



AMILCAR CABRAL/PAUL ROBESON
COLLECTIVE(M-L)

ORGANIZING
FOR
AFRO-AMERICAN LIBERATION
AND
SOCIALISM



The Amilcar Cabral/Paul Robeson Collective(ML) is a small collective in the Southern United States engaged in the struggle to build a genuine communist party in this country and the struggle to liberate the the Afro-American nation from the grip of U.S. imperialism

We dedicate this pamphlet to our comrade Mamie who's courage and determination to fight for revolution was only surpassed by her courage in her fight against cancer. We have learned much from her and will carry on the fight in her memory. We ask comrades and friends who knew her to join us in taking up the important work outlined in this pamphlet.

This set of theses is presented as part of the ongoing discussion and struggle around the organization of the Afro-American liberation movement, the liberation movements of the other oppressed nations, and the socialist revolution in the U.S. Although the discussion continues, comrades are moving forward on these organizational questions based on their grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory, the experience of the international proletariat and the liberation movements of the oppressed nations around the world. Even though armed with this rich arsenal of theory and practice, the particularities of a given situation often present extreme difficulties in finding the correct path.

We put forward these points for struggle with other genuine communist and revolutionaries as a way of advancing the organization of the Afro-American national revolutionary movement. Our points are aimed at two targets. On the one hand, during this period of growing fascist reaction and the upsurge in the Black movement, the deviation towards national exclusivism, Bundism. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, those forces who start out marching under the banner of internationalism, but because of confusion or the faulty application of dialectical materialism, come out of the battle holding the flag of national chauvinism, the very phenomena they want to oppose.

1. The Afro-American people have always had organizations formed along national lines. The character and class leadership have varied, with some being progressive or revolutionary, while others were thoroughly reformist.

2. Black workers have always formed their own organizations and associations to represent their interest as working people. Dock workers, sugarcane cutters, and caulkers are some examples. Some of the programs called for self-determination in an embryonic and unscientific form, while others dealt with the question of white privilege in the workplace, the exploitation of working people and the white supremacist practices of the existing labor unions.

3. All the while, Afro-American workers sought membership in the skilled trade unions and political organizations of the Anglo-Americans. They maintained the national forms because of the exclusionary policies of the labor bureaucrats and the large number of rank and file workers imbued with the ideology of white supremacy. When they were permitted to join these organizations, it became apparent that their specific needs were not addressed. The Socialist Party's approach to Afro-American oppression is the greatest example of this. This reinforced the need for national forms until white chauvinism is defeated in the trade unions and workers associations by both Black and white workers.

4. The most advanced Afro-American revolutionary organization of the early 1900's was the African Blood Brotherhood. Founded in 1919 by Black revolutionaries in Harlem, it had a program that called for self-defense, African liberation and unity with labor and the left. The program later included self-determination for Blacks in countries where they were in the majority. The membership was made up of some Black intellectuals in Harlem and industrial workers in Chicago and other mid-Western cities. As a secret organization its' estimated 3,000 members worked in a variety of Black and nationalist groups, including the Garvey movement. The leadership moved towards internationalism and communism under the influence of the Bolshevik Revolution and the formation of the Third International, more than the work of the American Communist Party.

In the 1920's the organization began to decline due in part to a post war boom in the economy and the lost of interest by many in militant nationalism as well as the A.B.B. leaderships' involvement in the Party. It became necessary for the Party to support it financially and with Black cadre. It was correct for the leadership to join the Party, although it was not free of white chauvinism or pursuing a consistently revolutionary line on the Afro-American question. At best they should have joined the Party with the stipulation that they could maintain the A.B.B.(this may have been the case from available evidence). This would have enabled them to continue to consolidate and build the A.B.B. while struggling for a correct position inside the Party as long as that was possible. However, they should have pre-

vented the dissolution, by all means possible, of this important anti-imperialist, revolutionary nationalist organization.

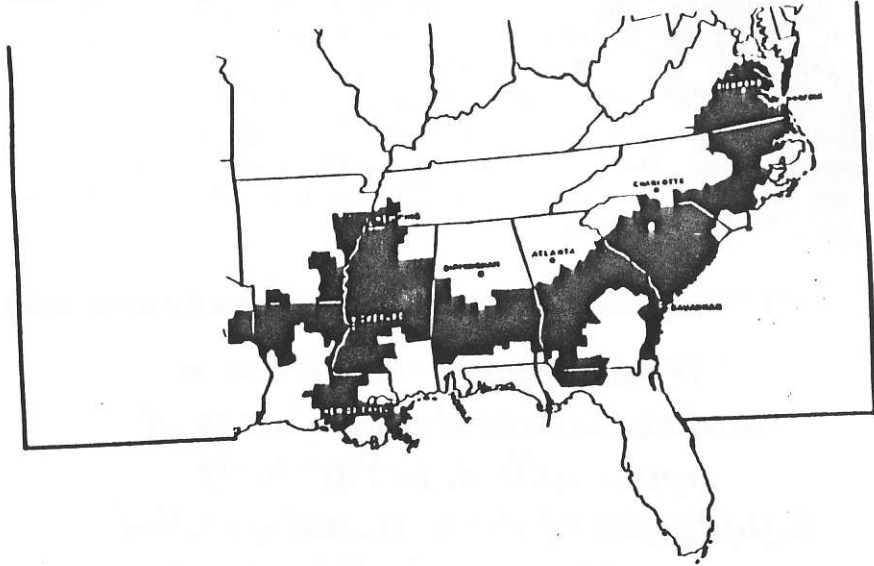
A similar situation developed in the national movements of the 1960's and reflected the same political errors. The Young Lords Party(YLP), which was an important Puerto-Rican anti-imperialist organization was loss when its' leadership announced the formation of the Puerto-Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization. As a result, many cadre and contacts were loss. The same pattern, with some differences, was evident in the African Liberation Support Committee. This will be discussed below.

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5. The mass organizations led by the Communist Party developed to fight against national oppression were predominately Black but mult-national in form e.g. the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the National Negro Congress, etc. The failures of these groups, while based on political line, were often attributed to white leadership in the organization or in the overwhelmingly Anglo Party. In fact, white chauvinism, narrow nationalism and other forms of opportunism, particularly liquidation of the national question, combined to render these organizations ineffective in the final analysis.

6. The Black organizations that emerged in the 1960's and 1970's were in many respects a new phenomena. They were a response to the failed strategy and tactics of white liberals and Afro-American reformist,

the increased assaults by white supremacist and the police, and a clear understanding that the federal and state governments would not end this oppression but in fact promoted and supported it.



The national forms that developed in this period played a positive and progressive role. The Black Panther Party, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the Revolutionary Action Movement, the Black Workers Congress and the Young Lords Party raised the question of revolution in a forthright, widespread and popular manner. They were clearly revolutionary and anti-imperialist. While they were eclectic ideologically, they contributed to the dissemination and study of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and other revolutionaries during that period. Many good cadre were developed in their ranks and are carrying on revolutionary work at present or can be expected to come forward again in the coming period.

On the other hand, many anti-Marxist ideas were adopted: gun fetishes, lumpen-proletariat as vanguard, students as vanguard, vulgar proletarianization, subordination of proletarian revolution to national liberation and a host of other deviations from Marxism.

Yet, with all of these shortcomings, and the absence of a genuine communist party and national revolutionary fronts, the national movements derived many benefits from these formations. Some of their good work can serve as examples for our work in the class, in the community, and mass organizations.

7. The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) was one of the most significant Black revolutionary organizations of the past period. RAM's importance is often overlooked by "Panther-centric" liberals and "leftist" or Black revolutionaries who did not come from that trend. They opened the early sixties with a variety of revolutionary activity carried out by serious cadre in various parts of the country. While the social base was mainly radical intellectuals and students, its ranks contained a fair amount of working class youth cadre, or the street force as they were referred to in the organization.

RAM played a role in the formation of a number of anti-imperialist, civil rights and student groups in addition to developing its' own local organizations. RAM cadre influenced the Black Arts Movement, SNCC, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, SDS, and the Black Panther Party in several areas as well as other organizations. They established international links with national liberation movements progressive governments and socialist governments.

Their correct stand on armed struggle made them a target of the state even in their early stages. Murders, beatings, frame-ups, jailings and other forms of COINTELPRO activity were used to destroy RAM. Even though RAM's ideological framework was a mixture of Pan-Africanism, African Nationalism, Black Nationalism and Marxism, RAM has left an important legacy of revolutionary struggle. Many cadre remain dedicated freedom fighters.

8. One of the important trends that emerged out of the 1960's was centered around the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU) and Malcolm X University. These formations consisted primarily of revolutionary intellectuals and students who based their practice on the ideas of Pan-Africanism and developed support for African liberation movements. These forces, along with others, organized the historic African Liberation Day (ALD) in 1972 and later formed the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) in concert with other revolutionary and radical forces.

The ALSC was extremely important domestically and internationally because of its' support work and political influence. It was not, however, the broad united front that some organizations and individuals now claim it was. After the first ALD and



certainly after the second, the politicians, reformist and representatives of the Afro-American bourgeoisie began to fall away. Class wise, it was made up of revolutionary students and intellectuals, a small section of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie, and few, if any workers.

The positive motion of the YOBU, Malcolm X University forces, along with others, in forming the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) gave rise to another problem. Initially attempting to consolidate the ALSC around proletarian ideology, causing a split and later engaging the organization in discussions around building a communist party the Committee lost its' focus.

The ALSC should have been preserved as an anti-imperialist liberation support organization without the baggage of the cultural nationalist who even stood in the way of this perspective. We wonder what role a vibrant ALSC would have played in relation to the final years of struggle in Zimbabwe and the revolution in Grenada. The RWL, with a proper grasp of the national question, could have continued its' work in the party building movement while continuing the work in that valuable formation.

Many former activist out of this trend remain part of the core of U.S. revolutionaries. The majority have become disillusioned or advocates of reform and not revolution.



9. "Self-determination now", meaning exclusively Afro-American organizations, like "cultural autonomy" and other imperialist/revisionist/reformist slogans, distorts the real meaning of self-determination. Self-determination is the right of every nation to self rule, to political secession from an oppressor nation.

Marxist-Leninist champion and pursue internationalism, the cooperation of workers of all nationalities against imperialism. We strive for the eventual amalgamation of all the peoples of the world under communism. Communist acknowledge and fight for the right of self-determination and struggle to get workers of other nations, particularly the oppressor nations, to support this right. In this context, the organizational question must be raised. Support for self-determination will break down the barriers of years, decades and centuries of mistrust between the oppressed nationality workers and the workers of the oppressor nation. Self-determination lays the foundation for cooperation on the basis of equality. From this standpoint, workers from the oppressor nation would help squash mistrust if they supported national forms of organization with genuinely anti-imperialist programs. Recognition of the ability of oppressed people to lead, to develop tactics/strategy and to be creative, would be a major blow against white supremacist thinking as it manifest itself in the minds of oppressor nation revolutionaries and workers.

10. Multi-national organizations do give the multi-national proletariat the much needed opportunity to work together, to learn from each other and to break down stereotypes and rid people of imperialist inspired suspicions. Communist must build mass organizations of this type that fight wage slavery and exploitation as well as national oppression. Such forms, however, must not be created in opposition to or in competition with national forms.

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11. National forms of organization do not, by definition, have to give in to narrow nationalism. History has shown how the proletariat organized along national lines e.g. in trade unions, can be used by their own bourgeoisies to oppose workers of another nationality. Failure to pursue internationalism is not caused by organizational form but by world view and political line. Thus, Marxist-Leninist influence is what can or will insure internationalist cooperation in multi-national groups and nationality based organizations.

On the flip side of this argument is the erroneous idea that only national forms of organization, or organizations without whites in the leadership or membership can guarantee the fight against white privileges and white supremacy. In fact, there are many organizations in the various national movements that posture well but do little or nothing to fight against discrimination and national oppression.

12. National forms of organization are justified as responses to chauvinism, privilege on the part or oppressor nation workers, and national oppression in general. Therefore, there is no basis or justification for Anglo or white organizations. Such forms would and do reflect white chauvinism or white nationalism, the ideology of the Klan, Nazis and other organized racist and fascist.

13. Trade unions must be multi-national. In work-places and industries that are composed of one nationality because of certain forms of discrimination and privilege, these unions would objectively be Afro-American, Phillipino, Chicano, etc. but not be exclusionary on principle. In some circumstances where where the current trade unions refuse to organize workers because of chauvinism or where Anglo workers are in opposition to the oppressed nationality workers and the union, it may be appropriate to form a Black trade union and/or a revolutionary trade union. In the Afro-American nation, the efforts to organize the unorganized must not only be done in close connection with the developing national liberation movement, but in fact should be under the leadership of the national liberation movement. This is happening at this time in various zones within the Black Belt and border territory.

14. The Afro-American working class is the only class among the Afro-American people that can be depended upon to act consistently in its' own interest and against imperialist domination. Because of their objective role in society and the process of produc-

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tion in particular, they easily come to see that they have nothing in common with the ruling class and nothing to lose if they break away from imperialism and the control of the bourgeoisie. Once they are made conscious of this, once the subjective factor is grasped, they become staunch and unwavering.

In order for the Afro-American proletariat to carry out its special role in the leadership of the Afro-American liberation movement, it must be organized. The organization must be local, regional, and national and have a clear sense of the role of Black workers as members of the multi-national working

class and as members of the oppressed Afro-American nation. In this organized form they can play a leading role in the Black liberation movement through its' mass organizations, coalitions and revolutionary formations. These organizations are essential for the fight to be conducted in the interest of the working class. The reformist cannot and will not do this. We strongly support the building of Black workers organizations.

15. Anglo-American workers, progressives, and revolutionaries should be allowed to join Afro-American organizations depending on certain conditions. The conditions relate to location, program of the organization, consciousness of the members of the group, social and political conditions at the time membership is considered, and, most importantly, the outlook and history of the potential Anglo members.

Just as it is of great benefit for workers to come together in multi-national groups, it would be a situation of far reaching significance if some Anglo workers belonged to an organization that is made up of oppressed nationality workers and/or other strata and led by them. This could strike blows at national chauvinism and the traces of white supremacy that effect many white workers.

16. Organizations like the National Black United Front(NBUF), the National Black Independent Political Party(NBIPP), and others of a similar nature that may develop in the future must be looked at carefully and taken seriously. These organizations, in the main, have been organized by the petty-bourgeois nationalist and reformist, with some involvement of revolutionaries of different tendencies and currents. Despite their constitutions, by-laws and charters, in some locations they function as a coalition, in others, a front, and in still others, a mass organization.

They are definitely not revolutionary organizations precisely because they do not have revolutionary programs. But they are or can be defensive and fight-back organizations that wage various struggles in support of democratic rights of Black people in the U.S. They have also proven to be anti-imperialist in outlook and program.

The NBUF and NBIPP cannot, will not, and should not be transformed into an NLF. The program and

leadership preclude this possibility. Moreover, an NLF cannot be built in view of the state as is the case with these formations. In the meantime, they provide revolutionaries with an opportunity for some joint practice and sizing one another up, at the same time participating in local and national struggles that the Afro-American masses are engaged in at various levels of intensity and with different degrees of consciousness. If revolutionaries cannot be with the masses in the fights that they choose based on their level of understanding at a particular time, then they cannot expect the masses to learn the necessary lessons from these struggles and move to more advanced and conscious forms of struggle and resistance.

It may be that the NBUF/NBIPP will become mass organizations of an NLF or at least organizations that support the struggle for Black political rule in the Black Belt and regional and local autonomy in national minority areas.

17. The question of self-determination for the Afro-American nation must be raised in the mass movements and organizations. This can be done through independent literature and discussions that deal with concrete situations and do not prove to be disruptive. Revolutionaries must raise the flag of self-determination in opposition to the electoral path in unity with the Democrats as the reformist advocate. U.S. imperialism must be targeted as the source of every form or case of oppression and Afro-American political rule over the Black Belt territory shown as the cutting edge of the solution.

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18. An NLF must be formed to conduct the struggle for liberation of the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt south. That struggle is a war of national liberation. Afro-American revolutionaries and revolutionary organizations should form the leadership and core of the Front. Comrades and fighters from other nationalities should participate in the NLF in the manner that best advances the goals and objectives of the Front and its' program. This participation, be it political, military or organizational, should be based on time, place and conditions.

19. Capitalism is a world-wide system. It is international. Therefore, for it to be removed from the face of the earth, it is necessary for an international organization of revolutionaries to lead the fight. The Comintern, with its' strengths and weaknesses, was such an organization. The international proletariat and the national liberation movements need this kind of organization today,

It is the responsibility of genuine communist parties in power, as well as the experienced parties in other countries to lead the struggle for a new Comintern.

The class struggle is actually carried out within a state and nation. Consequently, communist organizations must correspond to the reality of the struggle within specific capitalist formations. Communist of all nationalities within a state must work as one vanguard to topple the bourgeoisie. This includes communist from national minority groups. In multi-national states, communist organization should be along internationalist lines.

Oppressed nations and national liberation movements raise important questions for communist organization. In external colonial situations it is clear that the nation struggling for self-determination and independence should have a communist party e.g. Puerto-Rico, Ireland, Algeria, and Mozambique. In addition, to the expected and necessary cooperation between various communist parties, communist of the oppressed and oppressor nations must work very closely. Moreover, communist of the oppressor nation who reside in the oppressed nation should belong to the party of the oppressed nation.

In multi-national states that hold oppressed nations captive internally, the organization of communist is also a serious and sometimes confusing

question. If a nation has a territory for which it contends with the imperialist and has the right to self-determination up to and including secession (the right to an independent state), it is expected that the proletariat of that nation be represented and led by the communist party of that nation. Along these lines, we are calling for the discussion of the idea of a communist party in the Afro-American nation comprised of Afro-American communist in the Black Belt and Anglo and other nationality communist that live in the Black Belt or surrounding territory. The same discussion should extend to the Chicano, and Native American national struggles.

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20. It is essential that genuine revolutionaries take up the questions advanced above immediately. From the chauvinist liquidators of the Afro-American national liberation struggle, we expect no action. But there are some forces who do not fully recognize the importance of the Afro-American liberation struggle to social revolution in the U.S. We have stated before that in the U.S. today, the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and the Afro-American people is the principal(not fundamental) contradiction, the one at the sharpest level of development and struggle. If we recognize and identify this weak link in the U.S. imperialist chain and then take a hold of it, we will be able to launch serious blows in the direction of national liberation and socialism in the U.S. This struggle for self-determination will help create the conditions for a revolutionary movement of the workers of the U.S. against capitalism and for socialism. Solving this problem must and will be the struggle around which the genuine revolutionary communist party will be built in the U.S. in this period.

