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Address

Kansas City Theoret
Review
P.O. Box 10415
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October 29, 1981

Dear Comrade,

We are pleased to invite you to the Midwest Conference on Racism and National Oppression, to be held December 4-6 in Chicago. Enclosed is the Conference Call.

The Midwest Conference is a follow-up to the National Conference on Racism and National Oppression held in the Bay Area in May, 1981. A number of regional conferences will be held this fall around the country. We see this as an exciting opportunity to bring together the broad forces of our trend in the Midwest. Our goal is to discuss, debate and forge a common understanding of the theoretical, political and ideological issues we face in advancing the anti-racist struggle.

As communists we share a commitment to the centrality of the struggle against racism; yet we clearly have far to go in gaining clarity and unity on the precise nature of this struggle. This conference is one of many steps in a protracted process of political and theoretical work and dialogue on the complex questions of racism and national oppression. We hope to contribute to the progress of this work through the conference.

The conference will focus on the two "Working Papers of the National Conference on Racism and National Oppression." Emphasis will be placed on the first working paper, which deals with national and racial oppression --their distinct qualities and their intersection. This paper offers a theoretical framework on racial oppression which (1) examines racial oppression and (2) analyzes the relationship of racial oppression and capitalist development. The discussion of these papers will be held in workshops and plenary sessions. In addition, there will be two panel discussions: one on the Black Nation Thesis and the other on the Puerto Rican question.

To prepare for participation in the discussions and debates at the conference, members of the conference committee in each city will be holding discussion groups on the working papers. We are asking comrades to attend these meetings, as we believe they are necessary preparation for the level of discussion planned for the conference.

We encourage comrades to write responses to the working papers. We ask that position papers be submitted to us no later than Nov. 27, to insure distribution to all delegates before the conference.

For logistical reasons, we ask that you RSVP no later than Nov. 18. \$20.00 registration fee is requested to cover expenses.

We look forward to seeing you at the conference, and to actively working with you to make it a political success.

In solidarity,

The Conference Committee
c/o Bruce Embrey
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Chicago IL 60613
(312) 327-3073

Call For A Midwest Conference On Racism And National Oppression

Chicago, Illinois, December 4 - 6, 1981

The Klan is making a "comeback." The Atlanta murders are news for a year. Anti-"alien" jingoism and the cries of "white rights" and "reverse discrimination" are being raised throughout the country. Racism and racist violence are on the upsurge in the United States today, while the new economic policies of the federal government target minorities for increased economic and political repression in the years to come. The intensity and scope of the current racist attack on the working class challenges the communist movement to take the lead in the struggle against racism and national oppression.

Communists have recognized the centrality of this particular question, more or less, for the last fifty years. We have seen the need to take up the numerous practical and theoretical questions bound up with racism and the struggle against it. Unfortunately, taking the period as a whole, the communist movement has failed to lead either the practical or theoretical struggles. At different periods and in particular mass struggles, communists have been in the lead. But the anti-racist struggle remains dominated by reformist and petit-bourgeois leadership incapable of meeting the present racist offensive or charting the way forward to the elimination of racism.

The Need For Theoretical And Political Clarity Now

Today, more than ever before, the communist movement is challenged to confront the questions of racism and national oppression in all their forms. But we lack the necessary political and theoretical clarity to wage this struggle effectively. Theoretically, the communist movement remains thoroughly confused. Formulations such as "proletarian nations," "nations of a new type," and "internal colonies" have combined with sterile dogmatism to plague the communist movement in our recent attempts to analyze these questions. It is primarily this theoretical confusion which has resulted in the inability of the communist movement to provide political leadership and move to the center of the struggles against racism and national oppression.

The Present State Of The Trend In The Anti-Racist Struggle

The anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend has been no exception. On the one hand, our trend traces many of its roots to the revolutionary impulse of the mass civil rights and anti-racist struggles of the 60's and early 70's. Collectively and individually, we have had a substantial amount of experience accumulated both in the practical and theoretical aspects of the struggle. In recent years, as a self-conscious trend distinct from the ultra-leftists, we have attempted to influence and lead various anti-racist struggles involved with the issues of affirmative action, police brutality, school desegregation, and the KKK on a national as well as a local level.

Despite these gains, however, our practice remains by and large scattered, unsynthesized, and unsynthesized. And our trend has yet to unite around an all-sided theory of race and national oppression in the United States capable of breaking through the tremendous theoretical muddle left to us by earlier efforts.

Our trend also lacks consistent advanced experience in taking up the struggle against racism within its ranks in a systematic and timely fashion. Unfortunately, what has been proclaimed as an advanced experience has been the Campaign Against White Chauvinism of the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center. The campaign, based on an incorrect political and ideological foundation, represented a major setback for our trend. Instead of uniting the trend through clarifying the nature and importance of the struggle against racism, the Campaign Against White Chauvinism has led to the demise of the OCIC and to confusion and disunity within the trend.

Conference To Begin Systematic Effort In Midwest

A systematic effort needs to be made in order to overcome these weaknesses. To this end, a National Conference on Racism and National Oppression was held in the Bay Area from May 22 to 25 of this year. To build off the gains that were made during that conference and the preparatory work that went into it, we are planning a conference on Racism and National Oppression for the Midwest. This will be held in Chicago from December 4 to 6 of this year. We hope that it will contribute to advancing our trend's unity, understanding, and practice in the struggle against racism and national oppression.

The conference is being organized by a Conference Committee composed of activists from within the anti-revisionist, anti-"left" opportunist trend, including comrades associated with the theoretical journal *Line of March*, former members of the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center, and independent activists. The Committee is composed primarily of comrades who attended the national conference last May.

Structure Of The Conference

The conference will be organized around two working papers that were developed for the national conference.

The first working paper, *Racial Oppression and National Oppression: Their Particularities and Their Interconnection in the United States*, attempts to provide the basis for a more precise and scientific common language among communists concerning nations and national oppression, to examine the particularity of racial oppression in the United States and its interrelationship and interpenetration with national oppression.

The second working paper, *The Communist Movement's Relationship to the Struggle Against Racism*, advances a general framework for analyzing the phenomenon of racism internal to the communist movement, and for the correct handling of this volatile contradiction. Utilizing this framework, the working paper also traces the history of the socialist/communist movement and its practice in the struggle against racism from the turn of the century to the present. The conference documents are available from members of the Conference Committee.

Collective discussion of the working papers will be organized within workshops as well as in plenary sessions. In addition, several political and theoretical questions bound up with the struggle against racism and national oppression will be taken up. This will include discussion of some of the various analyses within the communist movement concerning the situation facing Black and Puerto Rican People in the United States.

The conference will be open to activists who fall within the broad contours of the anti-revisionist, anti-“left” opportunist trend. Due to financial and logistical considerations, participation will be by invitation. The Conference Committee will attempt to insure that there is the broadest representation of the various political forces in our trend, including the OCIC. We are hopeful that the conference will contribute to the maturation and development of our trend’s theory and practice in the struggle against racism and national oppression.

Conference Committee

Chicago

Bruce Embry
Jan Fowler
Tim Johnson
George Schmidt

Madison

Barbara Olsen
Simi Litvak
Helen Raizen

Cincinnati

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For further information, call: (312) 327-3073