One way or another, there will be mass demonstrations at the Democratic and Republican parties' national nominating conventions this summer.

But what will be the political substance of these actions, how will they be organized and directed, and why, it seems to the protesters' main focus? These questions have moved to the center of recent discussions about the strategies and tactics of the left on the one hand, and the degree to which the summit protests will contribute to the politicalmaturation of the left depends on how they are resolved.

This debate has assumed a singular importance in the context of the Jackson candidacy which, on the strength of a political base in the Black community, has sought a broad left perspective into the electoral arena. And Jackson's candidacy is not just a challenge to the Reagan Administration, it is also a challenge to the Democratic Party—in particular, its frontrunner, Walter Mondale—and the tendency to reduce the struggle against Reaganism to a lowest-common denominator—"dump Reagan" effort devoid of substantive political content.

The alternative offered by Jackson is a campaign which targets the central features of Reagan's program, and the racialized character of the administration's broader assault on the working class.

With such a perspective, the question becomes: How can we press the Jackson campaign to the political edge, and in particular, on the balance of forces in the Jackson campaign? We must recognize the clear implications of this—this is a key factor making plans for mass actions different from the plans for a more limited protest. The Jackson campaign will be a powerful unity movement, but the failure to organize Jackson broadly means that the Jackson forces are essential to the struggle.

Ironically—but predictably—the chief obstacle to an effective, unified effort is the fact that Black and White Americans are the political immaturity of the left which keeps it hostage to determinism, the organizational and strategic inability to get beyond the Black community to the broader issues, and inability to take the initiative rather than the initiative.

FOCUS ON THE DEMOCRATS

One of the central questions facing the Democratic Convention is the inability of many forces central to the national antiwar and anti-intervention movement to grasp the special significance of mass actions at the Democratic convention in San Francisco.

In particular, the distinct character of the Republican platform is set in stone, while the struggle is underway among the Democrats.

To be sure, progressive forces—especially those in the South, and in the South, have the responsibility to cooperate with the protesters, but the Black community is in the midst of the war. It is clear that the mass movements are central not only to anti-racist politics in this country, but to all progressive politics. Any attempt to negotiate or compromise on the central issue, permanently white peace movement simply must give way to this fact.

The question here is the racial blind spot which has historically prevented much of the organized peace and anti-intervention movement from grasping the strategic implications of the antiwar movement. It is clear that the Black community, has played a pivotal role in bringing antiwar politics to the center of national debate. Most obvious, it is the Black community, which has taken the lead in this great struggle, that has been able to bring the whole nation to its knees. The key question is the nature of the struggle, the tactics of the movement, and the tactics of the convention.

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