

It is highly important to put forward in precise terms the slogan of the *political self-determination* of all nationalities, in contrast to all hedging (such as *only* "equality").

V. I. Lenin, *Concerning Certain Speeches
by Workers' Deputies*, 1912.
[18:417* Lenin's emphasis]

We want to end the oppression of national minorities and women and make equality a reality. . . .

Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee (1975)

Black people today . . . do not retain, nor do they need, the right to self-determination.

Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee (1976)

Who's being dogmatic?

a response to the Philadelphia Workers'
Organizing Committee on the national question

By Jasper Collins

I

When V. I. Lenin wrote, in January 1917, that Negroes in the United States "should be classed as an oppressed nation" [23:275], he did not apply the criteria of nationhood set forth in J. V. Stalin's famous definition: "*A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture.*" [2:307 Stalin's emphasis]

Stalin's definition, written in 1913 in *Marxism and the National Question* [2:300-381] and warmly

embraced by Lenin at that time [19:539], was a rigid, dogmatic one: "it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation." [2:307] Lenin was not measuring Afro-Americans by this dogma in 1917. Instead he wrote, "They should be classed as an oppressed nation, for the equality won in the Civil War of 1861-65 and guaranteed by the Constitution of the republic was in many respects increasingly curtailed in the chief Negro areas (the South) in connection with the transition from the progressive, pre-monopoly capitalism of 1860-70 to the reactionary, monopoly capitalism (imperial-

ism) of the new era, which in America was especially sharply etched out by the Spanish-American imperialist war of 1898 (i.e., a war between two robbers over a division of the booty)." [23:275-276]

The white population, he added, despite widely varied origins, "smoothed out to form a single

*Citations in this article are to the 45-volume English edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* and the 13-volume English edition of Stalin's *Works* published in Moscow. The volume number precedes the colon and the page number(s) follow it.

'American' nation." [23:276] Lenin never finished this pamphlet, *Statistics and Sociology* [23:271-277], but it is clear from his outline for it [41:387-390] that he intended it to be a complete restatement of his position on the national question, reviewing the development of Marxist theory and debate, but casting it in the light of the new understanding of imperialism.

In 1915 he had written that "imperialism means that capital has outgrown the framework of national states; it means that national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation." [21:408] He had argued for a sharper understanding of the national question in a number of letters, polemical articles, theses, and speeches from 1915 on [e.g., 35:240-241, 242-245, 246-247, 248-249, 250-255, 264-265, 266-269, 272-274 (letters); 21:407-414; 23:13-21, 22-27, 28-76 (articles); 22:143-156 (theses); 39:735-742; 41:426-427 (speeches)], but *Statistics and Sociology* was to be his popular exposition on the subject. It was cut short by the first wave of the revolution in 1917 and, like *State and Revolution* [25:381-492], was never completed.

During this period Stalin was either unaware of Lenin's new understanding or else he rejected it. Lecturing in April 1917 he said, "the closer the old landed aristocracy is to power, as was the case in old tsarist Russia, the more severe is the [national] oppression and the more monstrous are its forms." [3:53]

Though Stalin saw that imperialism also oppressed nations, he did not understand the essential connection between imperialism and national oppression, nor the qualitative increase in the latter. A month earlier he had written in *Pravda* that in "North America, where landlordism has never existed and the bourgeoisie enjoys undivided power, the nationalities develop more or less freely, and, generally

speaking, there is practically no soil for national oppression." [3:18]

Clearly Stalin was clinging to the rigid terms of his 1913 pamphlet. Since Lenin had described "the specific political features of imperialism" as "reaction everywhere and increased national oppression" [22:287] in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) [22:185-304], which Stalin must have read, it is quite likely that Stalin knowingly disagreed with Lenin on this point.

Lenin continued to press for his view that Negroes in the United States were an oppressed nation. In submitting his *Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions* for the Second Congress of the Communist International, he specifically sought elaboration regarding this and several other specific instances of national oppression which he deemed "very

complex." [31:144] The draft theses explicitly required "that all Communist parties should render direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the American Negroes, etc.) and in the colonies." [31:148] It is especially ironic, then, that in 1928 and 1930, when Stalin and the Comintern finally addressed the Negro Question in the United States with the comprehensive consideration that Lenin had urged, it was done largely within the context of the 1913 theory that Lenin had transcended.

(The resolutions themselves do not contain the rigid language of the old Stalin pamphlet, but neither do they reflect Lenin's advanced understanding of the national question during the imperialist epoch. The 1928 resolution was so ambiguous that it gave rise to a number of



Members of the Altai minority as they lived under the tsars. Stalin's early theoretical work was not mainly concerned with peoples like this, but with the national question in Europe.



Petrograd, 1917: revolutionaries make bonfires of tsarist insignia. The imperialist war brought to the forefront the liberation of the colonies.

conflicting lines within the U.S. Communist Party. The 1930 resolution was an attempt to clarify the line and firmly express the view that "the Negro question in the United States must be viewed from the standpoint of its peculiarity, namely, as the question of an *oppressed nation*," and that in the South "the main Communist slogan must be: *The Right of Self-Determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt*." ["Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States," *The Communist*, February 1931, pages 153-154, emphasis in original] The debate on implementation revealed clearly the extent to which the Communists relied on the early Stalin understanding. [See, for example: Harry Haywood, "Against Bourgeois-Liberal Distortions of Leninism on the Negro Question in the United States,"

The Communist, August 1930, pages 694-712, especially page 706]

II

"Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce." Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.

Had Marx lived to witness the twentieth century, he might have added that third, fourth, and fifth reruns become increasingly farcical, particularly within the movement that bears his name. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the debate over the Black National Question in the United States. That debate has erupted again and again in

the U.S. communist movement — in 1946-1948; in 1956-1958; and, most recently, revived in the late sixties and continuing to the present.

Certain aspects of the debate predictably recur: The most persistent is the argument about whether Black people in the U.S. fit the 1913 definition of a nation. Black migration is examined in microscopic detail, and the outline of Afro-American history is retold. Rarely has the presence or absence of a nationalist movement among Blacks been central to the debate; in fact, paradoxically, those who argue most vigorously that a Black nation exists within the U.S. are usually the ones who are most hostile to existing nationalist movements. Never does the *development* of Leninist theory on the national question enter the debate; instead, every article is sprinkled with quotes from Lenin and Stalin without regard to their place in the unfolding of the theory — therefore generally presuming their validity as gospel, and thereby erecting a stout barrier to the method of Marx and Lenin.**

The practice of every revolutionary group is sometimes better, sometimes worse, than its theory. The experience of predominantly white left groups in the United States shows that more often than not they have failed to measure up

**This is not to say that all the writings produced in these debates are useless. Some are not, though one cannot read many of them without experiencing chronic *deja vu*, the redundancies are so numerous. More helpful, though, are two works that do not directly address the Black National Question. Horace B. Davis' book, *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917* (1967) is best in its treatment of the early years. Moshe Lewin's book, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (1968) is helpful historically, particularly to show the

importance of national self-determination to Lenin, and his practical differences with Stalin. Unfortunately, Lewin tends to project a Trotskyist analysis: Stalin's errors were due to his alleged or implied intellectual mediocrity, rather than to an erroneous theory from which flowed a disastrous, chauvinistic practice.

Trotskyists, on the other hand, have paid more attention to the importance of subjective factors: See, for example, *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination* (1967), and the many

Trotskyist writings that rely heavily on the works of Malcolm X. Unfortunately, they tend to obscure the meaning of self-determination and the struggle for independence by applying these terms loosely to any demand for Black community control and to any all-Black political formations.

A recent article that is faithful to the method of Marx and Lenin as far as it goes is "Are Puerto Ricans a National Minority?" by James Blaut, in *Monthly Review*, May 1977.

to the challenge of Black liberation. Acceptance or denial of Black nationhood within the confines of the traditional debate doesn't seem to have much effect: those groups that adhere to the Black-Belt Nation theory have often used it as an excuse to refrain from an all-out attack on white chauvinism and oppressor-nation privilege; conversely, those who reject the Black nation tend to ignore or oppose independent revolutionary initiatives by Black people. In this respect, the two poles of the usual debate are intimately bound by links of chauvinism.

Since the test of any left group has to be its practice, a critique of its theoretical product will only crudely approximate the judgment that will ultimately be called for. That limitation should be borne in mind as the following argument is weighed by the reader. On the other hand, a test of the theoretical base of a political line is the only valid way either to predict or to generalize a particular political approach.

Within the framework outlined above, there can be only one excuse for attaching importance to a particular theory of Black liberation advanced by one current within today's left sufficient to justify a thorough critique — the estimate of the strength of the political current, rather than the particular presentation of the line. After all, there are a wide variety of groups, sects, and parties of the so-called "new communist movement," or "anti-revisionist left," or revisionism, or social-democracy, or Trotskyism. But among those who can make a passable claim to being revolutionary, only one political current — the one that calls itself "anti-dogmatist" — appears to be growing in influence. Others whose fortunes looked good just a few short years ago have fallen into decline.

The political center of the "anti-dogmatist" tendency is the *Guardian* newspaper and its more or less loyal periphery, including such

groups as the Detroit Marxist-Leninist Organization (DMLO), the Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee (PWOC), and others. Within this broad trend, PWOC's writings — both theoretical and agitational — present the most comprehensive analysis and explanation of Black liberation. For that reason alone, this essay appears justified.

III

PWOC argues that Black people do not constitute a nation anywhere within the present boundaries of the U.S., because the Black nation that once existed — based on "a large Black peasantry" with the plantation economy as "the central unifying force in the national development of the Afro-American people" — has undergone an irreversible transformation due to geographic dispersal and a striking change in class composition. Because of these developments, says PWOC, Black

people are not entitled to self-determination; the most they may legitimately strive for is "equality" as a permanent minority within the U.S.; movements for independence are reactionary, and must be opposed.

As explained above, these arguments are familiar, and break little new ground. Another characteristic is similar to so much of the left's shameful past: the theoretical argument is a collection of citations from Lenin, Stalin, and the Comintern — often out of context — in order to justify a previously held position. PWOC's popular pamphlet, *Racism and the Workers' Movement*,*** appeared about a year before the theoretical exposition, *Black Liberation Today: Against Dogmatism on the National Question*.**** The most striking disappointment, however, is the extent to which the argument "a-

***Cited as *RWM*.

****Cited as *BLT*.



Some self-styled Marxist-Leninists refer to the race problem as a "contradiction among the people." Is this what they have in mind?



National oppression. Is this Africa or the United States?

gainst dogmatism" rests on the most rigid, doctrinaire — yes, dogmatic — adherence to Stalin's 1913 pamphlet, on the one hand, while quoting Lenin both before and after he developed the theory of imperialism — as though his ideas underwent no change — on the other.

To some extent PWOC's presentation along these lines flies in the face of some of its own theoretical understanding. The part of the first chapter of its pamphlet explaining the development of nations under feudalism is strictly doctrinaire Stalin, beginning with his definition of a nation and continuing through the traditional view that national persecution diverts attention from class struggle, bolstered with more Stalin. [BLT, pages 7-9] After reviewing the debates on the national question within the early Marxist movement, PWOC arrives at the present historical epoch, and says, quite correctly, "with the rise of Imperialism, the character of the national question is profoundly altered." [BLT, page 13] But the only text cited in this section is a quote from Lenin's writing in 1913, before he had developed his understanding of imperialism.

Finally, the first chapter concludes with a section on the historic tendency of capitalism to assimilate nations — an aspect, says PWOC, of

"the more advanced capitalist states." [BLT, page 14] Again the assertions are studded with quotes from 1913 gospel. This argument is the essential theoretical underpinning of PWOC's theory: "As capitalism matures and extends its market into wider spheres, it tends to break down national barriers and obliterate national distinctions." [BLT, page 14] "Lenin, in noting this feature of the national question, that is, the tendency of capitalism to assimilate nations, some sixty years ago spoke of 'a tendency which manifests itself more and more powerfully with every passing decade, and is one of the greatest driving forces transforming capitalism into socialism.'" [BLT, page 45] A longer version of this same Lenin quote is used in PWOC's summary argument. [BLT, page 49]

It cannot be stated too often that this is a view which was central to Lenin's understanding of the national question in his early years, but which was replaced by more significant insights after 1915: Imperialism "means that national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation." [21:408] "Imperialism means the progressively mounting oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of Great Powers." [21:409] The Party must

focus on the "division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the *essence* of imperialism." [21:409 Lenin's emphasis] "The imperialism of our days has led to a situation in which the Great-Power oppression of nations has become general." [21:410] He refers to "Increased national oppression under imperialism." [22:146] "Imperialism is oppression of nations on a *new* historical basis." [39:736 Lenin's emphasis] It is this aspect of nationhood, not the tendency toward assimilation, which is "profoundly altered" under imperialism.

IV

Even within the framework of their chosen doctrine, the anti-dogmatists commit serious theoretical blunders. For example, they write, "The Marxist attitude toward the national movement and toward the question of self determination is not absolute and unconditional, so Marxists also only support those national movements which advance the general interests of democracy and the proletariat." [BLT, page 11] If this were so, it would be dif-



Gordon, a Mississippi slave, freed himself and fought to free his people. On his first escape attempt he was caught by patrolers, flogged, and returned to his master. The next time he ran, he successfully escaped to Union Army lines, where this picture was taken, and became a soldier.

difficult to account for the unconditional support extended by Marxists to Haile Selassie's Ethiopia when Mussolini's army invaded in 1935.

PWOC attributes to Lenin the view that "the aim of [national] independence was unobtainable short of a general revolutionary crisis." [BLT, page 12] Even in the writings on which PWOC relies so heavily, Lenin clearly rejected this view. He repeatedly referred to the secession of Norway from Sweden — by referendum — as an example of the practicality of self-determination:

the Norwegian parliament resolved that the Swedish king was no longer king of Norway, and in the referendum held later among the Norwegian people, the overwhelming majority (about 200,000 as against a few hundred) voted for complete separation from Sweden. After a short period of indecision, the Swedes resigned themselves to the fact of secession.

This example shows us on what grounds cases of the secession of nations are practicable, and actually occur, under modern economic and political relationships, and the form secession sometimes assumes under conditions of political freedom and democracy.

No Social-Democrat will deny — unless he would profess indifference to questions of political freedom and democracy (in which case he is naturally no longer a Social-Democrat) — that this example *virtually* proves that it is the *bounden duty* of class-conscious workers to conduct systematic propaganda and prepare the ground for the settlement of conflicts that may arise over the secession of nations, not in the 'Russian way', but *only in the way* they were settled in 1905 between Nor-

way and Sweden. This is exactly what is meant by the demand in the programme for the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination."

[20:427 Lenin's emphasis]

Though PWOC attempts to exonerate oppressor-nation workers from their share of the responsibility for national oppression, placing the entire blame on the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation [BLT, page 9], Lenin did not concur in this either: "No one people has oppressed the Poles more than the Russian people, who served in the hands of the tsars as the executioner of Polish freedom." [24:297] He writes of "we Great Russians, who have been oppressing more nations than any other people." [24:298] When he wrote that "300-400 million out of 1,600 [million] are oppressors" [39:736], he was counting more than just a handful of imperialist bourgeoisie.

Finally, PWOC places great stress on the struggle against Black "bourgeois nationalism." [BLT, page 51] In discussing "the strategic task of Communists within the Black Liberation movement" they state that "much of the content of this work must necessarily consist of ideological struggle against the narrow na-

tionalism and reformism characteristic of the Black petty bourgeoisie." [BLT, page 53] Our disagreements with PWOC's characterization of contemporary Black nationalism will be dealt with below; here the contrast with Lenin's approach is important: "Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, *in favour*, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression." [20:411-412] "The bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we *unconditionally* support." [20:412] [Lenin's emphasis]

These examples are not a complete catalog of PWOC's collision with Leninism on theoretical grounds, but they embrace the important points. There is a touch of irony in the fact that the Lenin and Stalin texts relied on by PWOC, and PWOC's interpretation of them, are similar to those offered by the groups from whom PWOC is striving so hard to differentiate.

We have attempted to demonstrate two essentials of Leninism on the national question: that Lenin



Does PWOC consider this "narrow nationalism"?

had a program which he advanced during his entire political career based on a single principle — the right of nations to self-determination; and that Lenin's understanding of national oppression and the importance of national liberation deepened as his theory of imperialism developed.

Was Lenin dogmatic? The answer must be both yes and no. No, if the questioner means a rigid commitment to a political line that is super-historical, that does not flow from concrete historical experience and change in accordance with the requirements of a new historical epoch. Yes, if the question refers to the rigid and unbending commitment to revolutionary principle:

It is therefore quite natural for Social-Democracy, as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, to be so concerned for its *programme*, to take such pains to establish well in advance its ultimate aim, the complete emancipation of the working people, and jealously to guard this aim against any attempts to whittle it down. For the same reasons Social-Democracy is so dogmatically strict and firmly doctrinaire in keeping its ultimate goal clear of all minor, immediate economic and political aims. He who goes *all out*, who fights for complete victory, must alert himself to the danger of having his hands tied by minor gains, of being led astray and made to forget that which is still comparatively remote, but without which all minor gains are hollow vanities. Such concern for the programme and the ever critical attitude towards small and gradual improvements are incomprehensible and foreign to a party of the bourgeoisie, however great its love for freedom and the people may be. [8:427]

This was the commitment of Lenin's life. Once he understood the modern era as the epoch of imperi-



For white workers, racism is more than a mistaken idea.

alism, the liberation of oppressed peoples became for him a central aspect of the emancipation of the working people.

V

Besides the requisite list of quotes from Lenin, Stalin, and the Comintern, a nutshell history of Black people in the U.S. is obligatory in any self-respecting communist polemic on the national question. Again PWOC follows the tradition, cribbing as many errors as truths from its ideological forebears. There is not room here to refute in detail the history and analysis offered by PWOC; but the main points of difference will be shown. Readers who want to explore these matters in greater detail should read two pamphlets available from Sojourner Truth Organization: *Marx on American Slavery* by Ken Lawrence, and *White Supremacy: a collection*.

For an organization that has spent so much time concerned about racism, it is surprising that PWOC does not ever attempt to explain the origin of slavery or of white supremacy. For some unexplained reason, Africans were enslaved while Europeans were not. After that, "The ideas of white supremacy and black inferiority developed gradually to give moral and political sanction to the slave sys-

tem and the degradation of the Black people." [RWM, page 6] This is an astonishingly barren place to begin, considering that an understanding of the origin of white supremacy ought to shed important light on the practicality of various approaches to ending it. But PWOC is not deterred. (Part of the difficulty with PWOC's line is its overall imprecision, of which this is merely an example. One that is more glaring is the use of "racism" in a wide variety of contexts without carefully differentiating its meaning. At times, the term is intended to mean simply the ideology of white chauvinism [white racial superiority]; at other times, it is used to mean white supremacy [material privileges granted to those with white skin and denied to people of color]. these are important distinctions, because the former can, on occasion, be overcome through education, debate, or exhortation, while the latter can only be uprooted through victory in a conscious struggle that alters relations of power. Though these are necessarily intertwined, and one can lead to the other, they are not the same thing.)

PWOC definitely learned a few things — a very few — between the time its popular pamphlet appeared and the publication later on of its theoretical argument. In the former, although "Black People have waged a stubborn and heroic struggle against their oppression from the time the first slave ship docked in the New World" [RWM, page 23], not a single Black struggle against slavery merited mention. (Perhaps this is because "separatist" and "terrorist" paths are, to PWOC, "politically self defeating." [RWM, page 23])

Thus, "the class conflicts that led to the Civil War" did not include the slaves, according to PWOC's first attempt. Instead, the planters were opposed by the Northern capitalists, free workers, and farmers. [RWM, page 6] This scenario is reiterated in the later tract, but three sentences are added about

slave struggles: "The Black people themselves had never been passive observers of the struggle between other forces over the questions of slavery and freedom. Throughout the period of slavery the Black people had resisted their oppression by means of armed insurrection. Ex-slaves like Frederick Douglass had played leading roles in the abolition movement and the Black freedmen, though not numerous and subject to harsh political restrictions, had sought to organize to further the cause of Black freedom." Mention is made of freed slaves in the Union Army. [BLT, page 20] But PWOC claims these struggles were relatively insignificant, because "it is only with the Civil War and Emancipation that the Black People for the first time gain the requisites for forming a mass movement." [BLT, page 20]

As history this is a disaster. Nowhere were Black people important in PWOC's view. The planters, whom Marx viewed as capitalists, and slavery, which Marx considered "the pivot of bourgeois industry," are, for PWOC, enemies of capital, and feudalism, respectively. In Marx's view, the U.S. Civil War was a revolution from the standpoint of the slaves and free workers, a war for free soil and free trade from the standpoint of farmers and industrial capitalists, and a war for territorial conquest on the part of the planter-capitalists; in PWOC's view, it was a class struggle between planters and capitalists.

So much scholarship has documented the central role of the slaves in the fight against slavery that it is hard to believe anyone on the left would continue to spout this version of history. Those who have doubts on this score should compare PWOC's account to the writings of C. L. R. James, W. E. B. DuBois, Herbert Aptheker, Lerone Bennett, John Anthony Scott, George Rawick, and Peter Wood, to name only the best and most prominent. Even liberal historians like Kenneth Stampp and John Blas-



In liberated areas of the South, Black people openly celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation; in areas still controlled by Confederate forces, Loyal Leagues were organized to spread the word from plantation to plantation.

singame are more useful than PWOC. (As we shall see later on, however, PWOC's fake history is an important pillar of its strategy for today.)

PWOC's description of Reconstruction is as miserable as its treatment of slavery. Generally speaking, it follows James S. Allen's view in *Reconstruction, Battle for Democracy*: Reconstruction was a struggle for bourgeois democracy which failed when the Northern bourgeoisie betrayed the freedmen in the Hayes-Tilden compromise, which restored power to the planters and reduced the Black people to serfdom; as opposed to W. E. B. DuBois' account in *Black Reconstruction*, that the Black governments in the South were revolutionary dictatorships that failed primarily because white workers did not properly grasp their class interest — instead of fighting for the success of Reconstruction, they generally joined with the capitalists in an alliance based on white supremacy, thus abandoning the best opportunity offered by the epoch for their own emancipation. [This discussion is elaborated in Noel Ignatin's *Reconstruction: A Study Guide*, which will appear in the next issue of *Urgent Tasks*.] But PWOC adds embellishments to Al-

len's theory that are unique among leftists.

In real history the Reconstruction governments were overthrown by secret, well-financed, armed conspirators commanded by former Confederate generals, identical in every respect to the fascist *coups d'état* in our own century. No mention is made of this; in PWOC's account, the Ku Klux Klan doesn't arrive until after white supremacy has been restored [BLT, page 22], and the role of the Klan as the armed forces of the Democratic Party gets no attention whatsoever.

Finally, PWOC leaves out completely the fights against the imposition of terror, perhaps because those struggles outline sharply the leading and revolutionary role of Black people, whether the goals were proletarian class power or national independence: In Mississippi a Black militia was organized by Charles Caldwell, a state senator and former slave, to suppress the white insurrection. In the Sea Islands, Blacks took up arms to defend the land they had taken over. The greatest post-Civil War strike in U.S. history was started by Black and white railroad workers in Martinsville, West Virginia, in 1877. After the terrorists had won in the South, Black leaders like Benjamin

"Pap" Singleton, Edwin P. McCabe, and Henry Adams led the largest single migration in U.S. history — the Black Exodus from the South to Kansas and Oklahoma in 1879 — revealing to the whole world the mass demand for land and self-government. Instead, PWOC's version follows the standard bourgeois account: the era was characterized by "gross corruption and profiteering." [BLT, page 21]

It is typical throughout the PWOC argument that Black people are never considered workers until the present period — instead, they are viewed as an "ally" of the (implicitly white) working class. [BLT, page 5] Under slavery, the class character of the Black population is never discussed. After emancipation but prior to the Great Migration to the North — the period in which PWOC confers nationhood on them — Black people are serfs, peons, or peasants. [BLT, pages 21, 22, and 27] The very people who, in our view, are the most thoroughly proletarian group in U.S. society,

for PWOC are latecomers to the working class. For a historical rebuttal to this view, refer to the pamphlets mentioned at the beginning of this section; for a political reply, see Noel Ignatin's *White Blindspot*.

PWOC's history teems with additional misrepresentations, but a couple of additional examples will have to suffice: Describing the era of Marcus Garvey's mass following, PWOC refers to "the absence of a strong national movement during this period." [BLT, page 23] While the Communist Party was agitating for a Negro Soviet Republic, PWOC says its struggle "was not centered on the demand for independence but for self determination." [BLT, page 23] This quote reveals the muddleheadedness that is characteristic of the PWOC document. Self-determination is properly defined as independence, secession (hence the *right* of self-determination is the *right* to secede), but PWOC cannot get this straight. In one case it refers to *self-determination* as "the

right of an oppressed nation to secede and form its own state." [BLT, page 10] On another occasion, *the right of self-determination* is "repudiating the imperialist annexations and frontiers." [BLT, page 12] These two examples would be correct if their terms were exchanged, but PWOC obviously doesn't grasp the distinction. One wonders whether they have read even those texts by Lenin and Stalin on which they rely so heavily.

VI

Another feature common to polemics on the national question based on Stalin's criteria is a demographic argument accompanied by a sheaf of maps and charts; PWOC's is no exception. The purpose of the demographic discussion and the attendant attachments is always to establish whether or not the Black population meets Stalin's requirements of nationhood. PWOC argues that it does not. In addition, however, PWOC has ventured forth with what purports to be a class analysis of the Black population, so that it can attempt to locate its enemies and its friends among Black people. Once again there is not space here for a minute dissection of PWOC's presentation, so again a few samples will have to suffice for this review.

Along with others who have made similar arguments, PWOC seems to believe that unless "a contiguous territory with a Black majority could be constructed on the basis of these [Black majority] counties" [BLT, page 39], a nation does not exist. In actual fact, the Black-Belt nation of the twenties, thirties, and forties, which PWOC does accept as valid, *never* consisted of a contiguous territory with a Black majority.

PWOC attempts to show, by focusing on population percentages, that the decline in the Black population since the fifties has resulted in the dissolution of the Black

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Returning soldiers discharged at Little Rock, Arkansas.

should be, a real question still remains about the role of the metropolitan proletariat.)

Without accepting the opposite dogma, as espoused by Emmanuel and others, I think that the revolutionary centrality of the metropolitan proletariat cannot be regarded as an ultimate given. Its role is problematical. Essentially the issue demands a weighing of two factors. First, the centrality of national liberation to the contemporary international class struggle must be fully appreciated. Every major gain for the revolution in our generation has resulted from this form of struggle, and many of the advances in consciousness and organization for metropolitan workers have been greatly influenced by these victories. Only blatant chauvinism or incredible myopia could place these historic victories on a par with the extremely sluggish, tentative, and equivocal movements of the metropolitan working class.

On the other hand, there is one outstanding weakness within these advances. Sixty years after the first working class seizure of state power, we have only the most ambiguous models of socialism/communism in its basic sense of a society based on the self-organization of the producers where "every cook" governs. It is increasingly difficult to retain any confidence that the most hopeful development of this generation, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, will develop such a model.

Though we must abandon any hint of the technological determinism which the Chinese correctly criticize as the "theory of the productive forces," the question remains whether the weaknesses of the various post-revolutionary societies do not have their source in the uneven development of the working classes which have made revolutions. This possibility is what leaves the issue of the role of the metropolitan working class in the revolution an open question.

By Don Hamerquist

PWOC

(continued from page 12)

nation. [BLT, page 27] It is easy to place a different interpretation on these statistics, however. In the first place, it is necessary to point out the great inaccuracy of the census, particularly its count of the Black population. In the past, during slavery times and during the Jim Crow era, the Southern Black population was often exaggerated in order to increase Congressional representation for Southern whites. Now that Blacks have the franchise again, the tendency is to undercount Black people. The Census Bureau itself admitted a 7.7 percent undercount of the Black population in 1970 [Associated Press, 4/26/73], and some independent researchers have estimated an even higher amount of error.

Second, PWOC attempts to equate the situation of Black people in the U.S. today with that of the Jews in tsarist Russia. The comparison is not valid. Blacks are not historically a landless people. PWOC seems to assume, along with the bourgeoisie, that because whites hold possessory title to the land that Blacks have lived on and worked for centuries, it naturally belongs to them. The simple expedient of mechanizing agriculture, according to PWOC, permitted the planters to dissolve the Black nation by depriving it of its land. In the face of these odds, though, Black people have retained as much land as possible. In 1910 they owned more than 15 million acres of land. Since that time they have been robbed and cheated of most of it, but even today they retain almost 6 million acres, about 70 percent of it in the South, despite the fact that whites have used every available device, including terror and fraud, to expropriate Black landowners.

This is one reason why the migration to the North must be viewed as a forced evacuation; another is shown by government policy in the

South today. The state of Mississippi has actually published its intentions along these lines. In a book called *Mississippi's Changing Economy, 1973*, the state's planners have included a chart entitled "Mississippi Population Goals." [page 63] The chart indicates an intent to increase the white population to 2.4 million by the year 2000, while reducing the Black population to 750,000 during the same period. This is a relatively easy goal for them to pursue, since Black men and women are denied access to decent jobs while the state's welfare benefits — limited to Aid to Dependent Children and to the handicapped — are the lowest in the U.S.

Under these circumstances, it is rather amazing that Black people cling so stubbornly to their Southern homeland. PWOC's chart shows that the Black population decline in the South has been relatively small in absolute terms — less than ¼ of a million people in 30 years. [BLT, page 27] The real reason for the large percentage decline is the large influx of whites. And despite all the obstacles, news reports say that the out-migration trend has stopped, and there is now a "reverse migration" of Blacks returning to the South. [New York Times, 6/18/74; Washington Post-L.A. Times Service, 9/12/77]



The chart labeled "Class Composition of the Black People — 1972" is a wondrous PWOC creation. [BLT, page 44] Since the full source of the data is not given, it is impossible to make an independent check of the table's accuracy. That is relatively unimportant, however, because the purpose of the chart is to establish the existence of a Black ruling class. (PWOC needs this class in order to blame it as the source of nationalist ideas.) Who are the bourgeoisie? Industrialists? Bankers? No, says PWOC. These are the categories listed as bourgeoisie: self-employed managers, salaried managers, and public administration. (It really is difficult to take this group seriously sometimes.) White people who hold these positions are universally labeled petty bourgeois by Marxists. PWOC's categories do violence to real class analysis.

One need not leave the debate on that level, however. The answers to some fairly simple questions can firmly establish whether or not the strength of Black nationalism lies in the bourgeoisie: From what class did the thousands who flocked to Garvey's banner arise? What about the followers of Malcolm X? Or Malcolm himself? Why does nationalism have a large following in the prisons? Why are the nationalists — the provisional government of the Republic of New Africa, the African People's Party, The African People's Socialist Party, etc. — always so short on funds while the "assimilationists" — NAACP, Urban League, etc. — are always so flush? The answers to questions like these are much more convincing than all of PWOC's data.

VII

Both PWOC pamphlets include data quantifying the discrimination against Blacks in income, employment, health care, housing, education, prices of food and other goods, social services, and so forth. [RWM, pages 11-12; BLT, page 43]

A slight forgery

In addition to graphics copied from other publications, PWOC has created a few of its own, and these are among the most interesting. Apparently PWOC is aware that there are severe weaknesses in its arguments, because it has attempted to reinforce their underpinnings with four maps of Mississippi, three of which are forgeries. This is a very serious charge, so we will take the necessary space to document it fully, even though the arguments themselves do not merit such treatment.



Fig. 3

The first of these is Figure 3, which is adjacent to Figure 4. [BLT, page 19] Figure 4 is a soil map of Mississippi; though there may be questions about its accuracy, it is not a forgery. But Figure 3, which purports to be a map of the Black population distribution in 1890 is bogus in several respects. In the first place, it is drawn on a county outline map containing today's 82 counties instead of the 76 that existed in 1890. Second, of the counties that had the same boundaries then as today, the 1890 Black population percentages in six are misrepresented. Five majority-Black counties — Yalobusha, Chick-

asaw, Monroe, Lauderdale, and Clarke — are indicated as less than 50 percent Black, while Jefferson Davis County, which did not have a Black majority in 1890, is shown as having one. [See *Atlas of Mississippi* (1974), page 49]

PWOC's next fake is Figure 13 [BLT, page 36], purporting to be a map of the Mississippi Black Population in 1840. Like the previous one, it is drawn on an outline map showing today's 82 counties instead of the 59 that existed then. [See *Atlas*, page 40] Some of the counties that did not exist are shown as having Black populations that bear no relation to the surrounding counties of which they were then part — Benton, Calhoun, Montgomery, and Jefferson Davis are examples. In addition, several of the central Delta counties that are shown as having large slave populations had virtually none, because the land had been stolen from the Indians just a couple of years earlier and had not yet been cleared for planting.

PWOC's boldest move is Figure 14, its faked map of the 1970 Black population. [BLT, page 37] Since these census figures are widely available, PWOC took quite a gamble in guessing that no one would check its figures. On this one the Black population percentage reported in the census is inflated in six counties — Tunica, Claiborne, Wilkinson, Holmes, Noxubee, and Lawrence, and is underrepresented in two — Jefferson Davis and Chickasaw. (The result is a rather confusing visual effect, instead of a map similar to past population distributions but with an overall reduction in Black percentages which would have resulted if the census data had been used correctly.)

Now that we have called these errors to our readers' attention, perhaps PWOC will apologize for its "sloppiness" and express gratitude to us for the criticism, as it recently did after its distortion of the October League's position on busing was revealed. [The Organizer, September 1977, page 2]

Although PWOC insists that Black people are not a nation, it does state that this discrimination constitutes national oppression. [BLT, page 43] The corollary of national oppression is national privilege. Privilege in this instance is the difference between what the people (including the workers) of the oppressor nation get and what those of the oppressed nation [or national minority — for this purpose the distinction is unimportant] get.

Earlier, in the abstract and theoretical part of its argument, PWOC correctly stated the Leninist position that an "essential condition for the international unity of the working class is that the proletariat of the oppressor nation firmly oppose national privilege, particularly the privileges of its own nation." [BLT, page 10] But now that those privileges are actually on the table, PWOC shrinks back. "Who does this benefit? Obviously not the Black people. But not the mass of white working people either. The fact that a white worker has a better-paying job than a Black worker or gets higher wages for the same job a Black worker performs for less makes it appear that discrimination works on behalf of the white workers. But this is not the case." [RWM, page 13]

This is true in the ultimate sense, of course. But the main benefit that the bourgeoisie reaps is not "the super-exploitation of the Black worker," and the resulting "super-profits," as PWOC says. [BLT, page 43; RWM, page 9] Of course they get that, but they also get, in return for those privileges conferred upon white workers, a large measure of class collaboration. PWOC should have asked, if employers can get Black workers so much cheaper than whites, and there are so many available unemployed Black workers, why do they not get rid of the whites and hire the Blacks? The answer is that no amount of additional super-profits could buy what the bourgeoisie gets in return for

the oppressor-nation privileges granted to white workers — the unchallenged hegemony of capitalism within the United States.

For this reason PWOC's position that the main task of communists and of the workers' movement is to combat white chauvinist ideology [BLT, page 51] does not go far enough. [Even PWOC notes that to a certain extent racism will be countered automatically without a change in consciousness in the course of struggle: "Not all anti-racist demands deal directly with discrimination. Many demands around wages and working conditions are blows against racism to

the extent they aim at improving the conditions of minority workers and narrow the inequality between Black and white." RWM, page 36] It is really not so difficult, in the course of struggle, to get white workers to join with Black workers. That is because in the normal ritual of class struggle in the U.S., the national privilege of the whites is rarely challenged. But when Black workers on their own launch an attack on white privileges, it is much more difficult to get the whites to join in. In such a situation, a victory in the struggle against those oppressor-nation privileges will do far more to unify the

JOHN HARTFIELD WILL BE LYNCHED BY ELLISVILLE MOB AT 5 O'CLOCK THIS AFTERNOON

Governor Bilbo Says He Is Powerless to Prevent It—
Thousands of People Are Flocking Into Ellisville to
Attend the Event—Sheriff and Authorities Are Power-
less to Prevent It.

HATTIESBURG, June 26.—John Hartfield, the negro alleged to have assaulted an Ellisville young woman, has been taken to Ellisville and is guarded by officers in the office of Dr. Carter in that city. He is wounded in the shoulder but not seriously. The officers have agreed to turn him over to the people of the city at 5 o'clock this afternoon when it is expected he will be burned. The negro is said to have made a partial confession.

GOV. BILBO SAYS HE IS POWERLESS

When Gov. Bilbo was shown the above dispatch and asked what action, if any, he intended to take to prevent the affair, he said:

"I am powerless to prevent it. We have no state militia, but we wish it to be impossible to send troops to the scene, for the obvious reason, that we have no troops."

"Several days ago," anticipating a trouble of this sort in event of Hartfield's capture, discussed the matter with Adj.-Gen. Deaton, and he agreed with me that nothing could be done, insofar as furnishing troops are concerned; that if the civil authorities cannot prevent a lynching, it cannot be prevented.

"As the public is well aware the man-hunt has been in progress since June 18. Thousands have joined in it, excitement is at a fever heat, and any attempt to frustrate a lynching would unquestionably result in hundreds being killed."

"By the way, it had occurred to me that if the people of Mississippi elect Louisa as their governor, the family of John Hartfield can then draw a pension from the state, and take the majority of the law with us vindicated."

WOMEN NOW FIRST FEEL THE EFFECTS

LAUREL, June 26.—(Special)—A view from Ellisville day that the hour

for the lynching has now been fixed for five p. m.

A committee of Ellisville citizens has been appointed to make the necessary arrangements for the event, and the mob is pledged to act in conformity with these arrangements.

Rev. L. G. Clark, pastor of the First Baptist church of Laurel, left here at one o'clock for Ellisville to extract the mob to see Hartfield.

THOUSANDS GOING TO SCENE OF LYNNING

LAUREL, June 26.—(Special)—A telephone message from Ellisville says that five thousand people have gathered there from all parts of the surrounding country to witness the lynching and burning at stake of John Hartfield, scheduled to take place at five o'clock this afternoon.

All roads leading to Ellisville are choked with automobiles, forming a steady stream that actually prevents traffic in one direction.

All saw mills in Laurel, and throughout this territory, have closed down in order to permit employees to attend the lynching, and there is hardly an industry within a radius of fifty miles of here that is in operation.

The inscription rate running from Laurel to Ellisville are fixed at seven dollars, and at the same hour the company's manager took some old rolling stock out of the car barn in order to handle the traffic.

Only Slightly Wounded.

Hartfield was only slightly wounded

(Continued on page two)

JOHN HARTFIELD IS CAPTURED BY POSSE

(Continued from page two)

for the encounter with the posse prior to his capture early this morning. The capture took place within three miles south of Taylorville near Van Knight's store in the woods a short distance from the Hogworth church.

The fight of the fugitive was led by Will Colley and Thad Rogers. Several other shots were fired before the negro consented to surrender. When captured it was found that he was only slightly wounded in the shoulder. Hartfield spent the night within a few hundred yards of Knight's store. He had sent a small boy to the store to buy some canned goods late Wednesday afternoon, and through this it is believed known that he was lurking in the vicinity.

The party led by a school house near Hays well church, and shortly after daylight he emerged from the building and made a dash for the woods. Both Colley and Rogers fired upon him. A large crowd quickly gathered near the scene of the capture.

The authorities on Jones county realize that they are directly helped, that any attempt on their part to prevent the lynching of Hartfield would result in many persons being killed.

It is estimated that no less than 2,000 persons have joined in the hunt for the fugitive. He attempted to reach Miss Meek, day clerk at the Pinehurst Hotel, twelve days ago.

HARTFIELD HAS MADE CONFESSION

LAUREL, June 26.—(Special)—Hartfield has made a full confession. He is now in the custody of the mob, citizens having informed Sheriff Powell that any attempt at interference means trouble.

Several persons have been allowed to go into Mr. Carter's office and see the negro who is soon to die. To one of these visitors he said:

"Tell all young men and especially colored men to try to do right. Tell them I have done wrong. I did not see my mistake until too late, but I am ready and willing to die. Everybody pray for me."

Hartfield's first words when captured were, "I don't know any more, you've got me."

WOMEN BEING RAISED FOR YOUNG WOMAN

LAUREL, June 26.—(Special)—A subscription that was started here and at Ellisville this afternoon for Miss Meek, Hartfield's victim. Nearly a thousand dollars was raised at Ellisville, and fully that much more here.

When captured Hartfield had two pistols and twenty dollars in his pockets. Earnest appeals are being made to the mob not to burn the negro after he has been lynched.

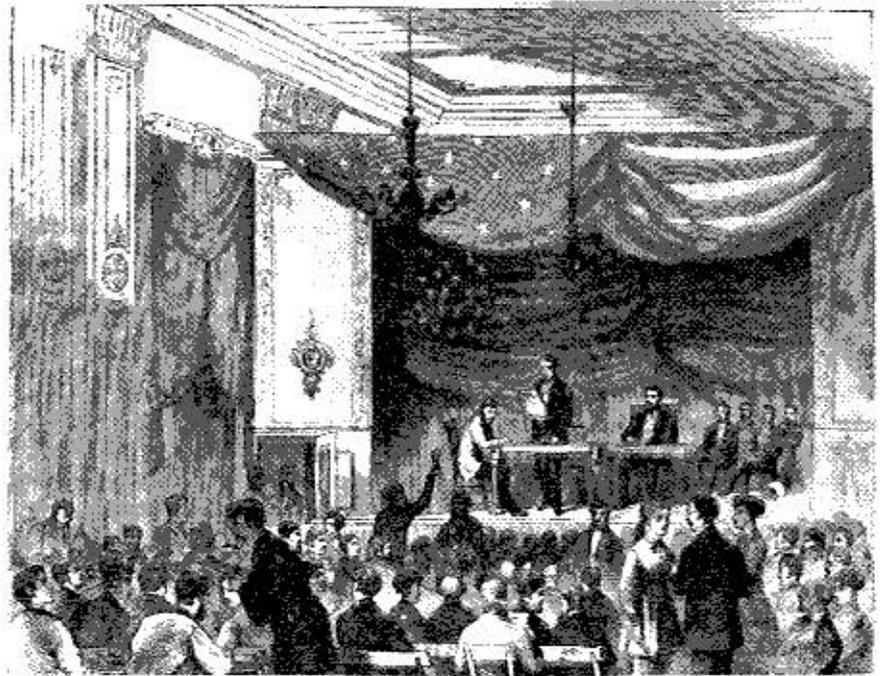
class than will the various prescriptions for Black-white unity proposed by PWOC. It takes more than an attack on chauvinism to bring masses of white workers into that struggle.

(PWOC also manages to misunderstand the way racist ideology functions, however: the white worker often "views the black worker, rather than the employer, as the cause of his problems. This blindspot is the product of years of conditioning and centuries of history." [RWM, page 15] This is really pretty rare; most white workers are thoroughly aware that the employers rule. The presence of Black workers serves as a reminder to the whites that they are *white*, i.e., privileged, and except for that they would be far worse off. That is the aspect which sharply prods white workers in the direction of class collaboration; the only answer to it is a thoroughgoing class consciousness, including the repudiation of all privilege. If xenophobic racism were the main problem, as PWOC suggests, the battle against it would have been won long ago.)

VIII

Despite appearances to the contrary, PWOC's pamphlets are not really intended to persuade white workers or white communists to agree to fight racism. It does not take 100-plus pages of fine print on the national question to accomplish that. The real purpose of these pamphlets, taken together, is to pull the revolutionary teeth of the Black liberation movement and channel it into the reform struggles where PWOC feels most comfortable — particularly the trade union movement. [BLT, page 53; RWM, pages 30-37]

That is the common thread running through the PWOC argument. Each section has a role to play in attempting to persuade Black revolutionaries that "No matter how well organized, no matter how well led, no matter how politically con-



The National Labor Union's Philadelphia Congress, August 1869; the NLU voted to exclude black workers, and its leaders opposed the Reconstruction governments in the South. Black workers then organized their own National Labor Union, closely allied with Radical Reconstruction. The refusal of white workers to unite with blacks weakened the entire labor movement nationally. Engraving from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper courtesy of Library of Congress.

scious the Black Movement is, it can only go to a certain point without the full force of the whole [i.e., *white* — j.c.] working class being brought solidly onto the side of Black Liberation." [RWM, page 26]

PWOC's arguments are subtle, but effective. The appeal to Lenin and Stalin provides the revolutionary cloak. The designation "anti-dogmatism" has a disarming effect; it implies that PWOC is reasonable while its opponents are not. The history of slavery and emancipation which denies the slaves an important role in their own liberation kicks off the argument that Blacks can only be free if whites decide to free them, and PWOC's version of Reconstruction and its overthrow fortifies this false picture. The lengthy argument about the creation and "dissolution" of the Black nation says that the nation only existed when it was too weak, in class terms, to win its independence; as the Black working class

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strip away any suggestion that Blacks rely on themselves for liberation; instead, they must join the white workers under the leadership of PWOC.

The real picture is quite different from the one painted by PWOC. The reason why Black workers have been the leadership of so many workers' struggles is precisely because of the power and potential of their national struggle. Conversely, the strength of the Black workers has immeasurably advanced the struggle for national liberation. Nearly all of the sharpest mass attacks on capital within the U.S. have been launched by independent Black or Third World groups, while only rarely have substantial numbers of white workers joined them in recent years. PWOC grudgingly admits that "under a variety of concrete circumstances, all-Black organizations are necessary," but argues that "Only multinational organization can consistently and effectively carry out this struggle." [BLT, page 54]

Again, the purpose is not directly spelled out. PWOC is most concerned, it seems, with being able to discipline its own Black members to this line. In the "division of labor that obtains between white Communists and Communists of the oppressed nationalities" [BLT, page 55], the task of the latter is to combat nationalism. "At the same time, the party cannot tolerate caucuses along national lines within its own ranks. Forms of this sort encourage a separatist approach to the struggle against racism. . . . Any attempt of a particular group of party members to claim autonomy or special authority above and beyond the democratic centralist determination of the party as a whole on the basis of nationality (or sex for that matter) is simply Bundism and cannot be tolerated." [BLT, page 56]

PWOC's reference is to the Jewish Bund in the Russian Marxist movement. A very one-sided account of Lenin's struggle against

BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM?

One indication of the class roots of Black nationalism can be examined in the Congressional testimony of Henry Adams, one of the leaders of the Exodus of 1879:

Q. What is your business, Mr. Adams? — A. I am a laborer. I was raised on a farm and have been at hard work all my life.

* * * * *

Q. What did you call your committee? — A. We just called it a committee, that is all we called it, and it remained so; it increased to a large extent, and remained so. Some of the members of the committee was ordered by the committee to go into every State in the South where we had been slaves there, and post one another from time to time about the true condition of our race, and nothing but the truth.

* * * * *

Q. Your council appealed first to the President and to Congress for protection and relief from this distressed condition in which you found yourselves, and to protect you in the enjoyment of your rights and privileges? — A. Yes, sir.

Q. Well, what other plan had you? — A. And if that failed our idea was then to ask them to set apart a territory in the United States for us, somewhere where we could go and live with our families.

Q. You preferred to go off somewhere by yourselves? — A. Yes.

* * * * *

Q. Now, when you organized the council what kind of people were taken into it? — A. Nobody but laboring men.

Q. At the time you were doing that, was there anything political in your organization? — A. Nothing in the world.

Q. You were simply looking out for a better place in which you could get work and enjoy your freedom? — A. Yes, sir; that was all.

* * * * *

Q. Was there any opposition to these meetings in which you talked about going away? — A. No, sir. There didn't nobody say anything to us against our having meetings, but I will tell you we had a terrible struggle with our own selves, our own people there; these ministers of these churches would not allow us to have any meeting of that kind, no way.

* * * * *

Q. Your meetings were composed, then, of men in favor of going away? — A. Yes, and of the laboring class.

Q. Others didn't participate with you? — A. No, sir.

Q. Why didn't the politicians want you to go? — A. They were against it from the beginning.

Q. Why? — A. They thought if we went somewhere else they would not get our votes. That is what we thought.

Q. Why were the ministers opposed to it? — A. Well, because they would not get our support; that is what we thought of them.

* * * * *

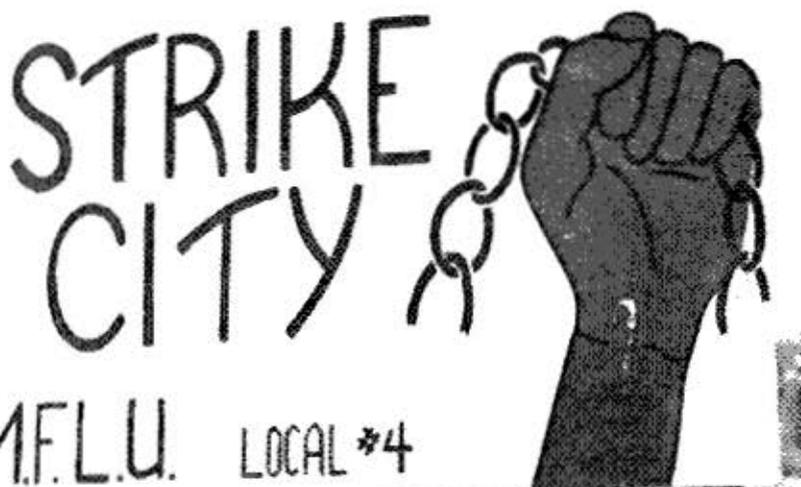
Q. What was the largest number reached by your colonization council, in your best judgment? — A. Well, it is not exactly five hundred men belonging to the council, that we have in our council, but they all agreed to go with us and enroll their names with us from time to time, so that they have now got at this time 98,000 names enrolled.

Q. Women and men? — A. Yes, sir; women and men, and none under twelve years old.

the Bund's desire for "cultural-national autonomy" within the Russian Party has been popularized in the U.S. left, resulting in the epithet "Bundist" — meaning anti-Leninist — being attached to any Communist group that provides autonomy in any form for its oppressed-nation members. PWOC is wrong on this also, not only in substance, but also in pretending that its practice follows Lenin.

At the 1906 Unity Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, Lenin specifically proposed special concessions to the Bund: "the Party must really ensure the satisfaction of all the Party interests and requirements of the Social-Democratic proletariat of each nationality, giving due consideration also to the specific features of its culture and way of life; and that this may be ensured by holding special conferences of Social-Democrats of the particular nationality, giving representation to the national minorities on the local, regional and central bodies of the Party, forming special groups of authors, publishers, agitators, etc.

"Note. The representation of a national minority on the Central Committee of the Party could, for example, be arranged in the following manner: the general Party congress may elect to the Central Committee a definite number of members from among candidates nominated by the regional congresses in those parts of Russia where at present separate Social-Democratic organisations exist." [10:160] Later he reported, "the Bolsheviks published a draft resolution proposing



Above: The Mississippi Freedom Labor Union struck cotton fields in the Delta in 1965.

a number of *further* concessions to *all* the national Social-Democratic parties, even to the extent of 'proportional representation in the local, regional and central bodies of the Party.'" [10:371-372 Lenin's emphasis] Clearly PWOC's treatment of its Black members is not based on this precedent from Lenin. (Today, when the revolutionary initiative is in the hands of the oppressed peoples, it is necessary for the revolutionary party to provide a great deal *more* autonomy for Third World members than Lenin proposed for the national parties in 1906; PWOC takes a giant step backward by returning to his 1903 argument.)

PWOC's insistence that its Black members combat nationalism as their responsibility under the "division of labor" is also contrary to Lenin's line on the national question in the epoch of imperialism:

"All national oppression calls forth the resistance of the *broad masses* of the people; and the resistance of a nationally oppressed population always *tends* to national revolt. Not infrequently (notably in Austria and Russia) we find the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations *talking* of national revolt, while in practice it enters into reactionary compacts with the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation behind the backs of, *and against*, its own people. In such cases the criticism of revolutionary Marxists should be directed not against the national movement, but against its degradation, vulgarisation, against the tendency to reduce it to a petty squabble." [23:61 Lenin's emphasis]

In the final analysis, "anti-dogmatism" is the new cloak for left chauvinism in the United States.