity of the NBUF says "to struggle to eliminate racism (including Zionism and apartheid), monopoly capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, and the oppression, exploitation and inequality of women." The key word here is "eliminate." This is not the same as to "overthrow", to rise up in revolution and smash. Something can be eliminated either peacefully or non-peacefully, in a revolutionary or an evolutionary way.

The principles of unity do talk of "revolution." But listen to point 7 "to continue the political cultural revolution to create a new vision and value system and a new Black man and woman based on common struggle around the needs of the Black majority." The purpose of this "revolution", which is an amorphous "political cultural" one, is not to overthrow imperialism, or even to "eliminate" it, but to create a new vision and value system presumably through creating a "new Black man and woman." This petty bourgeois self-cultivation based on the psychology of Freud and Marcuse. It really means personal, individual "change" will change the system. Thus, the proposed "revolution" can in no way be interpreted as a revolution to overthrow imperialism.

Returning to point 4, it is significant that all these "isms" are lumped together. This is a hidden version of the bourgeois nationalist line that racism is a system by itself, separate and apart from capitalism and imperialism. Such is the idealist view of the petty bourgeoisie, which separates ideas from material reality. The petty bourgeois view is also seen in singling out *monopoly* capitalism, and not all forms and stages of capitalism. This leaves the door open for support for non-monopoly competitive capitalism, such as Black businesses, "alternative" institutions and so on.

In short, the proposed draft confirms that the theme of *overthrowing* imperialism is entirely absent, and that NBUF's platform is essentially reformist.

Next, on the question of self-determination. Our leaflet said, "Along with this, the special conditions of the Black nation in the Black Belt are not raised, nor is the question of self-determination even raised." Earlier our leaflet specified we were talking about self-determination for the Black Belt nation, and we said, as do all genuine Marxist-Leninists, "without the overthrow of imperialism, the slogan of self-determination remains a meaningless, empty phrase."

The proposed draft, released after our leaflet was written, does talk of "self-determination," but in just such a meaningless way. Point 1 says: "To struggle for self-determination, liberation and power for Black people in the United States." Such a point could mean just about anything to anybody. It also says, nothing about the Black nation in the Black Belt, and more of the other points raise any special demands for that oppressed nation. The South is only dealt with as a geographical region, along with the West, Midwest, and Northeast. Washington, D.C., where Black people have more ties to Virginia and the Black Belt, is separated and placed in the Northeast.

There is even no attempt to define self-determination, rendering it meaningless, especially for the Black national minority outside of the Black nation.

Examining these points can only have us conclude that the B.L. leaflet was entirely accurate, and even antici-

pated the content of the proposed draft: "The platform of the B.U.F. is so vague that it can only be interpreted as being reformist." Further, we can also conclude that our literature was not suppressed because it was slanderous. Rather it was suppressed precisely because it presented a strong Leninist-Stalinist exposure of national reformism and bourgeois nationalism that threatened to expose the false rhetoric of some forces. This is why some people were so afraid of our leaflet that they suppressed it. There were differences among the leaders of the NBUF over whether we could distribute our leaflet, but, unfortunately, the anti-democratic forces won this particular battle. One leader, after agreeing to drop the issue if we ceased distribution, wanted to double-cross other NBUF leaders by launching an anti-communist attack on B.L. at a plenary session anyway. The other leaders then found out just how much his giving his word really meant. Still, this person resorted to outrageous intimidation tactics by having his henchmen follow our members around, even to the bathroom! Apparently the bathroom is where their politics belong. Such tactics will not intimidate Bolsheviks, but only drive Black workers away from the NBUF.

We raise this issue not only to defend ourselves, but also to underscore the anti-democratic maneuvers that threaten to wreck the NBUF. We say wreck, because, if the NBUF is to become, as its chairman Rev. Herbert Daughtry advocates, a mass-based and progressive organization fighting in the interests of the Black masses, then it must be democratic. If a mass organization is mass in name only, if the real power is held by wire-pullers protected by closed doors, then the masses will not regard it as their own. They will meet it with the same justifiable disgust they have for other bureaucratic groups like trade unions, bourgeois political parties, and so on. Some may not find it unacceptable that the NBUF become a closed club, but this will only hinder unity of action between all those in the Black Liberation movement who truly do want to overthrow imperialism.

Role of National Conference of Black Workers

What may ultimately prove to be the most important aspect of the NBUF Conference was the labor workshop. A resolution was passed calling for a national conference of Black rank-and-file workers. The original resolution only put the necessity of this in the context of the economic crisis. This economist tendency was partially corrected by an amendment adding the context of the coming imperialist war.

Much remains to be done in order to determine the direction of this Conference. By itself, it presents the most potential in a Conference that saw little participation of workers, grossly undemocratic methods, and a general petty bourgeois reformist and nationalist orientation. A national conference of Black workers, if properly conducted, could be a small step in the development of the hegemony of the Black proletariat in the Black liberation movement. No other class has, "nothing to lose but its chains." As the 1928 Resolution of the Communist International on the Black national question said: "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." This is even more true today, with the greater proletarianization of much of the Black population.

A Conference of Black Workers should not be held as an end in itself, but for specific goals. The Bolshevik League proposes four basic purposes of such a conference and for any organization it may form.

They are:

(1) Opposition to imperialist war and all war preparations and militarization. If there is imperialist war, it must be converted into a civil war.

(2) Struggle for trade union democracy, for rights for the unemployed, for organizing the unorganized, against all shifting-of the burden of the economic crisis onto the worker's backs.

(3) Struggle against all national oppression of Black people. Right of self-determination, including right of secession, for the Black nation in the Black Belt.

(4) For the revolutionary unity of the workers of all nationalities in the U.S. and the unity of the workers of all countries.

There will be those, such as CP (M-L) and company, that will try to use such a Conference for their own ends. And there will be those who do not wish to see a Conference of this type at all, since they are threatened by workers organizing without the control of the petty bourgeoisie. All these forces oppose the leading role of the Black proletariat in the Black national movement, and in this way try to get the NBUF to be under petty bourgeois leadership and therefore be subservient to imperialism. To counter all moves to sabotage or derail this National Conference of Black workers, the organization around it must guarantee a strictly democratic conference controlled by the workers themselves. Then there will be a true forum to see just whose ideas are bankrupt and whose are revolutionary. And precisely for this reason, the opportunists fear a democratic conference of workers like a vampire fears the sun.

Such a conference could greatly assist and expand revolutionary work among Black workers on a national wide basis. It could also strengthen NBUF, giving it more of a proletarian base and relieving it of some of the nonsense created by its predominantly petty bourgeois orientation.

Any organization that comes out of the conference, however, should not be confused with a vanguard proletarian party. The conference should aim to establish a mass group, open to all who unite with its politics. A vanguard party, modeled after the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin, is a monolithic cadre group that is the general staff of the proletariat. A mass group, on the other hand, can play the role of a detachment of the workers' forces, but not that of the advanced detachment, of a vanguard. This distinction is important, as both types of organization are needed, and opportunists have a long history of spreading confusion about the two, in order to liquidate the role each must play.

The Future of N.B.U.F.

Although there are disquieting signs in the NBUF and the Founding Conference left much to be desired, it is still too early to tell just what direction NBUF will finally settle upon. There will be sharp struggle as to its future, and the outcome of that struggle will determine what happens with it.

The future of NBUF largely depends on how democratic it will become, how much of a proletarian base it gets, and how the genuine revolutionaries are able to fulfill their tasks. If anti-democratic and anti-working class forces continue to have their way, the NBUF will dwindle down into another petty bourgeois nationalist cadre group. That would truly be disappointing to many today associated with NBUF. This-therefore requires all those who really want a mass, progressive, democratic NBUF to struggle through to the end to make it so.

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Proposal To The Atlanta Conference

This proposal was distributed by the Bolshevik League at a Conference on Black Workers in Atlanta, Georgia in Oct., 1980.

Today in the ever deepening crisis of imperialism the Black masses are faced with a decisive and imperative challenge — to develop and fashion a new and powerful instrument that can successfully organize a defense against the attacks against our rights and livelihoods. The results of failure would be drastic, as the next decade will be one of great suffering and increased oppression. Clear indications of this can be seen in the massive unemployment, layoffs, police terrorism, Klan attacks, death from other natural causes, suicide, disease, lack of health care, and on and on. The historic and present plight of Blacks has been well documented. What has been missing for many years is a strong consistent fight for a clear scientific approach to explaining the origins, nature and continued causes for the ever increasing torment.

Black National Oppression

Such an explanation was clearly set forth by the Communist International in 1928 and 1930. The Comintern resolutions on the Black national question said that the question of Blacks in the U.S. had to be addressed from the standpoint 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)." That the particularity of the Black question was addressed with the utmost seriousness and clarity is seen when they continue. "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." Black people in the Black Belt South were described as constituting an oppressed Black nation while Black people elsewhere in the U.S. constitute an oppressed national minority. It was made imperative that all gain clarity on this to guide the struggle for socialism and against the capitalist system.

The correct view of the Black question as a national question and all that it implies has been consistently hidden and opposed by all manner of means by all who claim to be leading the "Black Liberation Struggle". Even those who in the most recent period have been shouting about the Black nation (Pan-Africanist, nationalists, etc.), and even more so the so-called "communists" such as the CPML and LRS, who claim to uphold the Comintern resolutions, have worked night and day to liquidate it.

The various nationalists and Pan-Africanists do this by addressing the question of the nation in obscure, unscientific terms. They say that Blacks are a nation wherever they are, a dispersed nation with no direct connection to any land. In a few cases the south is pointed to, even certain specific states in the official U.S. boundaries. There are even those who persist in the fantasies of back to Africa, that the Black Nation is the whole of Africa. "Liberation" is to be accomplished by either individual Blacks emigrating to the African country of their choice, or in large numbers through negotiations with the respective African Governments. The bottom line in all these various twists is that the problem is ultimately whites or Europeans, that it was not meant that different races could live in peace and harmony together. Equality can supposedly only come if they live separately. The problem is white "devils", or that whites are just downright "evil." Without a doubt all this nonsense has a purpose which is to obscure the correct understanding of classes and nations, and that the basis of national oppression is the imperialist system, not "demons".

In the same way those who falsely claim to be "communists," "socialists," etc, have an interest in covering up an

authentic Marxist-Leninist approach. A section of those supporters of Mao and the "three worlds" theory who openly in the 60's were nationalists and Pan-Africanists, have remained so in fact, dropping only their expressed support for the bankrupt views. They saw in Mao a model that could better serve their petty bourgeois class interests. After all, covering bourgeois nationalism with Marxist phrases was gotten away with by Mao and so many others. Besides these opportunists, other slicker ones formally express agreement with the line of the CI, and then ignore or oppose it in their activity. Others say that the nation did once exist at the time of the CI, but that it no longer exists, that subsequent industrialisation and the dispersal of large numbers of Blacks from the Black Belt plus other factors have resolved the national question or destroyed the Black Belt Nation. There is still an even larger number of proclaimed communists, Marxists, socialists, etc, who flatly differed from the CL. These explain the basis of the "plight of Black people as racial prejudice, white skin privileges, and even secret government or private plots motivated by the desire to sow division.

Whatever the case, none of these views can solve the problem. This should not be surprising, since none of them come from the standpoint of the proletariat. All of these opportunists have at the basis of their views the defense of the economic and political privileges of the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy (the bribed upper stratum of the proletariat). The opportunists all seek to use the working class movement and the movements of oppressed peoples to gain a greater share of these privileges, which imperialist "great powers like the U.S. can give by dishing out a portion of the superprofits gained in the plunder of oppressed peoples and nations both inside and outside of their borders. The defense of imperialism and its privileges by the opportunists is attested to by their deeds, and not their hypocritical pronouncements of "anti-imperialism".

Their consistent activity has been the tailing of one bourgeois reformist after another, depending on who is in fashion at that moment. They thus lend assistance to the attempts to maintain the reformist character of the Black National movement. Cloaking their activity in revolutionary garb, they even do this when it is clear that the open reformists find their grip loosening over the Black masses and when the possibility of their turning to revolutionary leadership is growing. This continued activity stands as an obstacle in the path forward which must be removed.

Black Workers and Imperialist War

This is all the more so in today's conditions where the entire world imperialist system stands in such a dire crisis that all the world's imperialist powers are being driven into an intense and frenzied war preparations and increased rivalry, especially among the "Great Powers. Within the two imperialist blocs, one led by the U.S. and the other by Russia, this vicious contest is having every day most pronounced effects. There are continuing shifts in the composition within each bloc with shifts continually taking place, examples of which are Egypt, Iraq, Syria, China, etc. There is the disintegration of the U.S.—led bloc, as the rivalry within it extends. Questions are raised about the certainty of the allegiance of important members of the Western alliance such as France, West Germany, and even its more recent addition China. This cut throat competition can only lead to the outbreak of a world war among the great powers for the redivision of the markets of the globe.

That this war of all the "great" powers and their allies in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries will be a war of thieves, fighting in an unjust cause, is without a doubt. The various attempts to paint it otherwise are the

vilest of deceptions and treachery. The coming war must be branded for what it most certainly will be, an imperialist war that the workers and oppressed peoples of the world have no stake in fighting. Our stake will be in the working for the defeat of our respective governments and the transformation of the unjust imperialist war into a just one, a civil war by the proletariat and its allies for state power, the proletarian revolution, for socialism through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Consider what all this means of the working class throughout the U.S., especially for Black workers. With war, comes the militarization of the whole society. In war time, the democratic rights of protest, demonstrations and publications of literature are even more limited than now. Police murder and brutality are given even wider license by the so-called "law". The youth are even more herded into either the draft, war industry, or jail. This is the imperialist solution to the massive unemployment of Black youth. Black women will face even more difficult family problems, enforced employment in war industry and even the possibility of the draft. Trade unions, community groups and the schools are turned into military recruiting grounds which gather up the cannonfodder for imperialist war. All sort of rationing of food, clothing and other goods comes in war-time, which will hit hardest Black people and all those others who are already unofficially rationed the least amount. A war budget will mean more cuts in direly needed social services. No aspect of society will go untouched by militarization and war.

It is in the interests of the majority of Black people, who get nothing but misery and oppression from the imperialist system, to oppose all steps to war. The draft, the so-called "defense" budget, all spending on weapons, etc., must all be opposed. We must oppose all the results of militarization, including the further suspension and limiting of our rights to organize.

In opposing imperialist war and militarization we must target the source of war — the imperialist system itself. All shades of pacifism that thinks that imperialist war can be prevented while the imperialist system is maintained are sheer illusions and deceptions. War is in the nature of imperialism. The entire history of the twentieth century is proof of that. War cannot be averted by individual resistance to the draft, by boycotting the war, or by voting for some so-called "peace" candidate. John Kennedy ran as a man of "peace" — and invaded Cuba, the Congo, and Indochina. Johnson ran on a platform of "peace" — and proceeded to unleash one of the most devastating wars in history in Vietnam. Imperialist war can only be gotten rid of by getting rid of the imperialist system. Calling for a peace movement to reform imperialism is a dead-ena pipe dream that will only appeal to middle class liberals.

Another diversion in the struggle against imperialist war is to blame it on all white people. Imperialist war is fought for profit, which only go to the small handful of imperialists and their political servants. Most whites gain nothing from imperialist war. The draft, militarization, and all the evil consequences of imperialist war face working class and poor whites. Likewise, besides Black people, all other oppressed peoples in the U.S. including Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Native Americans, Dominicans, Asians and others, have absolutely no stake in imperialist war. Black people fighting against imperialist war must not only target the system of imperialism, but must also join with all other exploited, oppressed and poor people.

Those who promote these sentiments and cultivate them among Black people do so without the best interests of the majority of Black people in mind. They are motivated by the aspirations of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, which require the continued rule of finance capital.

Of course, such anti-white feelings do run throughout the Black community, both in the Black Belt nation in the South and elsewhere outside of it. This is in response to centuries of barbarism and brutality practiced against Blacks by white slaveowners, white plantation owners, and white capitalist bosses, and their legions of armed bands and police. This oppression has historically not been opposed by large numbers of white workers, who are widely infected with the shameful ideas of white chauvinism that

actually benefit only the capitalist class. So such distrust is inevitable, and we must understand it in that context.

Black Workers and the Trade Unions

Another area where Black workers get totally shafted is in the trade unions. They are led by the labor aristocracy, who through both open corruption and "legal" investments of workers dues, amass enormous fortunes for themselves. The unions are undemocratically run, and shut the rank-and-file out of any real control of them.

The trade union movement has thus betrayed the working class. All that is waged is an occasional reformist struggle where certain meager concessions are gotten, which were done to strengthen the rule of capital. In the 1920's and 30's many of the trade unions were built and grew through the efforts of large masses of workers. Lacking consistent communist leadership of these struggles, the unions were captured by the bourgeoisie through the agency of its labor lieutenants, the labor aristocracy, joining with the AFL unions in betraying the working class. Today they do not even defend the immediate daily interests of the working class. They have turned the workers unions into instruments which maintain the division and disorganization of the class. They refuse to organize the majority of the working class. Their main organizing efforts concentrate among the labor aristocracy, the skilled trades, and the higher and better paying sectors of the class. They join with the imperialist bourgeoisie in the colonies, semi-colonies, and dependent countries. They ensure the lowest of wages and work to crush the efforts of the working class in those countries and to keep Marxism-Leninism away from them. This disgraceful activity exposes itself within the U.S. in the partnership in the oppression of the Black Belt nation in the refusal to organize in the Black Nation, and their opposing the efforts by the class to organize itself. This has ensured that the Black nation has generally remained a stable market of cheap labor for the imperialist bourgeoisie just as outside the U.S.

The working class must fight to recapture the unions, to throw these bribed scum out of the workers movement, and to democratize the unions. Mass, democratic organizations run by the workers themselves are essential for this. Black workers in particular have no choice but to follow this course. This is most certainly in their class interest to do so.

While such economic struggle can at best only slightly lessen the rate of exploitation of the working class by the capitalists, they can also serve, as Lenin pointed out, as a "school of war" in which the workers prepare themselves for the ultimate revolutionary battle to overthrow capitalism. Thus the work in the trade unions and the workers movement in general cannot be viewed as ends in themselves, but only as subordinate and secondary to the struggle for socialist revolution.

The Black Proletariat Must Lead The Black National Movement

The struggle by Blacks against national oppression and racism in America has its origins from the moment the first African was captured and sold into slavery. Resistance has consistently continued all the way through slavery upon until today. Except for brief periods the Black proletariat has not played the role of leadership of the Black struggle. The leadership and hegemony has been and remains in the hands of those who are unwilling o& incapable of leading that struggle in a truly revolutionary manner. This has been repeatedly proven and only the blind and dishonest try to deny or obscure this simrjle fact.

The challenge-today is a clear one. Either we stand firmly and without fail for the leadership and hegemony of the Black proletariat in the Black Struggle, or we consign this struggle to continued betrayal with the most dire consequences. Those who stand against this are opposed to the only road for the Black movement that points forward and not back.

This at the same time must not be distorted by recreating the line and slogan "Black Workers Take the Lead"

Such thinking and sloganeering can only assist the maintenance of the division of the entire working class. We must fight for the unity of the entire working class and do our best to facilitate that unity and fight against anything that goes against that without fail.

In order to ensure the unity of the working class, Black men must support the just struggles of working women, including Black working women. They must struggle and ensure that at a Black Workers Conference and a National Black Workers Organization there will be the full and active inclusion of Black women in all its affairs. All expressions of male chauvinism must be fought against. The special demands that affect Black women have to be a major area of concern. Industries that are made up of large or majority concentrations of women should be a major focus of work, while struggling to ensure that no area of the work is restricted from women due to their sex.

The highest priority of attention must be directed to the plight of Black workers in the Black Belt South and the upholding of the right of self-determination, the right to political separation and the state unity of the territory of the Black Belt nation. The white proletariat must be won to the active of this right in order to facilitate the unity of the entire working class.

An organization of Black workers would be hopelessly narrow and parochial if it centered its fight against national oppression exclusively or even mainly in the factories and workplaces. Black workers must actively take part and strive to lead all struggles against the special oppression of Black people, including struggles around police brutality and murder, attacks on social services (such as health care, like the struggle in Harlem against the closing of Sydenham Hospital), etc. Restricting the focus to mainly economic issues allows the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois opportunists to run rampant in these struggles. Such an approach will also prevent the workers movement from being raised from its present level of economic struggle to becoming a conscious, political struggle, not merely for petty reforms, but for socialist revolution.

The struggle of the unemployed must be one of the major areas to be addressed. When the questions of workers are addressed, no distinction between the employed and unemployed must be permitted. Workers must be made fully aware of the role of the unemployed in capitalist society, and why Black and other oppressed nationality workers are affected even far more seriously. It is the system of capitalism that maintains the vast numbers of unemployed. Unemployment serves as a tool of the capitalists against the entire working class, pitting the employed and the unemployed. It is only with the abolition of capitalism that we will see the elimination of unemployment.

Any approach that also sets the struggle of Black people against the struggles of other oppressed nationalities only serves the imperialists. Historically the Black bourgeois nationalists have not only built antagonism to white workers, but also to Puerto Rican workers, Chicano workers, and workers of other oppressed nations and national minorities including Native Americans, Asians, Dominicans, and others. This is an example of the most absurd lengths the nationalists go to in order to isolate and weaken the Black struggle, thus protecting the imperialists.

The Conference

In our summation of the National Black United Front Conference, we outlined what should be the role and focus of a national Conference of Black workers. What we said then applies just as much for the planning of this Conference. We thus reprint a portion of our comments from our periodical, *Bolshevik Revolution*, No. 5:

A national conference of Black workers, if properly conducted, could be a small step in the development of the hegemony of the Black proletariat in the Black liberation movement. No other class has, "nothing to lose but its chains." As the 1928 Resolution of the Communist International on the Black national question said: "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

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." This is even more true today, with the greater proletarianization of much of the Black population.

A conference of Black Workers should not be held as an end in itself, but for specific goals. The Bolshevik League proposes four basic purposes of such a conference and for any organization it may form.

They are:

- (1) Opposition to imperialist war and all war preparations and militarization. If there is imperialist war, it must be converted into a civil war.
- (2) Struggle for trade union democracy, for rights for the unemployed, for organizing the unorganized, against all shifting of the burden of the economic crisis onto the workers backs.
- (3) Struggle against all national oppression of Black people. Right of self-determination, including right of secession, for the Black nation in the Black Belt.
- (4) For the revolutionary unity of the workers of all nationalities in the U.S. and the unity of the workers of all countries.

In addition, any conference and organization that were to emerge from it must be strictly run in a democratic fashion and reflecting the rights of all its members and participants. This will facilitate that it be run by its members, the worker themselves. If it does not do this, all the high declarations and calls to struggle in the name of the Black working class will be the shallowest deception. The working class first and foremost demands that its organization be truly democratic. The question of democracy flows from an understanding that nothing successful will come of attempts to build what is needed given the wide assortment of groups and individuals who will participate, unless the conference is strictly democratic. Given the sharp differences only the most democratically run conference and organization will permit it not to be a circus and disintegrate into a narrow sect with no real standing among *Black* workers. We say this knowing full well that such an undertaking will draw in opportunists and political leeches like a flame draws in moths. Their purpose will be to sabotage by either seizing control or splitting what they can not control going all out to see failure. A democratic conference and organization will bring them their just desserts like that moth rushing into the flames. We must work to ensure that the *flame* stays very hot.

Another method of the opportunists is to purposely blur the distinction between organizations of revolutionaries, which are cadre groups, and organizations of workers, which must be broad and democratic. Our comments about how this question was confused in the NBUF are also relevant here:

Any organization that comes out of the *conference*, however, should not be confused with a *vanguard* proletarian party. The conference should aim to establish a mass group, open to all who unite with its politics. A vanguard party, modeled after the* Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin, is a monolithic cadre group that is the general staff of the proletariat. A mass group, on the other hand, can play the role of a detachment of the workers' forces, but not that of the advanced detachment, of a vanguard. This distinction is important, as both types of organization are needed, and opportunists have a long history of spreading confusion about the two, in order to liquidate the role each must play.

To conclude, organizing a successful conference and establishing a successful mass national Black workers organization will not be easy. There must be clarity of purpose. The obstacles of bourgeois nationalism and national reformism must be combated. Especially in the context of the growing threat of an imperialist world war, great attention must be paid to developing a mass national Black Workers Organization most broadly and rapidly. There are plenty of reformist, bureaucratic groups that exist only on paper. Our task is to create a real organization. In this we must not fail.

BLACK REBELLION IN MIAMI- FRUIT OF AMERICAN "JUSTICE"

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The rebellion of the Black community in Miami was bound to happen. The acquittal of four white cops, who had beaten to death a Black insurance man, Arthur McDuffie, sparked the rebellion. But this example of America's so-called "justice" was only one episode in a long string of police murders and beatings of Blacks in Miami. This time, when the all-white, all male jury delivered the not guilty verdict, a large demonstration, mostly of Blacks, but also including some whites, took to the streets to show their outrage and disgust with what amounted to a sanctioning of police murders of Blacks. The police once again practiced their modern-day lynch law by viciously attacking the demonstration. It was then that the rebellion spread throughout the entire Black community in Miami, only to be put down by some 4,000 National Guardsmen. It was obvious that this righteous spontaneous outburst, while stifled for now, could spread during the summer to other ghettos across the country as more state-sanctioned police murders would come. The evidence against the four cops, along with other cops who also beat McDuffie to death with clubs and flashlights, was so strong that even the Miami police department was forced to throw the four cops off the force.

Two former Miami cops testified at the trial that the four accused cops fatally beat McDuffie after stopping him on a traffic violation, and then falsified reports to make it look like he died in a traffic accident. The coroner testified that the head smashing McDuffie got was the worst head injury he had ever seen.

But the state made sure the cops would get acquitted in court through manipulations of jury selection, preparation of the prosecution, and moving of the trial to Tampa so the cops could supposedly get a "fair" trial. All this once again shows that the American system of "justice" and "democracy" only justifies terror and tyranny against Black people.

The acquittal of the four cops was a signal to Black people that a heightened wave of police terror and repression was about to be unleashed. Following the police attack on the demonstration, what happened can only be called an officially sanctioned police riot. Police and organized bands of whites patrolled Liberty City and North Coconut Grove sections of Miami hunting down Blacks, committing numerous armed attacks, and destroying Blacks' cars while painting the words "looter" and "thief" on the cars.

The government and the press portrayed the picture of the Blacks as a brutal, savage mob, killing any whites they would find. They especially howled about the killing of two 15-year old white youths. Yet witnesses say that these white youths were killed only after being caught riding through the streets of the Black community shooting at Blacks with a pistol. The bourgeois press raises these issues in the way they do to obscure the real injustices and oppression that led up to the rebellion and to blame the victims, the Black people, for the real crisis of police terror.

Of course, there exists sentiment in the Black community, both in Miami and throughout the country, against whites in general. This is in response to centuries of barbarianism and brutality practised against Blacks by white slaveowners, white

plantation owners and white capitalist bosses, and their legions of armed bands and police. After the defeat of reconstruction following the Civil War, the Black people in the Black Belt area of the South were forged into an oppressed nation. The Black nation first was almost entirely dominated by the plantation system and the tyrannical rule of the white plantation owners who were by and large the former slaveowners.

This oppression has historically not been opposed by large numbers of white workers, who are widely infected with the shameful ideas of white chauvinism that actually benefit only the capitalist class. So such distrust is inevitable especially in a situation as in Miami where the rebellion proceeded spontaneously without a clear plan, clear goals, and a clear analysis of what the source of the problem is. In such circumstances the capitalists can whip up the greatest amount of racist chauvinism among whites and nationalism among Blacks, so as to cloud the real issues and provoke a race war.

Black National Oppression Stems From Capitalism

Brutal terror against Black people in America has gone on since they were kidnapped in chains from Africa as slaves. Terror by police, the Klan, and other white vigilantes and mobs have had one purpose: to keep Black people exploited economically and subjugated politically. Slavery could not be enforced without such terror. The plantation system and the brutalities of sharecropping could not be enforced without lynch laws and "legal" segregation. The ghetto life of the worst and lowest paid jobs, slum housing, and massive unemployment could not be enforced without an army of police letting Black people know they should "stay in their place." Where terror was not sufficient, drugs were flooded into the community, aimed especially at immobilizing and controlling the youth and keeping them from rebelling.

Capitalism has benefited tremendously from this terror. American capitalism grew up and thrived on slave labor. Today the banks and corporations also profit from cheap Black labor. The average income of Blacks is still only 59 percent that of whites, while at least 40 percent of all black youth are without work. The old tale of "last hired, first fired" means that many Blacks are part of a reserve army of labor, used especially to keep down the wages of all workers. This is done, as is everything else under the capitalist system, for one and only one reason: to maximize profit. To enforce this economic exploitation, a whole system of political oppression is built up. So, while Black people comprise under 15 percent of the U.S. population, over 50 percent of the people killed by police are Black. A similar pattern holds true for other oppressed nationalities, including Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Dominicans, Haitians, and many others.

The situation for Black people in Miami is particularly distressing. Many Blacks migrated to Miami in the 1920's and after to work in the resort hotels in the worst and lowest paid service jobs. Today in Miami's ghettos the unemployment rate for Blacks is 40 percent, and probably double that for Black youths. The Liberty City section of Miami's ghetto has the highest

concentration of poor people in Dade County, and has a median family income of \$5,771.00, only slightly above the official poverty line of \$5,500.00

Only ten percent of all whites and 18 percent of Latinos (mainly Cubans) are below the poverty level, 38 percent of all Blacks make less than this level. The official laws enforcing the Jim Crow system are gone, yet the deprivation, impoverishment, and terror against Black people remain. *Since* it is obvious to everyone that such conditions can only breed massive discontent and outrage, the response of the capitalists is to further shackle the Black people of Miami and elsewhere with a gestapo to keep them down.

Another trick used by Miami's rulers is to play Blacks off against Cubans. The growing *influx* of Cuban refugees has included both former capitalists and landowners who had prospered under the U.S. backed dictatorship of Batista, and workers and farmers *fleeing* the economic crisis and political oppression of Castro's phoney "communism". Some of these refugees, especially the elite, receive many privileges when they arrive in Miami. This is not only in stark contrast to the subjugation of Miami's Blacks, but also to the governments refusal to allow in significant numbers of Black Haitian workers and peasants *fleeing* the brutal Duvalier dictatorship. The resentment between Blacks and Cubans is being whipped up to divert all these oppressed workers and poor people from their common enemy, the capitalist system, which enslaves them all. It is a classic case of divide and conquer.

Also being brought into the act are the "responsible" Black leaders like Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson, and Vernon Jordan. These frauds are financed by the the same corporations that rake in untold profits from the sweat and blood of Black labor. They called for Miami's Blacks to cool down, but were not successful. Young was booed upon his arrival to Miami, and forced to leave only one-half hour later. These Uncle Tom bootlickers will no'doubt try to return with a more "militant" recipe for selling out the struggle for a few crumbs for the small Black bourgeoisie.

Another kind of Black opportunist is also seen in the situation like Miami. This type encourages rebellions, but *only* if they are unplanned and unorganized, as much of the Miami rebellion was. They can then let the people blow off some steam, spill some more blood to get some publicity, and then step in and demand a government program which will give only to themselves a bundle of privileges and money. A whole generation of poverty pimps was created in this way in the 1960's. Yet all the government commissions, all the "civil rights" laws, and all the so-called "gains" of the past only served to fatten a small group of middle class Blacks, while nothing of substance changed for the masses of Black people. These would-be poverty pimps, politicians, and the likes are merely auditioning for the role of successor to Jordan, Young, and the rest, and are just Uncle Toms-in-training. The only way to end the oppression of the masses of Black people is not to give some crumbs to these up-and-coming careerists, but to end the source of Black oppression, the profit-hungry system of capitalism.

More Miami s To Come

The summer months are bound to see more murders of Blacks by police and more rebellions like in Miami. What is needed, however, is not sporadic outbursts, since these, however righteous, offer no clear plan or direction to ending the oppression of Black people. They often also end up in needless deaths and sacrifices by both Black and white working people. What is required is organized, planned struggle, with pre-arranged

tactics that can advance the *struggle* in the best way in the given circumstances. This *itself* requires democratic organizations of self-defense among the Black people, something the "responsible" leaders and all opportunists seek to crush.

The struggle also requires the active participation of large numbers of white workers and other progressive white people. The *petty* economic and political privileges that most white workers get compared to Black and other nationally oppressed workers do not actually benefit the white workers. They actually serve to chain them to this system of wage-slavery and exploitation. As Karl Marx put it over 100 years ago, "**Labor can not emancipate itself in the white skin when in the black it is branded.**" (*Capital*, Vol. 1)

Only a minority of workers, the labor aristocracy, actually benefits from the super-profits and super exploitation made by the capitalist class from the oppression of the colonies, semi-colonies, and dependent countries. To the extent that the mass of white workers so shamefully identify their interests with that of the white capitalists and white labor aristocrats and support the oppression of Black and other oppressed peoples, they only betray their own class interests. Again, to quote Marx, "A people **which enslaves another people forges its own chains.**" (*Resolutions of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association*, 1869)

It is thus especially in the most vital *class* interest of white workers and all other workers to engage in the struggle against the oppression of Black people and all other oppressed people. To the extent the white workers fail to realize this, which is so considerable, they must be educated as to their real interests. Further, to the extent that Black and other oppressed workers and peoples see all whites as their enemy, this goes against their class interest. The enemy of all workers and oppressed peoples is the entire capitalist class. The struggle of the Black people against national oppression will only be successful if it becomes part of a *class* struggle of all working people against capitalism and for socialism.

No one knows for sure where the next Miami will be. Dozens of ghettos, from Harlem to Watts, from Newark to Birmingham from Bedford-Stuyvesant to Houston, and from Chicago's South Side to Atlanta, may boil over. The situation is especially volatile in the South, where the majority of black people live and where racism is often most open. In the *Black Belt* area of the South are many counties of *Black* majority, *which* form the core of the oppressed Black nation in the U.S. The economy is the most backward, often *still* agrarian or related to agriculture. The Klan is rising again in the Black nation, and also all throughout the U.S. All these are the ingredients for more tyrannical oppression of Blacks and more rebellions.

It is the task of the most politically advanced workers, of all races and nationalities, to take up and organize this struggle against this terror and oppression. The alternative is to accept the fate of a slave. •



Greensboro - Political Suicide With No Condolences

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The recent shooting of five supposed "communists" in Greensboro, North Carolina, by an armed band of Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Party fascists has been the subject of wide attention and commentary. The articles appearing in the bourgeois media have generally been sympathetic to those slain, who were all members of the so-called "Communist Workers Party" (CWP), until recently known as Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO). Virtually the entire opportunist "left movement" of the petty bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy painted CWP in a similarly sympathetic light, from the reformist "Guardian" newspaper to the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) to the various Trotskyite sects to even the pro-Russian imperialist CPUSA. Most also sent condolences. After the shootings, Carter dispatched a team of FBI agents to Greensboro to do an investigation. So the bourgeoisie and the opportunists were united as one in directing their main fire at the Klan.

But the Bolsheviks are sending no condolences to CWP. We are not seeking to unite with them or support them. Instead, it is our responsibility to expose how the activities of CWP objectively aided the fascists and the bourgeoisie, how CWP is not anti-fascist but actually social-fascist (socialist in word and fascist in deed), and how they stand directly against the fundamental interests of the proletariat.

The facts are that CWP has been actively seeking to provoke the Klan for some time. This past summer, a small armed band of CWP'ers broke up a Klan meeting, in China Grove, N.C., and declared them a bunch of "cowards". For the rally that ended in the shootings, they put out leaflets *inviting* the Klan to come to their rally for a showdown, again taunting them as "cowards" and "punks". The main slogan of this small march was "Death to the Klan", a strange twist of events, indeed, given the death of five CWP members! Clearly their intention was to provoke a confrontation with the Klan. And all the better, their leaders felt, if some CWP'ers get shot, for then they would have some martyrs struck down in battle with the hated Klan scum. This could serve to give their newly-founded "party" much publicity. So CWP asked for what they got. That is a fact.

But what CWP has done has actually *assisted* the fascists. As the general crisis of capitalism worsens, the bourgeoisie is turning more to promoting open fascist and chauvinist groups. Witness the recent rash of cross burnings. The likes of CWP are helping to whip up an anti-communist and fascist hysteria by portraying communists as provocative fanatics who needlessly endanger the lives of the working class and oppressed people and even spill the blood of their own members in the street to gain a little publicity. At the same time, such provocations are actually *a call to arms* for the fascists. They serve as "justifications" for whipping them up and for the fascists to flex their muscles. The bourgeoisie uses such incidents to prohibit public demonstrations on the grounds of avoiding "violence", as they did in Greensboro and elsewhere. And those opportunists not directly engaged in the provocations aid the fascists by demanding "police protection" from the Klan, when it is well-known that the police and

the Klan are one and the same.

All this adds up to a conspiracy of intrigue that objectively aids the growth of fascism and takes place at the expense of the working class, the Black nation in the Black Belt South, all oppressed nationalities, and all communists and progressive people. For these reasons, CWP is not anti-fascist at all, but actually assists (knowingly or unknowingly, it does not matter) the growth and development of the fascist movement.

The cause of this incident is not accidental, but rooted in the entire opportunist history of WVO, and now CWP. WVO had a long history of reformism and economism. Its base was almost entirely petty bourgeois (three of the five shot in Greensboro were doctors, for example). More recently they have been ardent supporters of the social-chauvinist theory of the "three worlds", and the "gang of four". They hailed China's aggression against Vietnam, and praised Khomeini and OPEC as "anti-imperialist". To promote their own anti-Leninist cause, they carried out Social-fascist actions in the so-called "anti-revisionist" movement. In Boston in 1976, WVO brought shotguns into an open, public meeting to intimidate those exposing their opportunism. Also in 1976, in both Oakland and New York, they provoked fights at public forums with their rival opportunists, the October League. And more recently they attacked another rival "three worlds" group, the League of Revolutionary Struggle, with baseball bats and chains.

The last few years have not been good to WVO. After a period of growth, they began to shrink and lost members to RCP. They dropped all theoretical pretense, being mute on key international questions. Their trade union activity got some members positions in the trade union bureaucracy, but their "party" did not grow. All their reformist calls to "nationalize the oil companies" did not help them either. Faced with a deepening crisis, they formed their "party" in October, 1979 (without even bothering to put out a program, so they could conceal their real program of social-fascism). But they still needed a gimmick to grow. So they merely took the experience in social-fascist activity they got in the "movement" and brought it to the Klan. Yet even with all this, CWP remains in a deep crisis. The small turnout of a few hundred at their funeral march in Greensboro, after all the nation-wide publicity, is evidence of that.

Those opportunists who "criticize" CWP at all generally see "ultra-leftism" as CWP's problem. This conceals their reformist and social-fascist history and essence. What they demand is that CWP be *more* openly reformist.

There is no contradiction between CWP, social-democratic reformism and their social-fascism. As Stalin pointed out, the social-democrats and fascists assist each other and "... **are not antipodes, but twins.**" ("Concerning the International Situation", Sept. 20, 1924, *Works*, Vol. 6, pg. 294)

These events show the criminality of the Maoist dictum of "to be attacked by the enemy is a good thing." And hence, the Bolsheviks look with disdain on this political suicide and send no condolences. •