

Bulletin

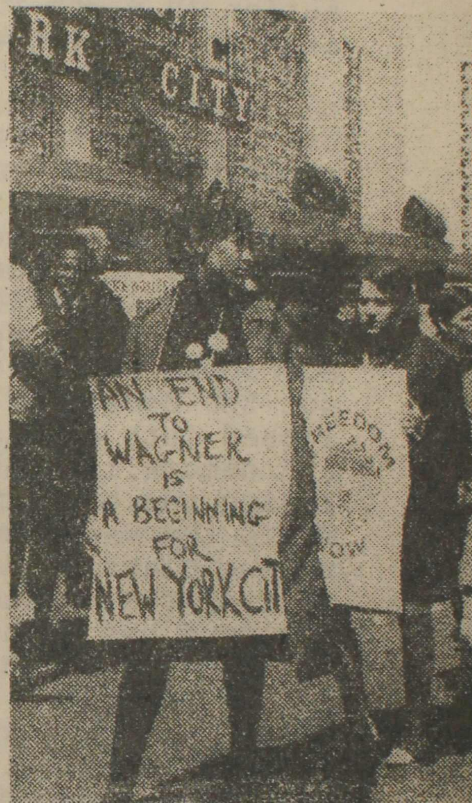
OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Vol. 2, No. 10

May 31, 1965

10 Cents

Working Class Program to Defeat



Wagner & Lindsay

**SPECIAL
DISCUSSION WITH**



OF BLACK NATIONALISM

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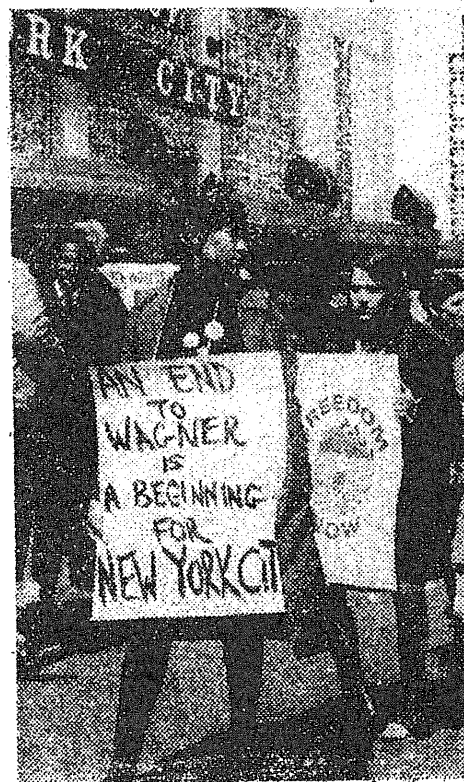
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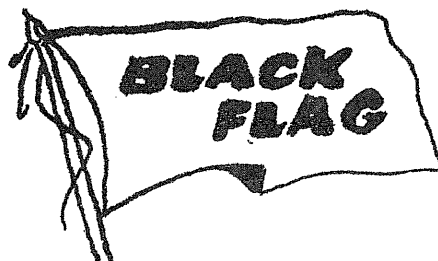
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Working Class Program to Defeat



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SPECIAL
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OF BLACK NATIONALISM

The 1965 mayoralty election in New York City presents important problems and opportunities for radicals and for the entire workingclass movement. Democrat Wagner is running for a fourth term after 12 years in office. The Republicans are putting up a "liberal" politician with "glamor" and "style", Congressman John Lindsay. There is the greatest disaffection with the status quo among the large minority group populations and the labor movement since Wagner became Mayor in 1953, and an opportunity and a need for radicals to link with advanced sections of the mass movement. It is our firm conviction that independent workingclass political action is worth fighting for now, and that we must fight for it even if its realization seems difficult at present.

The Wagner-Lindsay fracas and the murmurs of discontent with the Wagner machine from reform Democrats such as Robbins and Ryan arise against a background of poverty, continued long-term unemployment, and significant stirrings in the mass movement. In the past two years there have been important struggles involving school boycotts, rent strikes, and mass picket lines against job discrimination. This kind of mass action, spearheaded by the Negro movement but not at all confined to it even on these issues, was unheard of throughout the decade of the 50s. The Negro movement has temporarily lapsed into a relative passivity as a result of disorientation and demoralization due to the absence of leadership, and following the brutally suppressed Harlem rebellion of last summer. While the dangers of demoralization and the efforts of the ruling class to disorient, witchhunt, decapitate and eventually destroy the movement must not be underestimated, the Negro movement has, nonetheless, not yet suffered defeat, and the lull is very much a passing phase.

Meanwhile the New York City labor movement has begun to come alive a bit, and the Puerto Rican community has begun to express itself and search for organizational forms through which to further its goals. The Bulletin has reported in recent months on several extremely important developments in the labor movement in New York, including the welfare strike, the taxi drivers' organizing campaign, and the District 65 strike actions. The Puerto Rican community has expressed its outrage at the repeated incidents of police brutality against Puerto Ricans in New York. This kind of activity and militancy is also something which Wagner and his henchmen did not have to pay much attention to in earlier years.

Demands Can Reveal Capitalist Instability


The capitalist press and the government have skillfully used the crime scare as well as the shrinking job market to divide different sections of the workingclass. What is needed is an effort to unite the workingclass around its common interests, showing that the government is unable and unwilling to deal with the fundamental problems confronting the people of New York, and presenting a workingclass program in opposition

to the capitalist politicians. As we have seen, the Negro and Puerto Rican communities and sections of the labor movement are beginning to move. It is the job of revolutionists to actively intervene and link up with all the present struggles fighting to raise the level of consciousness of the movement. That means now fighting for independent political action based on the understanding that the capitalist government and all the capitalist politicians cannot be relied upon to serve the interests of the vast majority.

The workingclass movement must be pressed to demand of the capitalists that they provide jobs for all and a decent standard of living. This means, first of all, reducing the work week to 30 hours with no reduction in pay, and second, raising the minimum wage to at least \$2.00 an hour. We must demand that the billions spent on war preparations or on actual imperialist intervention in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic be thrown into a real war on poverty, in a massive public works program to build decent housing and schools and to employ on this program the unemployed and the doubly exploited Negroes and Puerto Ricans, at trade union wages. Let the city find the money for this program from higher real estate or property taxes, or by even beginning to collect the true amount on real estate which is unbelievably undervalued for tax purposes. This kind of demand coupled with 30 for 40 encompasses jobs, housing and schools.

In language that the working masses of the city can understand, an independent political campaign can propose and run on a platform that points the way to a real solution to the crisis which has given birth to the rent strikes and school boycotts. The rent strike and school boycott movements must be pressed into action. This kind of program must be taken to the unions, to the longshore and railroad workers, the teachers and welfare workers, the hospital and department store workers, to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and into the garment center, at street rallies where possible. We can show how the crisis continues to deepen, how the ruling class hasn't made a dent in solving the crisis, and how we can begin to solve it if we put the interests of the workers above the interests of private profit.

A transitional program of demands can prove concretely that capitalism is unable to meet the basic elementary demand of providing jobs and a decent life for all. It can expose the imperialist role of the U.S. government and the inability of the capitalists to deal with the contradictions of the system here at home even in a period of so-called prosperity. We must begin to make strides toward the independent organization of the working class politically, along the path on which it was stalled in the 1930s. This is the next great step the workingclass will have to take, and while it may not take it right away, we must start fighting for it right away, as the stirrings of new activity in the labor movement begin.



Left Must Unite to Reach Mass Movement

The attitude toward independent political action in the mass movement is still quite vague to say the least, even in its most advanced sections. CORE has come out with a strong denunciation of the Wagner Administration but has refused to run independent candidates for any major office. Rev. Galamison, who led the school boycott movement over a year ago, has remained silent, and Jesse Gray, who led the large rent strike movement of a year ago, has also not made any clear statement, although it was at one time reported that he was seriously considering running independently against Wagner. The more militant and active sections in the labor movement, including District 65 and Local 1199 of the Hospital Workers, the new Welfare union and the taxi union, have all tangled with the bosses and their government recently but have been completely silent on the issue of independent political action. Most of these forces in the mass movement, especially the union bureaucracy (its left wing), while they are engaged in some kind of action, see political action within the framework of the two party capitalist set up, but are under pressure to break from this viewpoint. All these sections of the mass movement which are in motion must be urged to take independent political action.

The Task of the Radicals

It is in the radical movement, among young people who have joined the Progressive Labor Party and the Socialist Workers Party, as well as other groups, that the understanding of the need for independent political action is clearest. It is these forces which therefore should unite and take the fight for independent working class political action into the mass movement with renewed vigor. But the inability of these radical forces to work together, both in defense against the witchhunt as well as on the election campaign thus far, is a big obstacle to reaching and influencing the mass movement.

The SWP, in typical fashion, observes, waiting for action to which it can attach itself or express admiration for. To the extent it remains interested at all in the mass movement, it does so as a spectator, not a participant. Its interest in the labor movement itself is almost nil because not enough "exciting" developments are taking place there. Far be it from the desire of the Socialist Workers Party to intervene and try to participate in the labor movement in the first stirrings of renewed militancy.

Thus the SWP election campaign becomes a strictly propaganda exercise, almost completely divorced from the mass movement. It may not yet be as isolated as the SLP from the mass movement, at least in terms of the content of its program (which if anything tends a bit towards reformism), but in terms of who it speaks to and how it speaks it is almost as bad. Most of the SWP's attention is devoted to liberal and radical circles, not to the workers or the labor movement.

On a related point, its defense of PLP in the recent witchhunt has been perfunctory. Its view that the attention PLP devotes to the workingclass is adventuristic and ultra left is not expressed openly but finds expression in other ways, including the lazy way in which it defends PL, not mentioning the activities for which PL is being persecuted, and barely managing to mention the name of the organization which is being witch-hunted whenever it devotes a little article in the Militant to this outrageous persecution.

The Challenge Before PL

Progressive Labor has displayed more interest than the SWP in the working class and in intervening now. This is reflected in its newspaper, Challenge, and is one of its positive attributes. At a symposium last fall Challenge editor, Fred Jerome, called for a united workingclass campaign against Wagner this year. But in the intervening period the PLP (forming itself into a new party at its April convention) has either lost interest or given up at least for now on the question of united action, although Harlem PL leader Bill Epton will be running for State Senate.

On PL's part, the reluctance to fight for a united campaign stems at least in part from its attitude to the SWP. PL is taking a sectarian attitude, and a dangerously wrong approach on this question. The leadership is seizing on obvious weaknesses of the SWP as an excuse to avoid the struggle for a united front. The SWP's attitude of ignoring the mass movement, or its call for federal troops to the South, to name just two of its errors for which it is criticized by PL members, are no excuse for ignoring the SWP and its membership which is interested in independent political action. Similarly the SWP ignores the new forces which predominate numerically in PL, and takes a sectarian attitude which smacks, of all things, of Stalinophobia, an attitude of ignoring a movement or tendency because it is Stalinist-led or influenced.

What we need is a united front approach, in line with the struggle, not for workers' power at this point, but for the leading influence within the workingclass movement. The existing radical forces within the working class forces must unite to confront the capitalists in the political arena.

There is no contradiction between this need for unity and the need, equally urgent, for sharp theoretical and political struggle on the ideological plane within the workingclass movement. The workingclass will never achieve socialism if this theoretical struggle does not take place, but the workingclass movement, and different tendencies within it, also need unity in action on issues where this is possible, while each tendency maintains its own view and retains the right to criticize where it sees fit.

THE MEANING OF THE DISTRICT 65 STRIKE

The Two Sides of Brother Livingston

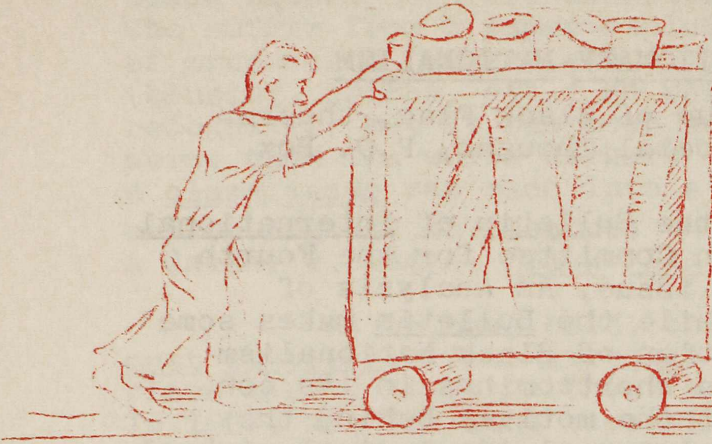
The recent strike of 10,000 members of District 65 (RWDSU) in New York's garment center was an impressive display of militancy and solidarity by black, white and "Spanish-speaking" workers who brought the class struggle openly onto the sidewalks of the "sweatshop capitol" of the U.S.A. The self-confidence, militancy and just plain determination of the "65" workers, most of whom are employed in "piecegood" and other textile shops which supply the apparel manufacturers, forced the bosses to concede the following: \$15.00 wage increase per week over the next three year period; an agreement to promote Negro and Puerto Rican workers to office and sales jobs; (these are currently held almost exclusively by whites in an industry where the Negroes and Puerto Ricans together are the majority) a 2% increase of the amount paid into the pension fund; a fourth week of vacation for workers with 20 years seniority.

While these economic gains can be considered a victory for "65" as against the textile bosses--more important than the gains themselves is that thousands of workers went through an experience of unity along class lines that is considerably more valuable than 10,000 lectures by "marxists" demanding that white people should support the demands of minority groups for equality, etc. The strike showed not only that racial differences recede into the background as the class issues come actively to the fore, but also that workers as workers are making their own "war on poverty" today in the same spirit as they organized the industrial unions of the CIO in the 30's. This development places one more nail in the coffin of the myth of "relative quiescence" of the American workers who supposedly will remain "relatively passive" until some point in the distant future when the force of the "colonial masses" brings the U.S. to the final crisis. (Socialist Workers Party please take note).

Potential Rank and File Center

The "65" strike is also impressive in that it gives an impetus to District 65 as a potential center of rank and file trade union militancy which could take on the job not only of organizing the unorganized in the offices and sweatshops of New York. It is to be hoped that an impetus has been given to the increased activity of rank and file militants in the internal life of the union which will lay the basis for a real working class leadership.

But the economic gains of the strike (which give piece goods handlers a starting wage of 95 dollars per week) will be eroded unless the non-union and "union" sweatshops "organized" by Dubinsky's ILGWU are brought up to the same level through a serious and consistent organizing drive. Workers in these shops are paid as little as \$40-\$50 per week.



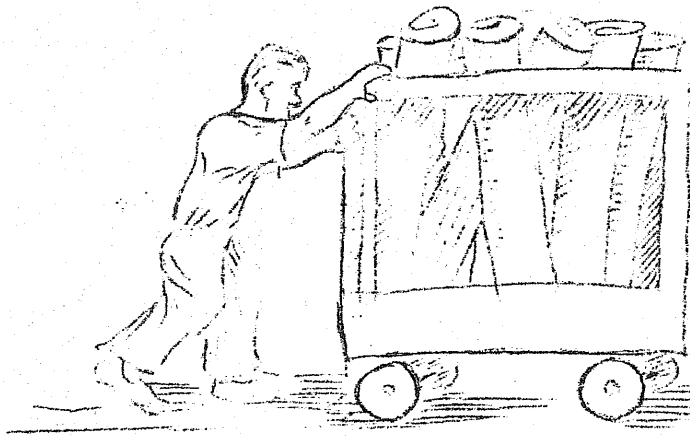
The policy of the present leadership headed by David Livingston turns its back on the countless numbers of workers whose shops have ILGWU sweetheart contracts. While an organizing drive which runs into head on conflict with Dubinsky (and thereby with the garment employers, the police and City bureaucracy, New York Central Labor Council bureaucracy, etc., etc.) is a vital necessity for maintaining the recent gains of "65", it doesn't look like Livingston and

his associates who can and will talk a very left and militant line, are willing or able to tackle Dubinsky, Van Arsdale, etc.

The estimate of Livingston as simply another progressive bureaucrat is strengthened by his actions in outmaneuvering a rank and file opposition in the Direct Mail division of the District in New York City, and ramming through a contract which while providing some economic gains, completely ignored the problems of automation, runaway shops and contracting or "farming out" of work to non-union shops. Prior to this example of "out-Reuthering Reuther", Livingston had persuaded the Direct Mail workers to accept a 3 month contract extension from Feb. 1 to May 1 to coordinate the expected strike action with the rest of the District. The new contract which grants wage increases of $12\frac{1}{2}\phi$ per hour provides that members who take time out from their job for a union organizing assignment, do so at their own loss in pay. It is known that some large nonunion shops in the field have better conditions and benefits than the union shops. There is a suspicion that the alleged unfair competition of the scab shops is a facade for actual collaboration of the union and non-union shops with the knowledge and perhaps connivance of the leadership.

Need a Rank and File Leadership

Certainly, Livingston's performance and social distance from the workers shows that the rank and file of "65" can have no confidence that his leadership can fulfill the potential inherent in the tradition and recent accomplishments of the ranks of "65". A resurgence of the same militancy which organized the garment workers into the CIO in 1937 is certainly a prerequisite for a struggle to dump Dubinsky which is a necessity for the development of this potential of "65". But it is clear that this job will not be accomplished simply by calls for "militancy", but by the concerted effort to create a conscious working class leadership based on the rank and file in "65"--a leadership which can arise only in struggle with and in victory over Livingston. The recent strike in the garment center should facilitate the work of those who are struggling to create this new leadership, and that is one of the most significant results of the strike.



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DISCUSSION - I

BLACK FLAG DEFENDS REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM

(Reprinted from the April 29th issue of Black Flag, theoretical organ of the Institute for Social Thought, P.O. Box 16022, San Francisco)

The March 22nd issue of the Bulletin of International Socialism the organ of the American Committee for the Fourth International carries as a special issue, An Analysis of Black Nationalism. We feel that while the Bulletin makes some pertinent observations on the Question of Black Nationalism there are nevertheless some serious shortcomings in its conclusions. It is obvious to us that the motives behind the editors of the Bulletin was one of internal ideological struggle within the socialist movement. Since we feel this is their right, we do not intend to involve ourselves in this area of their article. But we do intend to set forth our views on the validity of Black Nationalism.

The current ideological struggle now being waged by the proponents of black nationalism can be shown to be more of a Marxist nature than even Marxists will be willing to admit. Why is this so? By approaching the question and the relationship of the black man in American society from a dialectical point of view. The Bulletin itself seeks in a limited way to come to terms with this question by putting forth the concept "The Negro People are Neither an Emerging Nation Nor Simply a Race Seeking Assimilation" (Chapter 1). Before proceeding further, it would be well to point out revolutionary nationalists are not anti-Marxists and the fact that Marxists are criticized is directed towards strengthening what we feel to be a serious weakness among "Marxists" (some whom we seriously doubt), for the reasons we shall set forth later on in this document.

There Is No Bridge

It is our view, that the black man in America, while he is not a nation in the accepted use of the word, has had to relate to the capitalist system in a colonial or semi-colonial relationship. This has been due in the main to the "boxing in on all sides by segregation and racial discrimination." (Black Flag, #9 Observer) The Bulletin recognizes this "capitalist society continued to enforce a separate existence upon the Negro" (page 7). Since this is so, the prime question is at this stage and because of the aforesaid contradiction in capitalist society where is the bridge between on the one hand, the struggle of the black masses for bourgeois democracy and the white workers (struggle for socialism?)

This is the trap that most Marxists seem to fall into. The white workers already enjoy (for what it is worth) bourgeois democracy. The black masses do not. While it is true that capitalism will not nor can not grant the black masses "freedom" i.e. bourgeois democracy, the struggle for democracy has to continue.

Again, it is true that both the white workers and the black masses both are exploited. But it is the black masses who suffer from a super-exploitation, not only at the point of production (wages, etc.), but in its social environment (housing, prices, etc.) as well. This too, the Bulletin recognizes "But it has been kept separate from and treated worse than the white workers" (page 5). ("Thus what began as a class issue was made into a race issue by the simple act of separating off the Negroes on the basis of color" -Rebels With A Cause, J. Boggs, Black Flag #10, page 9).

As we have held, the struggle for bourgeois democracy must continue. This struggle for democracy on the part of the black masses is not without a precedent in revolutionary history. In 1928, Mao Tse-Tung recognized the need for the bourgeois-democratic revolution which had been defeated in 1926-27. (Selected Works, Peking 1964, page 64) Since the black masses are the most oppressed class who are badly in need of a bourgeois democratic revolution and since imperialist society cannot or will not allow this same revolution; this struggle for democracy takes the form of black nationalism.

The basic mistake of Marxists is they are too busy relating to the Negro question on the basis of the relationship of the white working class to the bourgeois state. This seems to be for reasons that would give them a validity. In other words, Marxists want to jump over the historical process where it applies to colonial people in general and the black masses in American society in particular. This explains the "Marxists" insults of "bourgeois nationalists" such as President Ben Bella, President Nkrumah, President Sukarno and other militant nationalists.

It cannot be denied that bourgeois democracy and black nationalism does set in motion certain undesirable forces. It is these undesirable forces which have been siezed upon in order to discredit nationalism completely. We have recognized the contradiction of "separatism" whether it is in the form of a state to be established within or an exodus for black people. Yet since the struggle for democracy must continue we call this "separation." A separation from capitalist society not in any physical sense, but it implies a corresponding struggle for socialism on the part of the white workers.

By the very nature of the black man's relationship to the repressive capitalist/imperialist system I.E., his separation, forces the upsurge of his nationalism.

The Bulletin criticizes the nationalists as being middle class in character (page 10) and never pro-working class. This is no doubt true in some instances but there seems to be a tendency here to use black nationalism as a whipping boy for the failure of white radicals in the past to establish a pro-working class, working class itself. We hold the white workers for the most part to be reactionary themselves. However, we have further stated that this situation could be changed (Crisis on the Left, Black Flag #4). The radicals and Marxists themselves

are middle-class oriented which explains their factionalism. Even the lowest elements of white workers have an identity with the capitalists.

The Trouble With the Left

This brings us to the reasons why the left has not been able to establish a base in the white working class. It is precisely because of the semi-colonial relationship of the black man in capitalist society.

It would be well to quote James Boggs, "Pages From A Negro Worker's Notebook" (Chapter 10)

"Marx's theory of revolution was developed in relation to the advanced capitalist countries. The United States is the most advanced capitalist country in the world. Not only that. It is the citadel of world capitalism without which the other capitalist countries could not survive. Therefore any revolutionary who evades facing the specific conditions and realities of American capitalism is like the British workers in Marx's day who were so preoccupied with keeping the Irish workers down that they could not fight for their own advancement, or all the American socialists who have been so preoccupied with Stalinism, either pro or con, that they have not sought or been able to find the basis of the revolution that is here, right in front of their eyes, in the most advanced capitalist country in the world."

The relationship of the radicals to the working class is further compounded by the era of imperialism and how these same radicals relate to imperialism themselves. As we have already seen, the problem of the black masses has been one of separatism from the mainstream of the working class. This has allowed even the lowest paid, worst off white workers to feel and act superior to his black counterpart. Since the evolution of capitalism into imperialism, the white workers could be allowed more benefits and a higher station in imperialist society than under laissez-faire capitalism.

One need only look at Great Britain, which since the loss of its empire has been reduced to a "tail" behind U.S. imperialism.

We are Not Anti-Working Class Per Se

No friends, revolutionary nationalists are not anti-working class per se but only to the extent that this same working class trails behind its own ruling class. But Marxists who should know better, see their duty not as building a revolutionary consciousness among the white workers who are a bulwark of reaction but of becoming opportunistic and taking over the black movement. The Bulletin says it this way: "The upsurge of the Negro struggle poses a great challenge to Marxists. They have the duty to intervene in this mass struggle, to connect up with it and lead it towards the path of revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system." (Chapter 3 page 15) (Emph-ours) We hold that the Marxists and other

radicals should at this stage be engaged in constructing a true working class party among the white workers. Connect up with the black movement, yes. Lead it, no.

Since the black movement is in a contradiction, that is the struggle that has to be waged (for democracy) is already passed the historical epoch when it would have been a step forward. Again, to deny to the black masses their right to struggle for democracy would be highly chauvinistic on the part of radicals.

Since we hold, above all else, that the struggle of the black masses for democracy must continue, it follows that this struggle becomes a "movement for liberation." As we have further held, all national liberation movements bear certain resemblances (Black Flag, Observer #9). We hold that as the struggle of black people here in the U.S. continues to sharpen as well as the struggle for national liberation of colonial peoples and the contradictions of the national bourgeoisie and imperialism continue to mount, the compradore or pro-imperialist black bourgeois organizations and leaders will tend to become more and more conservative and in some cases reactionary, as some indications are already showing. This will have the effect of setting in motion much more obvious, the already class forces which exist within the black struggle.

Class and the Black Masses

The criticism of the Bulletin that black nationalists do not recognize the class question is rejected because it has been obvious from the very upsurge of the Muslims (regardless of where they finally arrived) that their criticisms of the "respected" leaders were a manifestation of class recognition. Make no mistake about it, we are not attempting to defend the Muslims from the charge also of being middle class oriented, yet there is a quantitative difference here.

We hold that the class question or class relationships as it applies to black people fall into the masses and a small urban working class, on the one hand, and an urban middle class element. It is this middle class element that can be re-divided once again into a compradore or white capitalist controlled and backed class and a patriotic middle class which expresses nationalistic tendencies. It is further obvious that the black working class (within the technical meaning of the term) has to relate to a middle class oriented white working class (which is outside the question of race or color but a direct result of these two elements which are the heart and core of the Negro Question).

In other words, without the semi-colonial relationship in which all black people find themselves within capitalist/imperialist society by reasons of their race or color, the exploitation and suppression of white workers would be that much sharper, since the capitalists inherent greed would have to take from white workers in the same proportion as they now take from black workers. This would indeed change the outlook of the white working class (so-called).

Revolutionary nationalists in putting forward the demand for political power which the Bulletin criticizes, do so as a revolutionary step. The draft of the Freedom Now Party puts forth as a very minimum the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution as a start toward solving the economic problems faced by black people. No doubt some of this criticism which the Bulletin directs towards nationalist groups is valid in that in the same manner as any other force, black nationalism is not homogeneous. This is to say that while it has its progressive side its reactionary aspects should be struggled against. This should not surprise the editors of the Bulletin of International Socialism because is not the doctrine of the Communist Party USA and those of the modern revisionists and other hangers-on also reactionary?

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF BLACK FLAG

DISCUSSION-II

BULLETIN REPLIES: THE REVOLUTION IS PERMANENT

We were very happy to receive the critique of our views on black nationalism by Black Flag. It is precisely this kind of serious discussion among revolutionaries which is urgently needed at this time. Despite our theoretical differences we and the Black Flag do speak a common language. They state: "The current ideological struggle now being waged by the proponents of black nationalism can be shown to be more of a Marxist nature than even Marxists will be willing to admit." Thus the Black Flag group seeks, as do we, to apply the Marxist method to the Negro struggle.

Our central theoretical difference with Black Flag is over the permanent revolution. Since the white working class has already completed its democratic revolution, Black Flag sees no real basis upon which the black and white working class forces in this country can be connected up until the blacks complete their bourgeois democratic revolution. When Black Flag deals with the bourgeois democratic revolution either within this country or in colonial areas it sees this revolution as going forward under the leadership of petty bourgeois forces rather than under working class leadership.

As we stated in our special black nationalism issue, we do not feel the Negro people can be considered a nation. However, we do agree with Black Flag that there is a very strong national element in the Negro struggle. But even if the Negro people are to be considered an emerging nation, we must strongly disagree with Black Flag's conclusion that therefore it cannot be led by a working class leadership with a working class program.

The Lesson of October

It was Trotsky's great contribution to the theoretical preparation for the Russian Revolution that the bourgeois democratic revolution would inevitably go over into the socialist revolution. This is because the very weakness of world capitalism prevents native capitalist forces from completing their own historic tasks. Lenin, in his early disputes with Trotsky over this question, never disagreed with Trotsky on one essential point-- that the working class would lead the revolution whatever its sociological character. Later, in his April Theses, he went over completely to Trotsky's position.

Needless to say, the great October Revolution, which changed the very course of world history, was precisely a bourgeois democratic revolution which went over into a socialist revolution. Though the Chinese Revolution has many unique and complicated facets worthy of detailed study, it is enough to note here that it, too, went over from a bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist overturn of capitalism.

Applying the permanent revolution to the Negro struggle in the United States we can see that for the Negro people to achieve their full democratic rights their struggle requires a leadership more resolute than the present petty bourgeois leadership and a program more revolutionary in character than a democratic program. Certainly Black Flag must agree that the current petty bourgeois leaderships of the Negro people have shown all the signs of compromise with the existing system which Lenin and Trotsky had pointed out about this stratum in other countries in their day. Certainly Black Flag is as aware as we are, and perhaps more so, that the inferior and exploited position of the Negro mass results in a special form of class exploitation of the Negro. Any program which aims at liberating the Negro mass must aim at ending this class exploitation. Demands for Black owned business can neither excite the Negro mass nor in any way really lessen their exploitation. It would only mean that the Black Bourgeoisie would operate as the agents for white capital.

If the Black masses require an uncompromising working class leadership and a working class--that is socialist--program of emancipation, then certain programmatic problems are immediately posed to those who seek to lead the Negro movement. Here let us clear up one question once and for all. When we speak of Marxists leading the Negro people we are not speaking of white Marxists imposing their leadership from the outside upon the Negro masses. Rather we are speaking of the development of a Marxist leadership from out of the Negro mass itself. For instance, Black Flag considers itself a Marxist group. We feel that Black Flag has an opportunity to play a central role in the creating of a Black Marxist leadership of the Negro masses. Marxism knows no color and today Marxist ideas are held by masses of people of all colors. In fact there are more Marxists with black or yellow skins than with white skins. And so it

should be as the overwhelming majority of the exploited peoples of the world do not have white skins.

How to Dump the Exploiters?

A Marxist leadership of the black masses which is seriously interested in ending the exploitation of the Negro people must address itself to the question of how to overthrow the exploiters of the Negro people--the ruling class in the United States. If it does not address itself to this question it is not serious about representing the aspirations of the black masses. Black people make up approximately 11 per cent of the total population in this country. This is a sizable group of people but not enough by itself to overthrow the ruling class. The black masses must have allies.

But what forces are there in contemporary American society who share with the Black masses opposition to the exploiters of the black masses--the capitalist class? Obviously, the rest of the working class. We are speaking of the Puerto Rican workers in the East, the Mexican workers of the West and Southwest, and yes, the white workers throughout the country. How can these workers--even the other minorities--be expected to rally to a program of black nationalism? Does Black Flag have a program that could appeal to Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, not to mention white workers? Without such a program Black Flag will not be fulfilling its necessary role of providing the black masses with a program which can lead them to victory. Victory must always be our aim. Victory will be achieved.

Black Flag informs us that the white workers are prejudiced and tail the ruling class. Both statements are largely true. At the same time there are plenty of signs that the working class as a whole, including white workers, is showing increasing restiveness in industry across the nation. This is the meaning of the auto strike and of many localized strike actions. Time after time the rank and file workers have been forcing the labor bureaucrats to strike against their employers.

What Lies Ahead for the Class?

The question before Marxists is to what extent these new tremors of dissatisfaction within the working class as a whole will grow in the coming period or whether the obviously conservative and even reactionary surface manifestations of the working class will be intensified. If the latter is the case then there is no realistic basis for a struggle to overturn capitalist society and through this process free all the exploited masses including the doubly exploited Negroes. If the former is the case then there is a realistic basis for a struggle which aims at linking up black and white in a common battle against the ruling class.

As Marxists we must answer this question with more than impressions of current reality. We must apply our Marxist

method to the task of understanding the evolution of capitalist economy. Our own attempts have led us to the position that contemporary world capitalism is no longer expanding. It is in a crisis of stagnation which is gripping all advanced countries forcing them to compete with each other for what is left of a shrinking market. The capitalist class of each country is being forced to automate and to drive down the working conditions of the workers in order to maintain its profits under conditions of general stagnation.

Those who see capitalism as ever bounding forward--and Black Flag seems to implicitly share this assumption--should ask themselves why every advanced country has an unfavorable balance of payments situation? What would happen if everybody who was owed money internationally demanded full payment in gold? Such a step alone would force the collapse of the entire monetary structure. How long can they continue what is obviously an artificial monetary structure, itself a reflection of the stagnation of industrial expansion? Behind this stagnation lies the falling rate of profit and the inevitable laws of capitalist development.

All this has very direct bearing on the question of political struggle and political power. Black Flag mistakenly thinks that we reject the concept of black political power and of such parties as the Freedom Now Party. It so happens we supported the Freedom Now Party in New York in the elections last year and will continue to support such parties where it is clear they are parties directed against the system itself. We strongly favor such expressions of black political power. We are in favor of expressions of Mexican and Puerto Rican political power. We are for the fusing of these political expressions with the working class as a whole seeking to create a new party of the class. Is there any other way to overthrow capitalism? Can the Negro carry through his democratic revolution without overthrowing capitalism? These are questions for Black Flag to ponder.

For our part we welcome an honest and forthright discussion among Marxists of all colors and reject any form of paternalism. One of the most common forms of paternalism which dominates groups like the SWP is this concept--that us "white" Marxists should refrain from criticizing black nationalists or any other black groups. For our part we intend to criticize sharply anyone who seeks to lead any section of the masses if we feel these leaders deserve it. We also welcome and encourage criticism from black nationalists of our own political line.

Not only is it wrong to say, as Black Flag says, that white Marxists should only address themselves to white workers, it is also wrong for black Marxists to only address black workers. A Marxist movement must be built on a common understanding of all the problems of the world and must seek to fuse into a common international movement all the exploited--from the advanced and the underdeveloped countries; from the cities and the countryside. Discussions such as this one can only aid the creation of such a movement.

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