

The following is the report on the Black Cadre Meeting submitted by D.H. Wright to the Secretariat shortly after that meeting:

The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the role of Black Marxist-Leninists in the American revolution as a whole in the current period; and in particular to assess how they function within the framework of a "multi-national" organization. Included in this is the need for an overview of the Black liberation struggle, the formation of the Black nation, and the formulation of Nation of a new type.

The first segment dealt with an analysis of the Black liberation struggle, the role of Black communists in this organization, the role of national forms in building the new CP, and what must be done. Most of the cadre had no real view of the organization, what it was, and how it should develop; this became increasingly clear as the reports from the various areas were given. The reports from the comrades who had been in the organization for a while and had been in leading positions, were delivered in the cold detached manner that characterizes meetings throughout the organization, but as the younger and newer cadre began to speak some of the problems that lie at the heart of the stagnation started to come out and the discussion got very lively.

The reports often consisted of listing the Black organizations in the areas and what they did (level of work), and what the relationship of the organization was to them. It lacked an analysis of what really could be done stemming mainly from cadres lack of orientation of themselves being Black. The discussion became heated when it came down to a discussion of how individual Blacks in the organization really functioned, and how they viewed the Black liberation movement. Multi-nationality in essence has meant a few Blacks in an all-white organization, and the idea of multi-nationality has tended to blur the role of Black communists and how they should function. There is a sense of isolation from the Black nation on the one hand and not really belonging to this organization. These things came out particularly around such things as how was RED PAPERS V, recruiting guidelines, etc. discussed in your area; how do you function in your collective (basic or leadership); what programmes have been put forward for the Black community.

Those cadre who have been around whites on a consistent basis, those who have been recruited from petit-bourgeois student backgrounds have been able to function fairly well in a collective while others find it very difficult to relate to their collectives. Those who have the least difficulty also have the least ties with the mainstream of Black people.

Therefore given the isolation, the style of those most adjusted becomes more and more the style of the petit-bourgeois white counterparts, which inevitably leads to a total detachment from the Black masses.

The idea of multi-nationality becomes so inculcated that it negates the national question within the organization itself. What kinds of programmes, what lines of struggle, what do the masses of Black people think and talk about becomes external to Black cadre in an all-white organization. The organization has never addressed itself to programmes in the Black nation, of course how could it considering its make up, but there must be a change. In the past the organization had an almost uncritical attitude and support for the Black Panther Party, and today an almost totally critical attitude toward national forms of organization. This organization did not develop, nor have any real influence on the BPP; today it does have some influence among one or two national forms of organization, yet aside from being able to give some ideological leadership, it can formulate no programmes for practical application.

RP5 laid the ground for an M/L analysis of the Black nation, but the weaknesses of RP5 came very apparent in the meeting, specifically an understanding of classes and class struggle within the Nation, which encompasses the question of how to relate to the Black bourgeoisie, and analysis of the various forms of Pan-Africanism and other non-proletarian ideologies that are current in the Nation. In the meeting there was a good but brief discussion of Pan-Africanism, the ideology itself, and how it was manifested in certain work, especially student work and the African Liberation support. In RP5 the lines of CL, PL, SWP, CPUSA, etc. were discussed, but Pan-Africanism, which incorporates some of the same Trotskyist and revisionist lines, has much more widespread influence among Black people; most Black (people) don't have any idea who CL, PL, etc. are.

If the recruitment of Blacks is to be seriously approached, we have to look critically at what we are trying to recruit them into, at what level of development can they be recruited, and most importantly what sort of work will they be engaged in.

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At the present time what we have is a number of Blacks in residence, who are in all-white collectives, who are engaged in "multi-national" work (occasional contact with Black masses), and some times are told to go out and do work around this or that event in the Black community; because you are a...and should be able to do it. Just how does an organization of this type do work among Black people?

First there needs to be an understanding inside the organization of what the national question means and how to implement it. In some areas the recruitment guidelines have not been discussed thoroughly, or not at all, Blacks that have been recruited are viewed as little more than tokens. Many see themselves as whites in an all-white organization, and by virtue of being communists they have cleansed themselves of all racism and white chauvinism, and therefore go about their work with missionary zeal. This does not mean that whites have to now get into a lot of self-flagellation, what it does mean is that there must be a basic understanding of what the real conditions are and how the organization must move in relation to the Black liberation struggle.

To some extent the missionary view has been iced through practice. The Panther support committee model is dead mainly because the BPP for all practical purposes is dead, but how the organization must proceed beyond the support committee model for Black people's struggles is by no means understood. The Black liberation struggle is old, there are spontaneous struggles going on constantly because of the level of consciousness of Black workers, especially the large numbers concentrated in heavy industry. In the history of that struggle there have been numerous organizations and programmes. Black people are not just going to pick up on some issue or event because some white organization says it is important to Blacks.

The first step is to see the need for and implementation of Black forms internally and externally. Previously the policy of the organization has been that speaking to the problems of Black people should not be the sole province of Black cadre; this was good up to a point, inasmuch as white communists should be able to speak on the Marxist analysis of the national question, but in reality it never served to develop Black communists in the organization. Black comrades in the organization on the whole, as shown in the meeting, do not have a firm grasp on the questions and currents within the Black nation.

Many Blacks are attracted to the organization because of its ideological development, very few are recruited, those that are totter on the edge of whether to stay or leave because they don't see its relevancy to the Black masses and hence ultimately to themselves. As long as Black cadre are isolated in their mass work and in an all-white collective there will never be a scientific sum-up of work among Black people and therefore the organization as a whole will never develop programmes aimed at Black people, never attract any numbers of Blacks to the organization, in short never become truly multi-national.

A large part of the discussion was around what kind of Black forms were needed; the in-plant caucus, intermediate workers' organization, study groups, student organizations, African liberation, newspapers, and UWOC. There was much discussion on just what an intermediate organization was or what a mass organization was, in particular the kind of thing UWOC should be; but at the heart and core of it was a thorough discussion of the national question and how it relates to building these forms and organization. It was clear in talking about UWOC that it was not attracting Black unemployed in an area that has the largest percentage of unemployed Blacks in the country. One of the reasons for this is the emphasis on multi-national organizing with little or no attention paid to the national aspect. Although Black workers can give support to the goals of UWOC, they often see it as another project run by young petit-bourgeois whites. Also in the preliminary investigation of how UWOC would develop there was no analysis of conditions of Black people. Another point is that any kind of Black form is opposed by organization leadership in the area.

Study groups and Black students sort of led into the same topic; what kind of study material should be used, the question of class and class struggle in the Black nation, what is the basis of unity for Black students at this time. The Black student movement past and present was analyzed, and it was seen that although it is at a low level Black student organization is needed now more than ever, but the main problem in dealing with the students was a lack of real examination of the various brands of Pan-Africanism in an M/L light. We then went into an analysis of Pan-Africanism and other non-proletarian ideologies, which also covered how these lines manifested themselves in the African Liberation Support committees.

We came to a basic understanding of how the proletarian line must be put out.

what it means to give conditional support to the Black bourgeoisie, and how it functions. For example in the case of Operation PUSH and before that Breadbasket the Black bourgeoisie was demanding jobs for Black people, a demand that communists must support, but at the same time exposing the nature of capitalism. We also discussed the formation of the Black nation in the US in relation to the formation of nations in Africa, African socialism and the role of US Black bourgeoisie and bourgeois class in Africa.

In summary:

Although the need for Black forms is generally accepted within the organization it is not clearly seen how this is linked up with the development of this organization. Although the fact of the existence of a Black nation is accepted intellectually it is not seen what it means practically. While it is true that white comrades have done some good work among Black people, the problems of either trying to assume total leadership, or having to hold too far back will continue to exist. In the fullest sense, the development of Black struggle is concretely advanced under Black leadership. At this time it is also seen that the Black M/L organization will be the vanguard of the Black working class; but Black cadre in a multi-national organization must also be part and parcel of the class struggle within the Black nation together with Black formations.

On the basis of this we see that where possible there should be Black collectives within the organization. This will enhance the possibility of recruitment, be able to give guidance and direction to working in the Black community as well as facilitate better sum-ups for the organization as a whole. That Black intermediate workers' organization can be developed jointly with BWC as well as study groups, student organization, etc. The Black collective also provides the context in which to develop Black recruits and candidates best, because basic brothers and sisters who have no intellectual background (student) do not develop well in an all-white setting, this has been proved over and over again. Many Blacks with a college background would have difficulty functioning, to say nothing of those with poor reading and writing skills, fear of sounding stupid among a group of educated whites, and the basic lack of relevancy to the Black experience.

Black women: It was proposed that this be a separate topic, but it was generally agreed that it could not be separated from the national question as a whole, and that the error would be to gloss over the role of Black women in the liberation struggle as a whole.

TW workteams and TW commissions: At this point we don't see them as productive; commissions made up of Blacks, Chicanos and Asians lacks a common basis for discussion. Those in existence have bogged down in generalities that could have just as well been discussed in the organization as a whole.

To set up these commissions throughout the organization is just mechanical; not based on real investigation and the level of development at this time. It was no accident that in the beginning of this organization Chicanos and Asians were recruited while Blacks were not; it was based on the reality of the problems and struggles of people of African descent in this country. The decision to recruit Blacks was a correct decision, but the conditions remain in terms of the Black nation, history, class structure, and level of struggle. (racism)

Resolutions:

- ✗ That there should be a Black commission set up and outgrowth of this meeting, that would meet periodically to discuss the problems of Black cadre with a view to moving the organization as a whole forward.
- ✗ That a new pamphlet on the national question be done to develop the weaknesses in RP 5, recognizing that RP5 was correct and has laid the ground work for further development. In particular further analysis of classes in the Black nation, the role of the bourgeoisie, united front, and how non-proletarian lines manifest themselves in the Nation.
- ✓ That Black cadre should be concentrated where possible, and try to get Black collectives where ~~possible~~ feasible. The move of certain cadre to one city was seen as a positive step.
- ✓ That the proposal by a comrade organization to call a meeting of Black Marxists in the fall of this year be implemented.

The purpose of this meeting was not for Blacks to sit around and commiserate about racism and white chauvinism, nor as has been charged to build a power base for a certain leading cadre. The purpose was to try to move the total organization ahead, and the key to that as we see it is to be able to recruit and maintain Black cadre in the organization, and do some productive work in the class struggle, to look toward uniting the whole class.

The history of the Black liberation struggle in America demands that the Black worker take the lead in order to have revolution, and Black Marxists are the instrument. We are resolved and clear that Black Marxist-Leninists must be revolutionary nationalist, that they must have the nation at heart, and the whole class struggle in mind.

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