

The Theory of the 'Black Nation' in the U.S.A.



Alliance Marxist-Leninist

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INTRODUCTION

The rights of *national minorities* versus the rights of *nations* are of central strategic concern to the Marxist-Leninist movement, as it strives for the proletarian revolution. Marxist-Leninists in North America are particularly interested in this question because of the capitalist, institutionalised racism rampant in both the USA and Canada. In the USA, this racism peaks with the Negro (or black, or Afro-American) population, and the Chicano (those of Mexican origin) populations. In both the USA and Canada the indigenous peoples, or the Native Americans, also bear the brunt of this problem.

We have already examined in Alliance 22, the views of Marx and Engels on the formation of the USA and the Civil War in the USA, and their views upon USA slavery. We noted that both Marx and Engels talked only in terms of a single unitary nation, the USA, and not in terms of a multi-national state.

We now examine how the **Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA)** formulated their response to this issue, in calling for **“SELF DETERMINATION OF THE BLACK NATION.”** The policy of Alliance is to assist a principled debate to define the lines of the new evolving Marxist-Leninist party. Therefore we publish this view in an anticipation of a principled debate. We aim to ask here, whether the line adopted was objectively correct at the time, and if it is correct today. We examine as part of this, the formation of the CPUSA, and its functioning.

Marxist-Leninists have grappled with the central question over several generations. This is fortunate for us, since their writings can guide us. Both Marx and Engels wrote on the USA and the Negroes of America, and as seen, we have dealt with those views in Alliance 22. Later, both Lenin and Stalin also wrote extensively on the USA. Moreover, Stalin also wrote explicitly

on the deficiencies of the former Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA). As Marxists-Leninists, we should take their views into account. How did these Marxist-Leninists view America? What positions did they take, and how did they arrive at their conclusions? Were their positions right then? Are their positions still right under today's situation?

This list of questions, will force us to consider larger questions. These revolve around the character of the CPUSA and its leaders, and the role of the Comintern in its decisions. So far, the available histories of the CPUSA are either self-justifying revisionist accounts (into which category **William Z. Foster's** history fits); **Trotskyite accounts** (such as those by **James Cannon**); or bourgeois accounts.

One school of bourgeois historians, led by **Theodore Draper** allege that the Comintern subverted this and other lines of the CPUSA and imposed its will. Yet another school of historians led by **Maurice Isserman** reply this is untrue, and that the CPUSA made its own policies. This latter school, actually derives from the Old CPUSA itself. In addition some memoirs are relevant, such as the autobiography of **HARRY HAYWOOD**, entitled *Black Bolshevik*.

All these offer various useful facts. But all these perspectives, agree and take as a central premise that Stalin controlled the Comintern and that Stalin was in full control of the USSR. This viewpoint unites the bourgeois historians, the revisionist historians, the Trotskyites, and finally even those like Haywood. As the career of Khrushchev as a high priest of hidden revisionism shows, we argue that this viewpoint is no longer tenable.

Today, genuine Marxist-Leninists, are confronted by revisionism. This begs the question: **"How did the movement**

fall into revisionism?” Marxist-Leninists are faced with a stark decision regarding the origins of international revisionism. Most genuine Marxist-Leninists today, reflexively defend the history of the Comintern from 1919 to 1943, partly because they believe any other response defends Trotsky. But this attitude is not adequate. To answer the question : “How did the movement fall into revisionism?” Three associated questions must be asked:

a) Was the line itself correct or incorrect?

b) Was the leadership of the Comintern Marxist-Leninist or was it revisionist?

c) Who formed the leadership of the Comintern?

Elsewhere we argue that the line of the Comintern was subverted under the leadership of **GRIGORY ZINOVIEV**, **OTTO KUUSINEN**, **DIMITRI MANUILSKY** AND **GEORGY DIMITROV** (See Alliance 5; 12; 19). We argue here, that the line of the CPUSA was also subverted. But it was subverted **NOT** by Stalin, as alleged by Theodore Draper, Trotsky and James Cannon. It was subverted, by others than Stalin – by hidden revisionists. In relation to the USA, the line was first disrupted by **ZINOVIEV**. Haywood notes that Zinoviev brought up the question of the Black Nation in the USA, when he was in charge of the Comintern, after Lenin’s death. Haywood also comments that his own initial reaction to this line was hostile:

“Apparently Zinoviev and others in the CI leadership were not satisfied with the formulation that had rejected the self-determination for U.S. Blacks. Zinoviev had instructed **BOB MAZUT** to investigate the question.. I was present at the meeting of the Young Communist League District Committee in Chicago in 1924 when Bob Mazut (then Young Communist International representative

to the US) at the behest of Zinoviev... raised the question of self-determination... He had been shouted down by white comrades.. To me the idea of a black nation within US boundaries seemed far fetched and not consonant with American reality.”

(Haywood, “Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of An Afro-American Communist”; Chicago 1978; p. 226, 219).

Of course Zinoviev was exposed and removed from the leadership of the Comintern. All Marxist-Leninists accept that Zinoviev was revisionist. But his work was continued by **MANUILSKY**, and **KUUSINEN**, who ensured acceptance of the “Black Nation” theory in the USA. The first, and natural reaction of the CPUSA, including black activists such as Harry Haywood himself, had been to reject this line as a form of Black Separatism. Ultimately, by using a mixture of pressure and persuasion over a long period, elements such as Harry Haywood were won over by **SEN KATAYAMA**, and then by Kuusinen, to this line. We assert that Sen Katayama, Kuusinen and Manuilsky were revisionists.

REVISIONISM whether open or hidden, aims to subvert the socialist revolution. This line of the “Black Nation,” was calculated to overturn a class solidarity of white and black, and foster racial division between white and black workers. This line is and was, usually justified by honest Marxist-Leninists, as being directly traceable to Lenin and Stalin. But the evidence for these assertions does not exist. As Draper says:

“American Communists have claimed that Lenin spoke of American Negroes as a nation three times in his voluminous writings. Each of these citations fails on examination to bear out the extreme construction that has been placed on it.”

(Theodore Draper “American Communism and Soviet Russia”; New York; 1986; p. 335).

There is little doubt that this line of “The Black Nation,” was adopted by the CPUSA at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern. It was held from 17 July to 1 September 1928 in Moscow and was dominated by **NIKOLAI BUKHARIN**. J.V. Stalin did not even attend the congress. From many accounts the Congress was in a state of some apprehension over the recent expulsion of Trotsky, and some were anticipating further ideological attacks including against Bukharin, the apparent head of the current Comintern. Draper alleges that Stalin foisted his views on the CPUSA because of his authority on the National Question:

“As the Russian party’s specialist on the national colonial question, Stalin considered the (Far Eastern University in Moscow), his ward.”

(Draper Ibid; p. 334).

The source cited by Draper, and by honest Marxist-Leninists, to support the thesis that Stalin directly supported the theory of the “Black Nation” is Harry Haywood, who is adamant that:

“Stalin was undoubtedly the person pushing the position (ie. That the Blacks were an oppressed nation -Ed).”

(Harry Haywood; Ibid; p. 223).

But in fact all authorities – whether those arguing for the line of “Black Nation” or those arguing against the line of “Black Nation” – acknowledge, that there is **no smoking-gun** in any text by Stalin, that can be linked to this adventure. Marxist-Leninist forces do point to some textual references by Lenin.

But we here show by a full textual analysis, that these quotes are lifted out of context.

So, if the line did not come from Lenin and Stalin, where did it emanate from? Haywood, while firmly maintaining that the line on “Black nation” did emanate from Stalin, tells us that others actually imparted the “Word From On High.” As if Stalin in 1928-30 can not speak for himself! In fact, Haywood was sold this line by a chain of several revisionists – from Zinoviev to Sen Katayama to Otto Kuusinen. The role of Sen Katayama was central to the initial persuasion of those like Harry Haywood. Haywood states that:

“Sen Katayama had told us Black University Of The Toilers Of The East (Named after the Russian letters – KUTVA – Ed) students that Lenin had regarded U.S. Blacks as an oppressed nation and referred us to his draft resolution on the national and colonial question which was adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920.”

(Haywood; Ibid; p.219).

Haywood adds that whilst he was in Moscow, Sen Katayama:

“Was a special friend of the Black students in Moscow. He was born to a Japanese peasant family, was educated in the US and became one of the founders of the Japanese Social Democratic Party in 1901. A member of the ECCI, he had spent several years in exile in the U.S., and was considered an expert on the Afro-American question. Katayama was most interested in our studies and our view on the situation in the US., particularly as it concerned Blacks. ‘Old Man’ Katayama knew all about white folks and we regarded him as one of us. We often came to him with our problems and he always had a receptive ear. It was Katayama who told us of

Lenins' earlier writings about U.S. Blacks and Lenin's views on the Black belt. He died in Moscow in 1933 at the age of 74."

(Haywood; Footnote; p. 656; Ibid).

But Sen Katayama had rather simplified Lenin's views, as we will discuss later. Moreover, and most unfortunately given the influence he had over Haywood, it is clear that Sen Katayama was an early adherent of **LEON TROTSKY**. Trotsky, it will be recalled, just prior to the 1917 revolution had stayed in the USA, intending to remain as an emigre. But when the Clarion call to Russia came, he correctly went. But in the interim, he had been contending with two other Russians for control of the USA fledgling movement of communists. Acting on the behalf of Lenin's Bolsheviks were Bukharin and Alexandra Kollantai. As Draper puts it:

"Lore and Katayama agree that Trotsky talked himself into the momentary command of the American left Wing."

(Theodore Draper; "The Roots of American Communism"; New York; 1957; (Hereafter Draper 2); p. 82).

In fact Sen Katayama was explicit about his own role in that business:

"We intended to organise the Left wing under the direction of Comrade Trotsky, and Madame Kollantai was going to Europe to establish the link between the European and American Left Wing movements."

(Katayama's words cited in Draper 2; Ibid p. 82).

We suggest that it is most unlikely that Sen Katayma had shaken off his adherence to Trotsky, at that very time that he was busily influencing Haywood. The question then naturally arises, as to whether Trotsky himself is on record on the “Black Nation” question? Indeed he is. Trotsky was interviewed by ARNE SWABECK, a leader of the Trotskyite Communist Opposition in the USA, and later by C.L.R. JAMES, a militant Black Caribbean Trotskyite.

The two Trotskyites had arrived at the Master’s feet, to seek guidance on the line of the CPUSA on the Black nation. Far from attacking the line of the Comintern, Trotsky in fact, supported the “Black Nation” line. He had to persuade the Trotskyite Opposition in the USA to embrace this line. In fact, in a chain of argument to arrive at this position, Trotsky first asserts that it is a fact that Negroes are “a race and not nation.” However, Trotsky then states that Nationhood is “a question of their consciousness, that is, what they desire and what they strive for.” His full words were as follows:

“The Negroes are a race and not a nation. Nations grew out of racial material under definite conditions. The Negroes in Africa are not yet a nation, but they are in the process of forming a nation. The American Negroes are on a higher cultural level. But since they are under the pressure of the Americans they become interested in the development of the Negroes in Africa. The American Negro will develop leaders for Africa, that one can say with certainty and that in turn will influence the development of political consciousness in America. We of course, do not obligate the Negroes to become a nation; whether they are is a question of their consciousness, that is to say, what they desire and what they strive for. We say: If the Negroes want that then we much fight against imperialism to that last drop of blood,

so that they gain the right wherever and when however they please, to separate a piece of land for themselves. The fact that they are today not a majority in any state does not matter.”

(Leon Trotsky ; “The Negro Question In America,” interview with Arne Swabeck 1933; In “On Black Nationalism and Self Determination”; New York; 1967; p. 24-25).

Having “manufactured a nation” from a wish; and denied the relevance of a “majority”; now Trotsky asserts that this slogan will attract the petty-bourgeois primarily, whilst deterring the workers. But he adds quickly, that this is irrelevant since the white & black workers are divided as it is!:

“That the slogan of ‘self-determination’ will win over the petty bourgeois more than the workers- that argument also good for the slogan of equality. It is clear that those Negro elements who play more of a public role (businessmen, intellectuals, lawyers etc) are more active and react more actively against inequality... If the situation was such that in America common actions took place involving black and white workers, that class fraternization already was a fact, then perhaps our comrades’ arguments would have a basis (I do not say that it would be correct); the perhaps we would divide the black workers from the white if we began to raise the slogan “self-determination.”

(Leon Trotsky ; “The Negro Question In America,” interview with Arne Swabeck 1933; In “On Black Nationalism and Self Determination”; New York; 1967; p. 24-25).

The identity of Trotsky with the Comintern should give rise to pause for those adamant that the Comintern line was correct. Trotsky's line is a complete chain of specious arguments. First from asserting the ability to "wish" a nationhood; over to asserting the leading role of American blacks for the "Negroes" in Africa; through to the excusing of a policy that promotes division – "because there is some division now!" Parts of this chain of argument are very similar to those that today, emphasise the "wishes" of a section of the Black petty-bourgeois. The "Black Nation" line as accepted by Trotsky, then became part of the policy of a prominent USA Trotskyite organisation, the **SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY (SLP)**:

"The minority status of the Negro in the political divisions of capitalist America, even in the South, and the absence of a national Negro language and literature and of differentiated political history as in prewar Poland or Catalonia and the Ukraine of today, have caused in the past a too facile acceptance of the Negroes as a merely a more than usually oppressed section of the American workers and farmers... The desire to wipe out the humiliating political subservience and social degradation of centuries might find expression in an overpowering demand for the establishment and administration of a Negro state... The demand for a Negro state in America its revolutionary achievement with the enthusiastic encouragement and assistance of the whites , will generate such creative energy in every section of the Negro workers and farmers in America as to constitute a great step forward too the ultimate integration of the American Negroes into the United Socialist States of North America."

(Socialist Workers Party Convention; July 3, 1939;
"Results of The Discussions on the Right of Self-Determination and the Negro In the United States of

North America”; in : Leon Trotsky ; “On Black Nationalism and Self Determination”; Ibid; p. 76-77).

It should be no surprise that the SLP, would later fully support **MALCOLM X**.

Some in the international movement, have privately dismissed the documentation amassed by Alliance and CL as “fictions,” but have so far not enlightened us as to any documentary counter evidence. Some honest advocates of the line of “Black Nation,” have argued in recent principled discussions with Alliance, that quotes from Lenin and Stalin can be used as “scripture,” to support “any position.” So, they argued, this was not a very useful way of confirming or refuting the correctness of the line of “the Black Nation In the USA.” They will also no doubt argue that the use of Trotsky’s words, as a negative example, is also open to “support any position.”

In general we agree that historically, the words of the Marxist-Leninists leaders have often been deliberately misused. But we argue that, since Haywood and many others, down to the present day – including organisations such as **Working People’s News, Revolutionary Communist League (MLM), R.O. Light, Labour’s Champion, Communist Party USA Marxist-Leninist**; and many others; all vigorously defend the line of the “Black Nation,” by themselves citing Lenin and Stalin, we must all re-examine these texts. This is why we will analyse Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin’s actual written works in relation to the “Black Nation” line. But, in any case, we will argue that whether or not Lenin or Stalin supported it then; the question should be whether or not the policy was correct? Furthermore, is it correct now?

LENIN AND THE TERMINOLOGY: “BLACK NATION”

The proponents of the “Black Nation” theory, insist that they derive their position from Lenin. In fact there is little doubt that Lenin did indeed, use the terminology **“NEGRO NATION.”**

There are THREE MAIN CITATIONS of Lenin, usually described in any description of Lenin that discusses this question. We will analyse these. We also draw attention to other statements of Lenin that about onto this question.

Before examining Lenin’s views as distinct from those of the earlier Marxist-Leninists, we will briefly examine Lenin on the Civil War. This is logical as Lenin’s views closely followed those of Marx and Engels. He echoed their views on the Civil War and the naivete of Kriege. In distinction however to them, he could closely analyse the phenomenon of Southern share-cropping. This had been firmly established after the Reconstruction period of the South, as Marx had noted. However, it had not yet had time to establish itself. Lenin had recognised as clearly as Marx and Engels had, the progressive nature of the Civil War in destroying old property relations of the Plantations:

“The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing the rule of the slave owner, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war.”

(Lenin: From “Letter to American Workers”; Aug 1918; Vol 28; pp.62-75; In “Lenin On USA”; p. 342. CW Vol 28; pp 69-70).

As we saw above, Marx had thought the plantation economy of Southern Slavery was in fact capitalist, though he had appended the term a “formal capitalism,” because of the fact of slavery as opposed to “free labour” being used. Lenin pointed out that the full erection of a capitalist agriculture had developed out of the Post-Reconstruction Land Deals that had been worked out:

“It was not the old slave holding economy of the big landowners that became the basis of capitalist agriculture (the Civil War smashed the slave-owners estates).. But the free economy of the free farmer working on free land – free from all medieval fetters, from serfdom and feudalism.”

(Lenin : CW: Vol 15; p. 140).

But as his other works show, Lenin knew that this had led to the institution of share-cropping. It is from this point that it is logical to examine in detail the views of Lenin on the Black National Question. We will examine in turn the citations cited by Harry Haywood and others. They cite Lenin thrice, in support of this line.

Lenin’s First Citation: “Draft Theses On the National-Colonial Question”

HARRY HAYWOOD in his autobiography, describes as a key ideological supporter of the theory of the “Black Nation,” one **SEN KATAYAMA**. Katayama was a Japanese born member of the Comintern who had spent a great deal of time in the USA and had worked with the CPUSA at an early stage of its formation. We have already discussed in the introduction, Katayama’s Trotskyite adherence. Katayama claimed that his own support of the theory of the “Black Nation,” derived from Lenin. This claim, and Haywood’s own offered version of the

translated text of Lenin's "Draft Theses On the National-Colonial Question" is recorded by Haywood:

"Sen Katayma told us black KUTVA students that Lenin had regarded U.S. Blacks as an oppressed nation and referred us to his draft resolution on the national and colonial question which was adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920...It first appeared in Lenins's 'Draft Theses On the National-Colonial Question'... The draft which was later adopted called upon the communist parties to Arender direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example Ireland, the American Negroes, etc) and in the colonies."

(Cited by Haywood; "Black Bolshevik"; Ibid; p.219, p. 223).

Haywood himself is certainly aware that some have offered a different explanation of this citation. But Haywood relies only upon the views expressed by Katayama to him. Haywood argument is simple, that Katayama was there and must have known what "Lenin really thought":

"Some have argued that Lenin's reference to U.S. Blacks as a subject nation was merely a tentative deduction. When he submitted his draft, he asked the delegates for opinions and suggestion in 15 points, one of which was 'Negroes in America.' It was recorded however that the Colonial Commission of the Congress, which Lenin himself headed and in which Sen Katayma was a leading member, held lengthy discussion on the question of U.S.Blacks.. Sen Katayma told us of Lenin's earlier writings about U.S. Blacks, and about Lenin's views on the Black Belt."

(Haywood “Black Bolshevik”; Ibid; p.223; and footnotes on p. 656).

This is only an indirect view that at the moment, because for lack of archival evidence, we cannot corroborate this. But furthermore, there is a problematic question of the exact translation of the text. Theodore Draper argues that there has been a mis-translation:

“This translation is based on the final text in German and Russian. The key phrase: ‘Among the dependent nations and those without equal rights,’ reads in German: ‘Aunter den abhangigen und nicht gleichberechtigten Nationen’ (Protokoll des II Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen International, p.228) It reads similarly in Russian: ‘Azavicimykh ili neravnopravnikh natsiakh’ (Vtori Kongress Cominterna, revised edition, 1934, p.493 for resolution and p.648 for draft). The adjectival use of ‘without equality’ cannot be rendered literally in English.”

(Draper T; “American Communism and Soviet Russia”; New York; 1986; p. 337).

Draper comments correctly that:

“A strange fate awaited these few words. American Communists... Have known them in inaccurate English translations. In the official German and Russian texts of these, ‘without equal rights’ appears as an adjective before ‘nations’. Communist translations have changed ‘without equal rights’ into ‘subject’ or ‘subordinated’ nations, or have omitted it altogether. By accident or not, these mistranslations have oversimplified what Lenin may have had in mind for the American Negroes.”

(Draper; Ibid, p. 337-338).

What does the text actually say? A well recognised unimpeachable source for Comintern documents, is **JANE DEGRAS**, whose three volume text of the Document of the Comintern from 1922-1943 is a basic and much used source. The exact wording according to that text is this:

“(9). In regard to relations within States, the Communist International’s national policy cannot confine itself to the bare and formal recognition of the equality of nations expressed only in words only and involving no practical obligations, to which bourgeois democracies-even if they call themselves socialist- restrict themselves. Offences against the equality of nations and violations of all the guaranteed rights of national minorities, repeatedly committed by all capitalist states despite their “democratic” constitution, must be inflexibly exposed in all the propaganda and agitation carried on by the communist parties, both inside and outside parliament. But that is not enough. It is also necessary: first to make clear all the time that only the Soviet system is able to ensure real equality all the time that only the Soviet system is able to ensure real equality for the nations because it unites first the proletarians, and then all the masses of the working people, in the struggle against the bourgeoisie; secondly communist parties must give direct support to the revolutionary movements among the dependent nations and those without equal rights (e.g. in Ireland, and among the American Negroes), and in the colonies. Without this last particularly important condition the struggle against the oppression of the dependent nations and colonies, and the recognition of their right to secede as separate States remains a deceitful pretence, as it is in the parties of the Second International.”

(J.Degras : “Documents: The Communist International 1919-1943; Volume 1 1919-1922”; London; 1971 ; p.142).

On the text as it stands in Degras, it is certainly clear that Lenin did **not** view the “Black Nation” in the USA as an entity; but he viewed the position of the Negro as one of “without equal rights.” What did take place in the discussions in the Colonial Commission on this particular issue? It appears that the American Delegate to the Colonial Commission was **JOHN REED** who argued against the view that there was a “Black Nation” within the USA. Reed argued that the problem of U.S. Blacks was that of:

“Both a strong race movement and a strong proletarian workers movement which is rapidly developing into class consciousness.”

(Cited by Haywood; “Black Bolshevik”; Ibid; p. 223).

Most authors accept that this was how the matter was left, and accepted by the Comintern at that time, and by the CPUSA.

Lenin’s Second Citation: “New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture”

The Second written piece of evidence from Lenin, that is usually quoted, including by Haywood, is “**New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture.**” Only the first section entitled “Part One: Capitalism and Agriculture in the USA,” was ever completed. This magnificent piece was written by Lenin in 1918, to counter the views of Mr. Himmer, an “extreme left wing bourgeois,” who had argued that in the USA family labour and small scale farming was dominant.

Haywood cites only this following paragraph in *Negro Liberation*. It clearly shows that Lenin recognised that the Negro in the South USA was in dire straits. In this quote, Lenin sees the Negro in a position similar to that of the serfs of 1860 Russia:

“The farmers we are discussing are not tenants in the European, civilized modern capitalist sense; they are mainly semi-feudal or – what is the same in the economic sense – semi-slave share tenants. The sharecropping region.. is the region of the greatest stagnation, where the toiling masses are subjected to the greatest degradation and oppression.. Segregated, hidebound, a stifling atmosphere, a sort of prison for the emancipated Negroes – this is what the American South is like.”

(In Haywood H: *Negro Liberation*; Chicago; 1976; p. 48).

It will be noted that **Lenin does not here use the terminology of the “Black nation.”** This is so for the rest of the document. But nonetheless the work is of major importance for us to understand the process of transition from the latifundia through to share cropping. In several places, Lenin reminds us that the transition from Plantation (or other forms of pre-capitalist agriculture) to capitalist agriculture, is not against Marxist predictions:

“In Volume III of Capital Marx had already pointed out that the form of landed property with which the incipient capitalist mode of production is confronted does not suit Capitalism. Capitalism creates for itself the required forms of agrarian relationships out of the old forms, out of feudal landed property, peasants commune property, clan property etc.. Marx compares the different methods by which

capital creates the required forms of landed property.. In America this re-shaping went on in violent way as regards the slave farms in the Southern States. There violence was applied against the slave-owning landlords, Their estates were broken up and the large feudal estates were transformed into small bourgeois farms.”

(Lenin, In “The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy In the First Russian Revolution 1905-07”); In “Lenin on the USA” Moscow 1967; From Vol 13; pp 275-76. p.40).

Lenin does not deny that the transition from slavery towards capitalism was slow:

“If we get down to brass tacks, however has it happened in history that a new mode of production has taken root immediately without a long secession of setbacks, blunders and relapses? Half a century after the abolition of serfdom there were still quite a number of survivals of serfdom in the Russian countryside. Half a century after the abolition of slavery in America the position of the Negroes was still very often one of semi-slavery.”

(Lenin: “A Great Beginning”; July 1919; Vol 29; p.425; In Collection “Lenin On USA”; Ibid; p. 397).

Nonetheless, the work **New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture** does detail the transition into capitalism; and contrasts this passage as it occurred in the South, to that as it occurred in the North of the USA. In graphic detail, Lenin outlines the process by which the “freed” Negroes were re-enslaved; and how their actual “freedom” had still left them, on the whole illiterate:

“The South of the U.S.A was slave owning until slavery was swept away by the Civil War of 1861-65. To this day, the Negroes who make up no more than 0.7-2.2% of the population in the North and the West, constitute from 22.6% to 33.7% of the population in the South. For the U.S.A. as a whole the Negroes constitute 10.7% of the population. There is no need to elaborate on the degraded social system of the Negroes. The American bourgeoisie is in no way better than the bourgeoisie of any other country. Having ‘freed’ the Negroes, it took good care under ‘free’, republican-democratic capitalism, to restore everything possible and do everything possible and impossible for the most shameless and despicable oppression of the Negroes. A minor statistical fact will illustrate their cultural level. While the proportion of illiterates in 1900 among the white population of the U.S.A. of 10 years of age and over was 6.2%, among the Negroes it was as high as 44.5%! More than seven times as high!”

(Lenin, “Data On Development of Capitalism In Agriculture In the USA,” In “Lenin On the USA”; Moscow 1967; Ibid; p. 123-4).

Lenin goes on to describe the economic system – share cropping – that leaves them in this condition. He will later define share cropping in detail (See below):

“What then is the economic basis that has produced and continues to support this fine superstructure? It is the typically Russian, ‘purely Russian’ labour service system which is known as **share-cropping**. In 1910 Negroes owned 920,883 farms ie 14.5% of the total. Of the total number of farmers, 37% were tenants; 62.1%, owners; the remaining 0.9% of the farms were run by managers. But among the whites 39.2 % were tenant farmers, and among the Negroes

-75.3% The typical white farmer is an owner. The typical Negro farmer is a tenant. This proportion of the tenants in the West was only 14%.. In the North the proportion of tenant farmers was 26.5% and in the South 49.6! Half of the Southern farmers were tenants. But that is not all. These are not even tenants in the European civilised modern capitalist sense of the word. They're chiefly semi-feudal or-which is the same thing in economic terms-semi-slave share-croppers. In the 'free' West, share croppers were in the minority (25,000 out of a total of 53,000 tenants). In the old North, which was settled long ago, 483,000 out of 766,000 tenant farmers ie 63% were share croppers. In the South 1,021,000 out of 1,537,000 tenant farmers ie 66% were share croppers. In 1910 , free republican-democratic America had 1,500,000 share-croppers of whom more than 1,000,000 were Negroes. And the proportion of share croppers to the total number of farmers is not decreasing, but is on the contrary steadily and rather rapidly increasing. In 1880, 17.5% of the farmers in the USA were share-croppers, in 1890 18.4%; in 1900 22.2% and in 1910, 24%. In 1910, free republican-democratic America had 1,500,000 share-croppers, of whom more than 1,000,000 were Negroes. And the proportion of share-croppers to the total number of farmers is not decreasing, but is on the contrary steadily and rather rapidly increasing. In 1880, 17.5% of the farmers in the USA were share-croppers; in 1890, 18.4%; in 1900 22.2%; and in 1910, 24%."

(Lenin, "Development of Capitalism In Agriculture In USA," In "Lenin On USA"; Ibid; p. 123-4).

Lenin then goes on to show that the tenant farms arose from the plantations of "considerable size from before the Civil War." He

quotes American statisticians to corroborate this. Lenin uses figures from the American Census to point out that conditions are so dreadful in the South, that the peasantry are “**fleeing**.” He later uses the term “**displacement**”:

“To show what the South is like, it is essential to add that its population is fleeing to other capitalist areas, and to the towns, just as the peasantry in Russia is fleeing from the most backward central agricultural gubernias, where the survival of serfdom have most greatly preserved.. To those areas of Russia which have a higher level of capitalist development, to the metropolitan countries the industrial gubernias and the South. The sharecropping area both in America and in Russia is the most stagnant area where the masses are subjected to the greatest degradation and oppression. Immigrants to America who have such an outstanding role play in the country’s economy and all its social life, shun the South... The South is distinguished by the immobility of its population and by the greatest ‘attachment to the land’... Negroes are in full flight from the two Southern division where there is no homesteading: these two division provided other parts of the country with almost 600,000 ‘black’ people. The Negroes flee mainly to the towns, in the South, 77-80 % of all the Negroes live rural communities; in other areas only 8-32%.”

(Lenin; “Data On Development of Capitalism in Agriculture”; Ibid; p. 125; & Ibid; p. 123-24).

This leads on to a detailed analysis of the transition in the South of the USA in particular (as opposed to the North) from the **LATIFUNDIA** to “small commercial agriculture.” In the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1973, Latifundia are defined as: “Large estates.” Lenin’s working definition of Latifundia is given below:

“I designate latifundia farms with an area of 1,000 acres and over. In 1910, the proportion of such farms in the USA was 0.8% (50,135 farms) and they added up to 167.1 million acres, or 19.0% of the total amount of land.. During the 10 years from 1900 to 1910 the total acreage of the latifundia, but only of the latifundia, showed a decrease. The reduction was quite substantial: from 197.8 million to 167.1 million acres 30.7 million acres. In the South there was a reduction of 31.8 million acres.. Consequently it is in the South and in the slave owning South alone, that the latifundia with their negligible proportion (8.5%) of improved land are being broken up on a really vast scale. The inescapable conclusion is that the only exact definition of the economic process under way is – a transition from the slave holding latifundia, nine-tenths of which remained unimproved to small commercial agriculture. It is a transition to commercial farms.”

(Lenin Ibid; p. 129).

This transition to a commercial farming was to one of a state of dependency for the smallest farmers on landowners, which is the state of **SHARE-CROPPING**:

“There is no doubt that in America as in all the other capitalists countries a part of the handicapped farmer have to sell their labour power.. more than one third of the farmers are directly exploited by the landlords and capitalists (24% share-croppers who are exploited by former slave-owners in feudal or semi-feudal fashion, plus 10% who are exploited by the capitalists or altogether 34%). This means that of the total number of farmers a minority , hardly more than one-fifth or one-quarter neither hire labourers or nor hire themselves out or sell themselves into bondage.”

(Lenin Ibid; p. 133).

Because share cropping is in essence one step up from slavery, although *free* labour, it utilises very little machinery. It is the lowest rung of farms in post-Reconstruction USA in its use of machinery:

“The former slave owning South, the area of share cropping occupies a bottom place in the use of machinery. The value of implements and machinery per acre- for its three divisions – is one-third, one-quarter, one-fifth of the figures for the intensive states of the North. The latter lead the rest, and in particular are far ahead of the West North Central states, America’s most agricultural area and her granary.. (moreover) In the Northern intensive states, capitalism is growing faster.”

(Lenin; Ibid, p. 144; p. 145).

What makes an agricultural system capitalist? is the central theme of Lenin’s article. The use of machinery is one major hallmark of the advent of capitalism in agriculture. Lenin warns against the equation of latifundia with capitalism, using purely the criteria of large size to mean capitalism. In addition to the importance of mechanisation for understanding the penetration by capital into the countryside, another factor limits the use of purely size as a characteristic of capitalism in agriculture. Lenin describes the universal tendency in systems which are disintegrating their “pre-capitalist farming systems,” for the continual break up of outdated modes of land owning into smaller fragments. This stands in contrast to the tendency under capitalism for an ever increasing farm size. But it does not change the character of capitalism in agriculture:

“It would be imprudent to confuse the latifundia with large-scale capitalist agriculture, and the latifundia are frequently survivals of pre-capitalist relationships- slave owning, feudal or patriarchal. A break-up, a parcelling out of the latifundia is taking place both in the South and in the West. In the North the total farm acreage increased by 30.7 million of which only 2.3 million is accounted for by latifundia, while 32.2 million belongs to big capitalist farms (175-999 acres). In the South the total acreage was reduced by 7.5 million. The latifundia decreased by 31.8 million acres. On the small farms there was an increase of 13 million, and on the medium farms 5 million acres.”

(Lenin; Ibid; p. 151).

This universal tendency for farms to grow in size under capitalism is due to the **displacement** or **expropriation** of the small farmers by the large farmers:

“In effect the fundamental and principal trend of capitalism is the displacement of small-scale by large scale production both in industry and in agriculture. But this displacement should not be interpreted merely as immediate expropriation. Displacement also implies the ruin of the small farmers and a worsening of conditions on their farms, a process that may go on for years.”

(Lenin; Ibid; p. 172).

“The tendency of capitalism to expropriate small scale agriculture is so strong that the American ‘North’ shows an absolute decrease in the number of landowners in spite of the distribution of tens of millions of acres of unoccupied free land. Only two factors still serve to paralyse this tendency in the

U.S.A. : (1) The existence of the still unparcelled slave holding plantations in the South, with its oppressed and downtrodden Negro population; and (2) that fact that the West is still partly unsettled.”

(Lenin; Ibid; p. 190-191).

Part of this process entails the drift of the population, towards the towns (Now termed **urbanisation**). Lenin shows this process was at work, even in the ‘rural’ South of the USA:

“The general statistics show that the urban population is growing at the expense of the rural, the population is abandoning the countryside. The proportion of the urban population increased from 29.5% in 1880 to 36.1% in 1890, 40.5% in 1900 and 46.3% in 1910. In every part of the country the urban population is growing more rapidly than the rural population: from 1900 to 1910, the rural population in the industrialised North went up by 3.9% and the urban by 29.8% in the former slave holding South the rural population increased by 14.8% and the urban by 41.4%.”

(Lenin; Ibid.; p.187).

In conclusion in this work Lenin describes the passage of the Negro from slavery through into a form of capitalist agriculture – sharecropping. He depicts the misery of this existence. He shows the Negro “fleeing” and becoming “urbanised.” But as to the description of a Negro, or Black nation, this is not clearly described.

iii) Lenin's Third Citation: "Statistics and Sociology":

The **Third** piece of work cited by Haywood in Lenin's writings regarding the "Black Nation" theory, is in an unfinished work entitled: "**Statistics and Sociology**" begun in 1917. Haywood cites only one fraction of the unfinished piece. The fraction cited by Haywood reads as follows:

"In the United States, the Negroes (and also the Mulattoes and Indians) account for only 11.1%. They should be classed 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 (imperialism) of the new era."

(As cited by Haywood p. 224-225).

Clearly, in this quote, and quite unequivocally, **Lenin does use the term:** "Oppressed nation" to describe the situation of the Negroes of the USA. But this truncation of the quote, is most unfortunate. Because in fact, the thrust of the article is slightly different. Lenin is describing an analysis of the diminution of national differences in 14 advanced countries, who have made "especially great strides in colonial policy." Lenin is actually pointing out the rapidly disappearing significance of "nations" within states like the USA.

Just prior to the quote cited by Haywood, Lenin discusses the older states of Western Europe. Then **just following** the quote cited by Haywood, Lenin is referring to **the "smoothing out" (or assimilation) to form a single "American nation."** We will

therefore pick up Lenin **after** he has first discussed the significance of the advanced states of the Western Europe who have in the main got a homogenous population. He first calculates how many per cent within the population of those countries could be classed as “oppressed nations”; finds that this amounts a low figure, and asks way that should be? He then lists the features of these “advanced countries”:

“Obtaining 12 Western European countries with a total population of 242 million. Of these only about 9.5 million ie only 4% represents oppressed nations (In England and Germany – ie Ireland for England; and Germany Poles (5.47%) Danes (0.25%); and Alsace Lorraine (1.87 million) [of whom Lenin felt that ‘an unknown part of the latter’ undoubtedly incline toward Germany] – leaving ‘about 5 million of Germany’s population belonging to alien unequal and oppressed nations’. If we add together these sections of the population in all these countries we will get about 15 million, ie 6%.

On the whole consequently, this group of states is characterised by the following: they are the most advanced capitalist countries, the most developed both economically and politically. Their cultural level too is the highest. In national composition most of these countries are homogeneous or nearly homogeneous. National inequality as a specific political phenomenon plays a very insignificant part. What we have is the type of ‘national state’ people often refer to, oblivious, in most cases, to the historically conditional and transitory character of this type in the general development of mankind. But that will be dealt with in its proper place.”

He then asks whether this situation applies outside of Europe? It does in the USA and Japan, he replies. In the USA the Negroes form an “oppressed nation”:

It might be asked: ‘Is this type of state confined to Western Europe?’ Obviously not. All its basic characteristics – economic (high and particularly rapid capitalist development), political (representative government), cultural and national-are to be observed also in the advanced states of America and Asia: The United States and Japan. The latter’s national composition took shape long ago and is absolutely homogenous: Japanese make up more than 99% of the population. In the United States, the Negroes (and also the Mulattoes and Indians) account for only 11.1%. They should be classed 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 (imperialism) of the new era which in America was especially sharply etched out by the Spanish-American imperialist war of 1898.”

(Lenin: “Statistics & Sociology” unfinished work; Vol 23: pp 273-76. In “Lenin On USA;” Ibid; p. 301-306).

But the significance of this oppression is not as intended by Haywood, since Lenin points out that as a consequence of the “advanced nature” of these countries, differences are being eliminated, in the forming of a single “American nation.” Lenin has introduced the concept of “smoothing out differences,” similar to “assimilation”:

“The white population of the US makes up 88.7% of the total and of this figure 74.3% are Americans and only 14.4% foreign born, ie, immigrants. We know that the especially favourable conditions for the development of capitalism and the rapidity of this development have produced a situation in which vast national differences are speedily and fundamentally, as nowhere else in the world, smoothed out to form a single ‘American’ nation.”

(Lenin; From “Statistics and Sociology”; Ibid; p. 306).

THIS VIEWPOINT OF LENIN’S, AS EXPRESSED IN THESE WORKS CITED BY HAYWOOD; IS NOT FOR A BLACK NATION – AS IS PRESENTED BY HAYWOOD AND OTHERS.

iv) Other Discussions by Lenin Bearing on This Theme – Critical Remarks on the National Question: On Jews and the Bund

Are there any other indications of how Lenin regarded minorities, and those who saw themselves as nations? The Jews were a group who crossed borders of countries and who certainly had some common identity, during Lenin’s life. Moreover they had the desire to be liberated from oppressions, and these desires frequently took the form of national aspirations. These were supported by the socialists of the Jewish “Bund.”

What was Lenin’s views on this? In his **“Critical Remarks on the National Question,”** Lenin is quite vocal that they are not a nation, that assimilation is the order of the day, and that they are often worse off than Negroes. In the following text, the term **“PURISHKEVICH”** derives from the landowner and

monarchist, **Vladimir Mitrofanovich Purishkevich**; who founded the reactionary Black Hundreds organisations in the 1905-07 period in Russia to ward off revolution:

“It is the Jewish nationalists in Russia in general and the Bundists in particular who vociferate most about Russian orthodox Marxists – being ‘assimilators.’ And yet ..out of the ten and a half million Jews all over the word, about half that number live in the civilised world, where conditions favouring ‘assimilation’ are strongest, whereas the unhappy downtrodden disfranchised Jews in Russia and Galicia who are crushed under the heel of the Purishkeviches (Russian and Polish) live in conditions for ‘assimilation’ least prevail where there is most segregation and even a ‘Pale of Settlement’, a ‘numerous clausus’ and other charming features of the Purishkevich regime. The Jews in the civilised world are not a nation, they have in the main become assimilated, say **KARL KAUTSKY** and **OTTO BAUER**. The Jews in Galicia and in Russia are not a nation; unfortunately (through no fault of their own but through that of the Purishkevices) they are still a caste here.”

(Lenin ‘Critical Remarks on the National Question’ In Collection “Lenin On USA”; p. 87. Written 1913; Vol 20; pp 28-30, and 37).

Lenin moves from this overall discussion of assimilation to point out the rapidity of this process in the USA:

“A rough idea of the scale which the general process of assimilation is assuming under the present conditions of advanced capitalism may be obtained from the immigration statistics of the United States of America.. The 1900 census in the USA recorded

over 10,000,000 foreigners. New York state.. grinds down national distinctions.”

(Ibid; p. 88).

He concludes that the plan for non-assimilation is reactionary, and directly links this with the introduction of “separate” school systems in the South of the USA:

“In practice the plan for ‘extra-territoriality’ or ‘cultural national’ autonomy could mean only one thing: the division of educational affairs according to nationality re the introduction of national curia in school affairs.. How utterly reactionary it is even for the standpoint of democracy let alone from that of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.. A single instance and a single scheme for the ‘nationalisation’ of the school system will make this point abundantly clear. In the USA the division of the States into Northern and southern holds to this day in all departments of life: the former possess the greatest traditions of freedom and of struggle against the slaveowners; the latter possess the greatest traditions of slave ownership, survivals of persecution of the Negroes, who are economically oppressed and culturally backward (44% of Negroes are illiterate and 6% of whites), and so forth. In the Northern states Negro children attend the same schools as white children do. In the South there are separate ‘national’, or racial, whichever you please, schools for Negro children. I think this is the sole instance of actual ‘nationalisation’ of schools.. In Eastern Europe there exists a country where things like the Beilis case are still possible, and Jews are condemned by the Purishkeviches to a condition worse than that of the Negroes. In that country a scheme for nationalisation Jewish schools was recently mooted in the Ministry. Happily this

reactionary utopia is no more likely to be realised than the utopia of the Austrian petty bourgeois.”

(Lenin ‘Critical remarks on the National Question’; Ibid; p. 88-89).

v) Polemic with Rosa Luxemburg – On “The Right Of Nations To Self-Determination”

Of course elsewhere Lenin talks of Stalin as “that great Georgian” who wrote on the National Question. But before examining Stalin on the National Question, what else did Lenin write on the National Question? In his polemics with **ROSA LUXEMBURG**, Lenin had a great deal to say about this. In his “**The Right Of Nations To Self-Determination**” written in 1914, Lenin firmly upholds the rights of nations to self-determination, against Luxemburg’s hesitations. This is not controversial to Marxist-Leninists where there is proven to be a nation. Lenin also discusses issues regarding the multi-national state.

If there are indeed two nations within the USA, then the USA is a multi-national state. This would be composed of (as the Comintern, Harry Haywood, the CPUSA and all his later followers have maintained) the “**Negro nation**” and a “**Euro-American**” nation. [We leave aside for the moment the assertions that there are two other nations within the USA, the “Chicano Nation” and the “Native American” nation]. But Lenin holds that the “typical normal” capitalist state is one inhabited by a single nation:

“The tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states, under which.. Requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal and, therefore for the whole of

Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the national state is typical and normal for the capitalist period.”

(Lenin; “Right Of Nations to Self Determination”; Sel Ws; Vol 1; Moscow; 1977; p.569; C W 20; p 393).

Lenin goes on to say that the then Marxist Karl Kautsky agreed that multi-national states are formed in territories where the state structure remains “abnormal or underdeveloped” in relation to the needs of capitalist society:

“States of mixed national composition (known as multi-national states, as distinct from national states) are *always those whose internal constitution has for some reason remained abnormal or underdeveloped (backward)*. Needless to say, Kautsky speaks of abnormality exclusively in the sense of lack of conformity with what is best adapted to the requirements of a developing capitalism.”

(Lenin; “Right Of Nations to Self Determination”; Ibid; p.569).

There were indeed remnants of the slave owning system in the South. But as Lenin pointed out, this was confined to the South where the USA state was not constructed. This USA state was constructed in the North, and this state forcibly destroyed, the Confederate State of the Southern slave owners during the Civil War of 1861-65. At this time the authority of the North was established throughout the territory of the United States. Moreover Lenin showed how rapidly the system of capitalism had transformed the slavery system into share-cropping; and that even though this held back capitalism, as compared to the North, this was only in a relative comparison to the North. Those

factors then that would operate in forming multi-national states were NOT operating in the USA. This must of itself rise serious doubts about the presentation of the USA as a “multi-national state.”

In conclusion, Lenin was not in favour of the theory “Black Nation” as argued by the proponents of the “Black Nation” theory.

2) STALIN, THE NATIONAL QUESTION, AND THE QUESTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE “BLACK NATION” THEORY

a) Stalin’s Definition Of A Nation

Lenin took the work by J.V.Stalin, “On the National Question,” as a useful starting point to understand the National Question. It is not remarked by the proponents of the theory of the “Black nation,” that in this work, Stalin speaks unequivocally of:

“The American nation.. At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries.. The Americans.. already constituted a nation distinct from England.”

(J.V.Stalin “Works” Moscow; 1956; Vol 2; “Marxism and the National Question”; p. 311).

What does Stalin consider the definition of a nation? He explains that it is not dependent upon religion, nor upon a racial mixture. The famous succinct **definition** given by Stalin is that:

“A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and

psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.”

(J.V. Stalin Works, Moscow; 1956; Vol 2; “Marxism and the National Question”; p. 307).

Stalin pointed out, that under national oppression the workers suffer more than the bourgeoisie:

“Restriction of freedom of movement, disfranchisement, repression of language, closing of schools, and other forms of persecution affect the workers no less, if not more, than the bourgeoisie. Such a state of affairs can only serve to retard the free development of the intellectual forces of the proletariat of subject nations. One cannot speak seriously of a full development of the intellectual faculties of the Tartar or Jewish worker if he is not allowed to use his native language at meetings and lectures, and if his schools are closed down.”

(Stalin; Ibid; p. 304).

Therefore the National Liberation struggle was a key issue for the workers movement. But the national liberation struggle must also be supported for another reason. Because the national struggle is diversionary and obscures, it diverts, from the real workers struggle – for socialism:

“The policy of nationalist persecution is dangerous to the cause of the proletariat .. It diverts the attention of large strata from social questions, questions of the class struggle, to national questions, questions ‘common’ to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And this creates a favourable soil for lying propaganda about ‘harmony of interests’, for glossing over the class interests of the proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers. This

creates a serious obstacle to the cause of using the workers of all nationalities.”

(Stalin; Bid; p.320-321).

And linked to this, moreover, nationalism allows a policy of “divide and rule,” again diverting from the main struggle:

“The ‘system’ of *oppression* to a ‘system’ of *inciting* nations against each other to a ‘system’ of massacres and pogroms. Of course, the latter system is not everywhere and always possible, but where it is possible- in the absence of elementary civil rights – it frequently assumes horrifying proportions and threatens to drown the cause of unity of the workers in blood and tears. The Caucasus and the South Russia furnish numerous examples. ‘Divide and rule’- such is the purpose of the policy of incitement. And where such policy succeeds, it is a tremendous evil for the proletariat and a serious obstacle to the cause of uniting the workers of all the nationalities in the state.”

(Stalin; *ibid*; p.321).

The Leninist position, and Stalin’s own position, was always that nations should have the **full** right to self-determination.

“The right of self-determination means that a nation may arrange its life in the way it wishes. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights.”

(Stalin; *Ibid*; p.321).

But even if there is a nation, not all claims to nationhood are strategically defensible from the workers perspective.

Obviously the Marxist-Leninist will not necessarily support all claims to nationhood if they obstruct the working peoples. For instance, the resurrection of beys' and mullahs' influence in Transcaucasia would not have been in the best interests of the toiling strata. The answer that is best for the workers and toilers depends upon the precise historical situation and must be carefully assessed on the precise facts:

“A nation has the right to arrange its life on autonomous lines. It even has the right to secede. But this does not mean that it should do so under all circumstances, that autonomy or separation, will everywhere and always be advantageous for a nation; ie. For its majority, ie for the toiling strata. The Transcaucasian Tartars as a nation may assemble, let us say, in their Diet and succumbed to the influence of their beys and mullahs, decide to restore the old order of things and to secede from the state. According to the meaning of the clause on self-determination they are fully entitled to do so. But will this be in the interest of the toiling strata of the Tartar nation? Can Marxists look on indifferently when the beys and mullahs assume the leadership of the masses in the solution of the national question?.. Should not Marxist come forward with a definite plan for the solution of the question, a plan which would be most advantageous for the Tartar masses?.. But what solution would be most compatible with the interests of the toiling masses? Autonomy, federation or separation? All these are problems the solution of which will depend on the concrete historical conditions in which the given nation finds itself.. Conditions like everything else change, and a decision which is correct at one particular time may prove to be entirely unsuitable at another.”

(Stalin; Ibid; p. 324).

b) Stalin On The Rights Of Minorities And The National Question

Another situation where this issue of nationhood, must be closely examined, is where there is one region with different minorities, or “proto-nations” lying side by side. There are different racial minorities in the same geographical area of the South of the USA. This is a special type of national problem. Such situations have been frequent, including in Stalin’s times. At that time, in the European world, the situation in **TRANSCAUCASIA** was an example. As a precondition to solve the problems of these areas, Stalin insisted that:

“The complete democratisation of the country is the basis and condition for the solution of the national question.”

(Stalin; bid; p. 373).

But, Stalin recognised that there was a possibility that independence and secession was necessary for some parts. However, he then considered the possibility that for some parts regional autonomy was preferable. This was so:

“For the Jews in Poland, the Letts in Lithuania, the Russians in the Caucasus, the Poles in the Ukraine and so on...”

This was for two reasons; namely, because it disposed of a fiction bereft of territory, and, it did not divide people by nation:

“The only correct solution is regional autonomy, autonomy for such crystallised units as Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Caucasus etc. The advantage of regional autonomy consists first of all

in the fact that it does not deal with a fiction bereft of territory, but with a definite population inhabiting a definite territory. Next it does not divide people according to nations, it does not strengthen national barriers; on the contrary it breaks down these barriers and unites the population in such a manner as to open the way for division of a different kind, division according to classes... Of course, not one of these regions constitutes a compact homogeneous nation, for each is interspersed with national minorities. Such are the Jews in Poland, the Letts in Lithuania, the Russians in the Caucasus, the Poles in the Ukraine, and so on. It may be feared therefore that the minorities will be oppressed by the national majorities. But there will be grounds for fear only if the old order continues to prevail in the country. Give the country complete democracy and all grounds for fear will vanish.”

(Stalin; Ibid, p. 376).

The key issue for Stalin, was that there should be definite and clear democratic rights. So much so that he repeats this again:

“What the minorities want is not an artificial union but real rights in the localities they inhabit. What can such a union give them without complete democratisation? On the other hand, what need is there for a national union when there is complete democratisation? What is that particularly agitates a national minority? A minority is discontented not because there is not national union but because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language. Permit it to use its native language and the discontent will pass of itself. A minority is discontented not because there is no artificial union but because it does not possess its own schools. Give it its own schools and all grounds for discontent will

disappear.. A minority is discontented not because there is not national union, but because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience (religious liberty), liberty of movement, etc. Give it those liberties and it will cease to be discontented. Thus equal rights of nation in all forms (language, schools, etc) is an essential element in the solution of the national question.. Complete democratisation of the country is required.”

(Stalin; Ibid.; p. 375-377).

c) Stalin On Multi-National States

Views regarding the formation of multi-national states are relevant to this discussion. Stalin’s view became the basis for Lenin’s viewpoint that echoed Kautsky (See above). This was that the formation of multi-national states, is a “special method” of the formation of states, and one which takes place in territories where certain conditions hold. These are:

- 1) Where more than one pre-nation (nationality) exists;
- 2) Where capitalism has not yet been eliminated; and
- 3) Where capitalism is feebly developed but is more developed in one of the pre-nations concerned than in the other (or others):

For Stalin the formation of multi-national states was more common in the East:

“Whereas in the West (of Europe-ed) nations developed into states, in the East multi-national states were formed.. This special mode of formation of states could take place only where feudalism has not yet been eliminated, where capitalism was feebly developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the background had not yet been able to

consolidate themselves economically into integral nations.”

(Stalin; J.V; Ibid; p.314).

Again, even in this context, Stalin’s view regarding the example of **Transcaucasia** holds. ie that Stalin favoured Democratisation and Regional Autonomy – equating with national status – within a larger federation.

IN CONCLUSION regarding the written views of Stalin upon nationhood:

Unless it can be demonstrated that there is a true Nation and not a national minority of blacks in the Southern areas, the implications of these views are self-evident. If Marxist-Leninists insist that their line does adhere to the line of Stalin, they have an onus to demonstrate exactly how this accords with a line of “the Black Nation.”

iii) Do Stalin’s Criteria Fit the Theory of the “Black Nation?”

Let us examine the criteria one at a time, as they apply to the “Negro Nation.”

Historically Constituted Stable Area

Clearly there is a historically constituted area of the South of the USA. It should be noted that this is **not** however, distinct from the historic continuity of the Whites in the South. Furthermore, it is **not** stable, as it has shown a major tendency of a drop in the numbers of Negroes resident in the South. The proportion of the total Negro population of the USA living in the “Black Belt” at the beginning of the 20th Century was 90%. (M.Ellison: “The Black Experience: American Blacks Since 1865”; London;

1974; p.58). This population of Negroes then was, it was true at that time, mainly located in the South:

“Thus by 1900.. African-Americans collectively.. Were larger by about 4.5 million over 1860. .. African-Americans numbered nine million by the turn of the century. Of that number fully 90% that is nearly 8 million, of all African-Americans still lived in the South. The percentage of urban dwellers varied across the South from a high of 27% in Tennessee to a low of 6% in Mississippi.. By 1940 the black population had grown by an average of only 9% that, slightly more than a million per decade or at an annual rate of less than 1%.”

(Denoral Davis, “Portrait of 20th Century African-Americans,” US Census in “Black Exodus”; Ibid; p.7).

But there was a steady and accelerating drift away from the South, by the Negroes. Here we cite figures summarising the so called “**GREAT MIGRATION.**” This had been described, it will be remembered by Lenin under the term “displacement”:

“During the Great Migration, 1915 to 1960, about five million rural southern African-Americans migrated to the northern industrialised cities of America. The immediate conditions for the ‘great migration’ were created after the Civil War when African-Americans were not given ‘forty acres and a mule’, the means of economic survival at that time.”

(Preface: “Black Exodus: The Great Migration From the America South”; Ed Alferdeteen Harrison; p. vii).

After the Second World War the pace of out-migration accelerated. In fact, it only slowed towards the end of the

1970's, as the increasing post-war crisis of American industry was deepening:

“The post-1940 demographic trends of African-Americans.. The once closed black population of the South would over the next 4 decades become decidedly more open. In the 1940's the South suffered a loss of 1.5 million of its African-American resident which represented a 1.5% drop in the region's black populace. It was the most substantial net migration loss for any single decade ever. Nevertheless, during that decade the South's black population increased by 6% and 543,000 in absolute numbers. The volume and the pace of the exodus was basically re-enacted in the 1950's when another roughly 1.5 million black southerners absconded the region. The South's black population again showed a net increase the time of 3% and 320,000 in absolute numbers for the decade.. A slight easing of the out-migrating pace of the past decades beginning in the 1960's, for in the 1960's nearly a hundred thousand free blacks forsook the South..The slowing of the black out-migrating in the 1960's albeit only slightly, was tantamount to a turning point as the past two decades of migrating patterns were dramatically reversed. In fact by the early 1970's there was emerging evidence of a black re-migration to the South. This early period of re-migration even resulted in a net migration increase for the South; it was the first time that had happened in 30 years.”

(p.11-12; D.Davis; “Portrait of 20th century African Americans,” Ibid).

Clearly, as unemployment and poverty in the Northern cities affecting the proletariat grew worse, under the crises of

capitalism over the last few decades, there was a tendency which continues, for the Negroes or Blacks to move back to the South:

“From March 1985, until March 1988, of blacks in America, 586,385 went from the North back to the South. In these same three years only 326,842 blacks followed the original pattern of the Great Migration and went from the South to the North.. The present reverse emigration during the three years cited has brought 219,809 blacks.. back to the South east. Simultaneously only 51,083 blacks have taken this lane North. Along the far Western lane, comparable figures show 186,196 blacks returning to the South and only 92,085 journeying toward the states beyond the Rocky Mountains. The Midwestern lane.. from 1985 to 1988 back migration.. going in a Southerly direction totalled 183,083. Those going North were in aggregate 183,674.”

(Introduction in “Black Exodus”; Ibid; p. xvii-xviii).

Despite this, the net result has been an enormous demographic change:

“The impact nonetheless of three decades of out-migrating was enormous. African-Americans were by 1970 more geographically diffused across the American landscape than ever before. In general they were both less rural and southern. Fully 80% of African-Americans in 1970 were urban dwellers. In the South the figure was in excess of 70%. This compares with less than 50% of all African-Americans in 1940 and about one in four Black Southerners. In effect a dual migration had occurred with significant numbers of blacks leaving the South, one in seven to take up residence in the Northeast, Midwest, and increasingly the West – but at the same time non-migrating black southerners

were exiting the rural South for its urban environs. And by 1970 blacks were more urbanized than whites nationally as well as regionally.”

(D.Davis: “Portrait of 20th Century African-Americas”; Ibid; p.12).

There is little doubt that most of the Black migrants were going into the work places of capitalism, they were moving from share-croppers to becoming proletarians:

“Migrants were directed to specific industrial centers industries and jobs. Between 1910 and 1920 for example New York experienced a 66% increase in its black population; Chicago a 148% increase; Detroit a 611 % increase; and Philadelphia a 500% increase. By 1920 almost 40% of the black population in the North was concentrated in these four cities. The great bulk of migrants found their way into manufacturing industries with a 40% increase over levels found in 1910. Gains were most dramatic in the packing houses and steel industries in Chicago. In packing houses there were 67 blacks employed in 1910 and nearly 3 thousand in 1920. In steel black representation increased from 6% in 1910 to 17% in 1920.”

(Carol Marks: “Social and Economic Life of Southern Blacks”; in “Black Exodus” Ibid; p. 46-47).

Marks describes that the first to be able to move North were the best literate. When they got there of course, they got only the lowest paid, hardest and dirtiest jobs. These were the jobs that were available to them. Nonetheless, the industrialisation of the black sharecropper had transformed the political and social life of the Negro Americans.

See: Table 1.1: Shows the Persons Engaged in Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits as percentage of Total Gainfully employed By Selective Region 1880-1900 for the North East and South. (From Statistical Abstracts of the US; Washington DC Government Printing Office; 1932; Cited by C. Marks, Ibid, p. 39).

TABLE 1.1
Persons Engaged in Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits
as Percentage of Total Gainfully Employed
by Selective Regions, 1880-1900.

REGION	1880	1900
<i>North East</i>		
Rhode Island	55.4	52.2
Massachusetts	50.2	46.2
Connecticut	46.8	45.3
New Hampshire	39.8	42.1
New Jersey	38.6	39.4
Pennsylvania	30.8	32.6
Maine	28.4	29.9
Ohio	23.6	27.7
Vermont	20.3	25.2
<i>South</i>		
Alabama	4.2	7.8
Arkansas	4.2	6.7
Florida	8.1	14.5
Georgia	5.8	9.6
Kentucky	11.2	12.9
Louisiana	8.1	9.7
Mississippi	3.0	4.7
North Carolina	6.5	12.1
South Carolina	4.8	9.9
Tennessee	7.6	9.5
Texas	5.6	7.4
Virginia	11.6	14.1
West Virginia	12.6	14.2

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932).

Table 1.2 shows the same picture in more detail for the period 1910-1920 for only the major Southern States. (Data from US Census of the Population 1910-1920). (p.43 Marks, Ibid).

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TABLE 1.2

Proportion of Black Males in Skilled and Unskilled Manufacturing and Mechanical Trade Positions, 1910-1920 in Major Southern States (By Number and State)

STATE	1910	1920
Alabama	(32,604)	(36,168)
% unskilled	84%	92%
% skilled and semi-skilled	16%	8%
Arkansas	(15,718)	(22,658)
% unskilled	77%	76%
% skilled and semi-skilled	23%	24%
Florida	(25,492)	(34,688)
% unskilled	70%	70%
% skilled and semi-skilled	30%	30%
Georgia	(39,343)	(60,752)
% unskilled	48%	65%
% skilled and semi-skilled	52%	35%
Kentucky	(17,713)	(18,308)
% unskilled	61%	61%
% skilled and semi-skilled	39%	39%
Louisiana	(16,138)	(47,651)
% unskilled	72%	73%
% skilled and semi-skilled	28%	27%
Mississippi	(25,702)	(13,146)
% unskilled	74%	72%
% skilled and semi-skilled	26%	28%
North Carolina	(31,891)	(46,133)
% unskilled	67%	70%
% skilled and semi-skilled	33%	30%
Oklahoma	(6,233)	(8,081)
% unskilled	80%	76%
% skilled and semi-skilled	20%	24%
South Carolina	(14,952)	(12,507)
% unskilled	46%	62%
% skilled and semi-skilled	54%	38%
Tennessee	(21,998)	(13,623)
% unskilled	65%	75%
% skilled and semi-skilled	35%	25%

TABLE 1.2 CONTINUED

Proportion of Black Males in Skilled and Unskilled Manufacturing and Mechanical Trade Positions, 1910-1920 in Major Southern States (By Number and State)

STATE	1910	1920
Iowa	(27,027)	(41,794)
% unskilled	81%	79%
% skilled and semi-skilled	19%	23%
Virginia	(19,737)	(52,109)
% unskilled	68%	64%
% skilled and semi-skilled	33%	36%
West Virginia	(4,207)	(4,932)
% unskilled	68%	64%
% skilled and semi-skilled	32%	36%

Source: U.S. Census of the Population, (1910-1920)

Common Language

Stalin points out that a Common Language does not imply a nationhood of itself. Stalin refers to the Norwegians and the Danes who (Stalin; Ibid; p. 308): “Speak one language, but they do not constitute a single nation owing to the absence of the other characteristics.”

“A common language is one of the characteristic features of nation. This, of course, does not mean that different nations always and everywhere speak different languages, or that all who speak one

language necessarily constitute one nation. A common language for every nation, but not necessary different languages for different nations!.. Englishmen and Americas speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation. The same is true of the Norwegian and the Danes, the English and the Irish.”

(Stalin; Ibid; p. 304).

Language then does not disqualify the Negroes from constituting a nation; but nor does it assist in establishing that the Negroes are a nation.

Common Territory

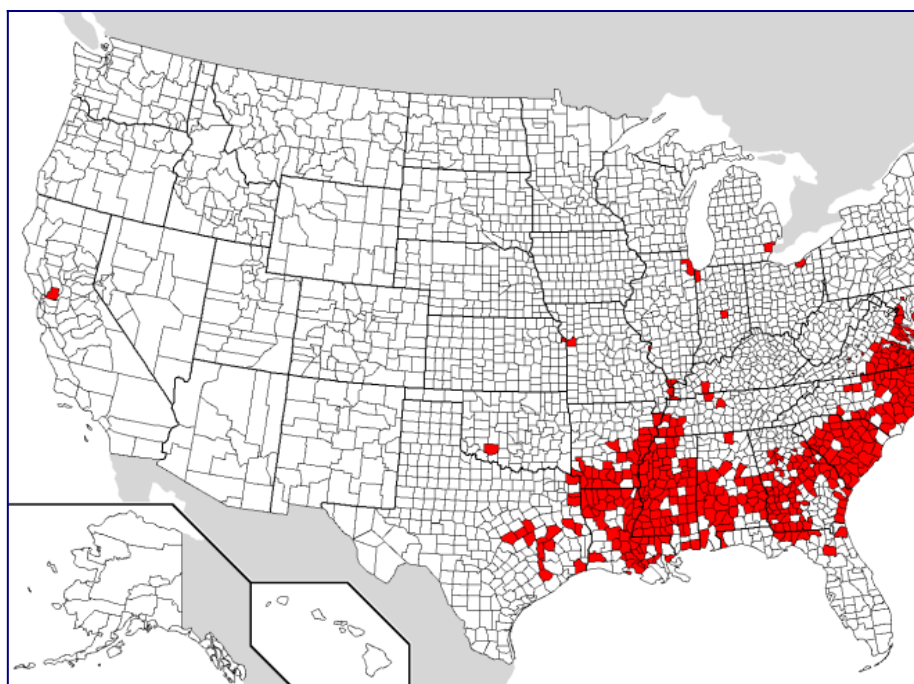
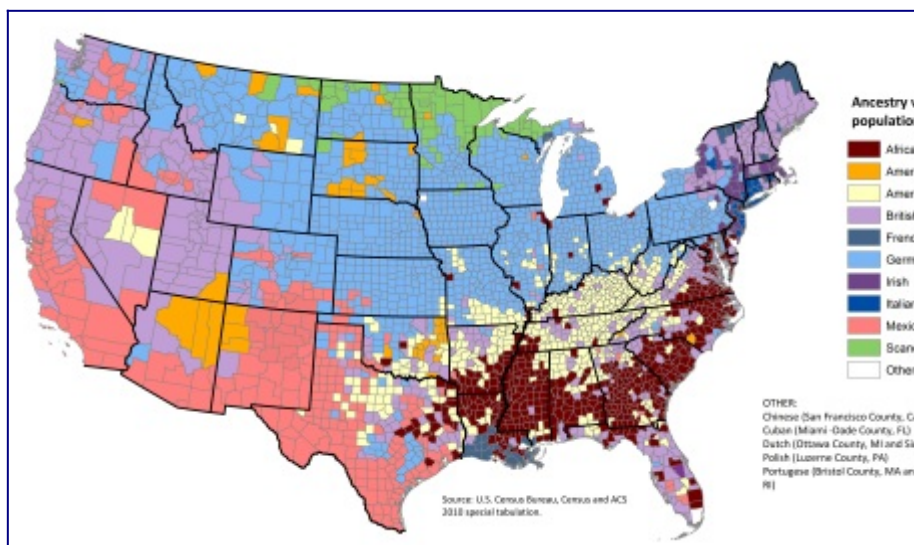
Those who present the Negroes in the “Black Belt” of the USA as a “separate nation” generally claim that it has a common territory in the “Black Belt.” As the ECCI resolution states:

“At least three-fourths of the entire Negro population of the United States.. live ..(and are-ed) settled in the ‘Black Belt’ and constitute the majority of the population.. In the South.. The main communist slogan must be: ‘the right of self-determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt.’”

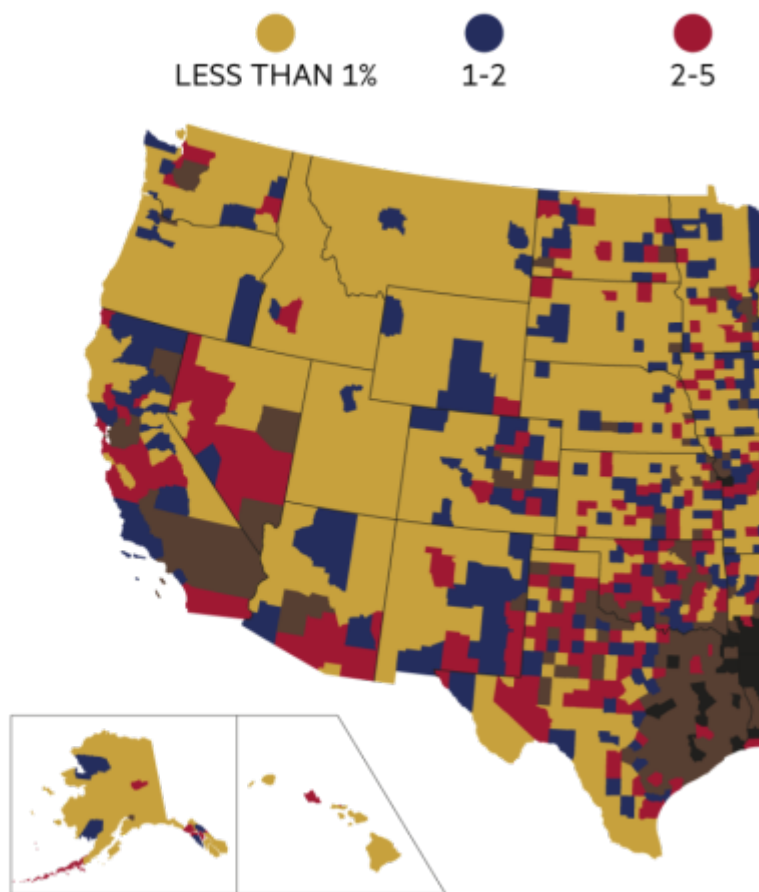
(Political Secretariat, ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Population In the United States”; In; J.Degras (Ed): Volume 3; p. 125-126).

But this is certainly not true today. The counties where the Negroes constitute a “majority of the population” are shown in the map on the next page. Several points must be made regarding this map:

MAP OF COUNTIES OF USA WITH NEGRO MAJORITY



BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICANS AS A SHARE OF



Source: US Census Bureau

Firstly, the counties where the Negroes form a majority of the population – although lying generally but not absolutely within the “Black Belt,” form only a portion of it;

Secondly, these counties do not make up a contiguous territory, but are disconnected and scattered;

Thirdly, these counties contain a Negro population of only 11 million of the total Negro population of the USA.

Fourthly, even in these counties, more than 40% of the population is “euro-American,” i.e. white.

Fifthly, the number of counties where the Negro people constitute a majority of the population has shrunk rapidly throughout the present century, together with the Negro population residing in them (**See Table 3**):

TABLE 3.

YEAR NUMBER OF COUNTIES NEGRO POPULATION

1900 286 4 Million

1950 158 2 Million

1970 105 1 Million

Thus while it took 50 years (from 1900 to 1950) for the Negro population of such counties to drop by 50%, it took only another 20 years (from 1950-1970), for it to drop by a further 50%. Clearly the “Black Belt” can in no way be regarded as a “common territory” for the “Negro Nation” in the South USA. Stalin pointedly asks:

“What common territory can there be among people who inhabit different territories?”

(JVS: “Marxism and the National Question”; Ibid; p. 309-10).

Common Economic Life

The proponents of the Negro “Black Nation” theory generally claim that it has a “common economic life” in agriculture:

“The bulk of the Negro population (86%) live in the Southern States; of this number 74% live in the rural districts and are dependent almost exclusively upon agriculture for a livelihood.”

(PS ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Question, In J.Degras (Ed): Ibid; Volume 2; p. 553).

But the 1970 Census reveals that less than 3% of the occupied Negroes are engaged in agriculture. In the South the figure is only 5%. Even so, perhaps it is still a separate economic unit in the South? But even this is not the case. There is no integral economic unit more or less distinct from the economy of the rest of the USA either. Of course those proponents of the “Black Nation” deny this is the case:

“The ‘Black Belt’.. is not, either economically or politically, such an integral part of the whole US as any other part of the country.. The capitalist economic system there.. still has semi-colonial features.”

(PS ECCI; Degras; Vol 3; Ibid; p. 129, 130).

But as a result of the uneven development of capitalism, **all** capitalist countries have areas and regions which are more or less regions which are less, industrially developed. And moreover the regions which are less well developed generally have a kind of dependency or “semi-colonial” economic relationship to those areas which are more industrially developed. This does not mean however, that such a less industrially developed region of a country forms an integral economic unit more or less distinct from the economy of the rest of the country; such as would create the basis of separate nationhood.

For example the South of Italy, has long been industrially less well developed than the North, to which it has a semi-colonial relationship; but this does not mean that the South of Italy forms an integral economic unit distinct from the economy of the rest of the country, such as would create the basis of a separate “South Italian” nation.

The PS of the ECCI admitted that the question of the level of industrialisation was irrelevant to the national question in the USA:

“Industrialisation in the ‘Black Belt’ is not, as is generally the case in the colonies properly speaking, in contradiction with the ruling interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie which has in its hands the monopoly of the entire industry.”

(PS ECCI; Degras Vol 3; Ibid; p. 129).

In fact the ECCI went further, it actually admitted that the “**Black Belt**,” did not constitute an “integral economic unit more or less distinct from the economy of the rest of the country”:

“The ‘Black Belt’ is not in itself either economically or politically such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States.”

(PS ECCI; Degras Vol 3; Ibid; p.129).

A fall back argument was used by the ECCI, (and its later adherents) that the “Black Belt” was, and is now, an integral economic unit that is: “more or less distinct from the rest of the USA.” This argument rests on the grounds that its economy contains significant survivals of slavery, manifested in such “pre-capitalist” systems of exploitation as share cropping:

“The Negro...oppressed nation is in a peculiar and extraordinary distressing situation of national oppression...Above all because of considerable... remnants of slavery...At least three-fourths of the entire Negro population of the United States lives... most of them being peasants and agricultural labourers in a state of semi-serfdom settled in the ‘Black Belt’...The agrarian question...lies at the basis of the national question...In the ‘Black Belt’.. the capitalist economic system still has pre-capitalist...features.”

(PS, ECCI, Degras Vol 3; Ibid; p.125, 129, 130).

“The remnants of slavery in all their ramifications explain the basic content of the Negro question in the US. The chief factor which has preserve the area of Negro majority to the present time, in the face of the conflicting forces tending to redistribute the Negro population is the modern plantation system based upon forms of labour which are survivals of chattel slavery.”

(J.S.Allen: “The Negro Question in the United States”; London; 1936; p.169).

It is true that in the absence of land reform in the South, the plantation owners took great advantage of the weak economic position of the Negro Freedmen, to impose upon them forms of exploitation which may justly be described as “semi-serfdom.” And it is true, that out of these forms of exploitation, share-cropping emerged dominant as form of exploitation, that was best suited to the needs of the plantation owners:

“It (ie share-cropping) was the outcome of years of experimentation to find out what method would

produce them to constant supply of submissive labour at the lower cost.”

(F.A. Shannon : “The Farmers’ Last Frontier: Agriculture : 1860-1897”; New York; 1955; p. 87).

But the system of sharecropping is not confined to Negroes, nor to the “Black Belt.” Furthermore, share cropping has rapidly declined in the South since 1930:

“Share cropping once typical of the cotton-growing areas of the South is now history...Share cropping tenancies...are today found only in the Mississippi Delta and on the coastal plains of the Carolinas.”

(A.N. Duckham and G.B. Masfield: “Farming Systems of the World”; London; 1971; p.113, 155).

The advent of the mechanised farming made possible by the invention of the Hopson mechanical cotton picker in 1944, was the final nail in the coffin of share cropping. This dramatically reduced the cost of picking cotton:

“Picking a bale of cotton by machine cost (Hopson) \$5.26, and picking it by hand cost him \$39.41. Each machine did the work of fifty people.”

(Nicholas Lemann; “The Promised Land”; New York; 1992; p.5).

But it should not be thought that the system was only in disintegrations during the war. The system had been crumbling even before then, ever since the price of cotton had fallen dramatically from \$1.00 per pound in 1911 to \$0.10 cents per pound in 1920; and the dramatic exodus of workers from the Cotton Belt to the North (Lemann, Ibid; p.15). And in any case, particular forms of exploitation (such as share-cropping for

instance) do not make the region in which they are operating “an integral economic unit more or less distinct from the economy of the rest of the country,” to provide the basis of a separate nation. For example share-cropping remains the predominant form of agricultural exploitation in Lombardy and Emilia, but this does not mean that these regions form “integral economic units”; such as would provide a basis for separate nationhood for these regions of Italy. Thus even the PS of the ECCI was forced to acknowledge:

“The ‘Black Belt’ is not in itself, either economically or politically, such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States.”

(PS ECCI; Degras Vol 3; Ibid; p.129).

Common Psychological Make-up

The advocates a “Black nation” hold that there is a “common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.” The ancestors of the present Negro inhabitants of the United States were brought from Africa to serve as slaves, for the most part on the plantations in the Deep South. But the social formations of the regions of Africa from which they came were those of the tribe and the tribal federation, from regions where pre-nations (nationalities) had not yet been formed, and they came from different regions having no common culture or common language. Clearly therefore the Negro community did not constitute a pre-nation – much less a nation – at the time the Negroes arrived in North America. If so – a common make-up was formed in the crucible of the USA. Some of those advocating that this occurred, point to a statement by Frederick Engels:

“The working class has gradually become a race apart from the English bourgeois.. The workers

...speak other dialects, have other thoughts and ideals, other customs and moral principles, a different religion and other politics than those of the bourgeois, they are two radically dissimilar nations.”

(F. Engels: “The Condition of the Working Class In England”; London; 1969; p. 154).

But it is clear that in speaking of the British capitalist class and the British working class as separate “nations,” Engels is speaking no more literally than when in the earlier sentence he refers to them as belonging to separate “races,” he is speaking metaphorically, in order to emphasise the differences in the common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture possessed by the two main antagonistic classes within the British nation.

But in addition to these radically dissimilar psychological make-ups and cultures which reflect class differences, the British capitalist class and the British working class have in common a certain “common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” which reflect that both classes belong a single British nation.

Thus the fact that during the period of slavery, in North America, the Negro people acquired a distinct “common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” which reflected their social position as a slave class, and so was radically dissimilar from the psychological make-up and culture of other social classes in no way means they acquired a “psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” appropriate to a separate nation.

With the abolition of slavery, by the **13th Amendment to the US Constitution of December 18th, 1865** – the Negro people

ceased to form a slave social class, and so in time, they ceased to have the “common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” appropriate to a slave class. Though it is true that the features of minority oppression and racism did not ever disappear. It is true that this continues to be an issue every day for Negroes in the USA. But it is also true that this is not the basis for a national movement. It is also true that this can only be overcome by a joint Communist struggle with whites.

iii) Stalin and the “Black Nation” – What Evidence of Stalin’s support?

As seen, we have argued the case that Negroes are a minority. It is likely that Stalin’s views related to the Jewish minority fits the Negro population of the USA. Yet this formulation is quite different from “the Black Nation.” The manifest injustice then and now, to the Black people and in particular to the workers, underlies the subjective drive of many Marxist-Leninists towards this theory. This daily injustice spawns a subjective desire to assist their development, and to harness their manifest alienation from capitalist America. This must be considered honestly, as an honest confusion of subjective factors for objective factors.

Marxist-Leninists accept that Stalin was a great working class leader. Those who accept the theory of the “Black Nation,” claim therefore that this line had the imprimatur of Stalin on it. Perhaps, Stalin changed his mind in his later years well after having written his influential work? What evidence then is there that Stalin’s view was altered into one favouring “The Black nation?” Yet in all of Stalin’s written works, nothing suggests that he supported a policy of two nations in the USA. To the contrary, it appears that he always talked of one nation – The USA. However proponents of the theory claim to the contrary,

that indeed Stalin did support this line. Where is the evidence of Stalin's support for this line supposed to be? The Marxist-Leninist supporters of the "line of The Black Nation," cite this evidence as lying in **two sources**:

One source of "evidence" that Stalin supported the line of the "Black Nation"; is the assumption that Stalin was in charge of the Comintern. We have already addressed to some extent, in previous publications, that this interpretation is contrary to the known facts (Please see Alliance Numbers 18; 12; 19). This analysis is left to the Marxist-Leninist international left to either reject by principled reply, or, to accept. In this document we discuss a little more, the circumstances of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International. This supplements previous writings on this question from both the Communist League (UK); and ourselves.

Thus we argue, that the international Marxist-Leninist left needs an open and clear principled debate, on the nature of the Comintern, and its relationship to the rise of revisionism. Because Alliance is a small organisation, it may be argued that this renders it un-necessary to refute this line. Such comments have been voiced by some. We believe that this is akin to closing one's eyes. Some international Marxist-Leninists have accused us of attacking Stalin by this analysis. We wonder at their understanding of a Defence of Stalin. Our record on Stalin speaks for itself in fact.

The second source of "evidence" that Stalin supported the line of the "Black Nation" lies in the verbatim comments, and memories of leading Black members of the former CPUSA, that the "Black Nation" theory originated with Stalin. We consider many of these verbatim comments and memories, as both biased and in contradiction to the written evidence of Stalin's own writings. The enigma remains for

Marxist-Leninist proponents of the “Black nation,” why it is that Stalin never burst into print with this? As Draper says:

“The man whose voice the American communists really heeded on the American Negro Question never made a public statement about it. For lack of other evidence, Stalin’s decisive influence in this area has hitherto been deduced or surmised from his decisive influence in all areas and his special interest in the national question.” (Draper; Ibid; p. 342).

To accept this notion that anything significant that happened in the Marxist-Leninist movement only happened if Stalin said “Yes!”, is to defer to the bourgeois and Trotskyite myth of the all-Powerful Stalin. Nevertheless, we examine these reminiscences. The first is from a prominent black member of the CPUSA who was at the famous “Far Eastern University for Toilers” in Moscow. Draper reports the memories of **OTTO HALL**:

“According to Hall, the little group of five Negroes (Otto Hall, and four other Negroes-ed) had not been at the Far Eastern university in Moscow more than a week when Stalin sent for them...The group was taken to the Kremlin...KARL RADEK who knew enough English to serve as interpreter was present... They drank tea and talked informally for several hours. Stalin held forth: ‘The Negroes represented the most oppressed section of the American working class. Therefore the American party should have more Negroes than whites. Why weren’t there more Negroes in the American party?’” (Draper; Ibid; p. 334).

Hall answered that prejudice and discrimination within the party were largely responsible for the shortage of Negro members. Hall remembers Stalin as saying:

“‘The whole approach of the American party is wrong. You are indeed a national minority with some of the characteristics of a nation.’ He asked them to write memoranda on the question.. To Hall and the others, it sounded like Jim Crow in revolutionary guise.” (Draper; Ibid; p. 334).

But this terminology is far different from the terminology of a “Black Nation.” In fact it accords with the written views of Stalin in his work on the National Question that we have cited above. Otto Hall had one further memory also involving Stalin on this question:

“Otto Hall says that Stalin gave him and four other Negroes at the Far Eastern University their first intimations of a Negro ‘National Question’ in 1925. One more direct and one indirect association with Stalin has come to light. William F. Kruse recalls that about 2 years later, he and other American students at the Lenin School were invited to attend a discussion on the American Negro question in the Anglo-American Secretariat of the Comintern. To their surprise , among those seated around a long table was Stalin, flanked by two young Russian members of the Institute of Red Professors. One of the Russian professors read a long ‘thesis’ in support of the theory of self-determination as applied to the American Negro question. Stalin himself said nothing throughout the entire session, except for whispered consultations with the speaker. Kruse did most of the talking and upheld the older position that equality rather than self-determination constituted the revolutionary solution. The discussion ended without reaching any conclusion.” (Draper; Ibid; p. 343).

But there is **NO** indication as to Stalin's thought. It is simply assumed what he thought!

In startling contrast to this picture of a vague, nebulous, mythical "support" from Stalin for the line, many known Ultra-Left revisionists in the international movement openly fostered the theory of the "Black Nation." We have already discussed the role of Zinoviev, in the introduction. But after his exposure as a revisionist others continued to promote the line. For example, **SALOMON LOZOVSKY**. Again Draper cites the memories of CPUSA members:

"Finally another American student at the Lenin School, **Joseph Zack**, says that he first heard of the doctrine of Negro self-determination in the US from the head of Profintern, Lozovsky, who told him that it came from Stalin himself. Like most Americans, Zack reacted unfavourably. A week later, Lozovsky asked Zack to come to his apartment and showed him the outline of a thesis by Stalin on the subject, consisting of a few brief points." (Draper; Ibid; p. 343).

Another memory comes from **GEORGE PADMORE the West Indian born Communist. He remembered OTTO KUUSINEN** as taking the lead role in promoting the theory. Kuusinen was the chairman of the Negro Commission of the ECCI. Padmore:

"Called Kuusinen the '>genius behind the scheme'." (Draper Cited p. 349).

Of course Draper reverts quickly to the given stereotype, and states emphatically – Especially important is it to be emphatic and dogmatic when there is only weak "evidence" – that:

“Kuusinen was no doubt entrusted with the management of this operation, but that he did not originate this theory, there can also be no doubt. If there was a ‘genius’ in this scheme, it was undoubtedly Stalin, whose bidding Kuusinen unflinchingly obeyed.” (Draper Cited p. 349-350).

TO CONCLUDE: Neither do the writings of Stalin nor do the facts, support the view that Stalin promoted the line of a “Black Nation”; We are forced then to consider why this line was adopted and who forced the line onto the CPUSA? **We will suggest, there is good evidence that this came from the hidden revisionists in the Comintern such as Kuusinen, assisted by Radek, Lozovsky, and Manuilsky, as they took over, or hijacked, the Communist International.** Furthermore this process was assisted by the intense factionalism of the CPUSA. This created the opportunity for frustrating the correct line in the USA. First, we briefly ask whether the line of “Black Nation” is still alive today?

v) The Modern Day Line of The Black Nation In the CPUSA

Is this line of the “Black Nation” still voiced in the USA? The answer is yes, and most emphatically. We will ignore the openly bourgeois and petty-bourgeois voices that articulate some form of Black Nationalism. We will only point out that many voices on the Marxist-Leninist Left still firmly accept the line of the ECCI nowadays. A number of parties and organisations follow this line, though they may vary on some aspects of this. Nonetheless, all are united on the line itself in broad measure. They are united in saying that the ECCI was correct; and they are united in pointing to the importance of Harry Haywood’s articles. Rather than perform a detailed analysis at this time, of

each text by the various groups, we will concentrate on Haywood, since all groups follow his lead.

By the time that **EARL BROWDER** turned the party into open revisionism, the line of Black Nation was already in disrepute as it had failed to ignite Black workers. But by this time also, the victory of open right revisionism of the type of Khrushchev, enabled the militants still within the CPUSA, to argue that fighting revisionism, in part meant resurrecting the Black Nation line. In 1959, no doubt conscious that the line of a black nation was not developing according to a full adherence with the theory of Stalin, **HARRY HAYWOOD** counter-attacked those who had shown the temerity to disagree with him in this manner.

This included **JAMES ALLEN**, until then a prominent writer on this question who had favoured a “Black Nation” line. Allen had re-assessed the position, and came under sharp attack from Haywood. Haywood’s main attack was that in the present times of imperialism, all “classical” roads to nation formation were closed, and that new routes were needed. Haywood went so far as to say that the standard application of a Marxist Leninist set of criteria was “rigid.” Haywood made it clear that this meant the “classical” interpretation was “too rigid” to allow it to be used for the putative Black Nation of the Southern USA:

“The main question for us is: Does there exist the objective conditions for the development of a national revolutionary movement among the Negro people in the Deep South as a phase in their struggle for socialism in the USA. If there is even a possibility of such a development, the Party cannot withdraw support to the right of self-determination as the strategic goal of the Negro movement in the South. It is clear that the proponents of the draft resolution deny the possibility of such a movement. It is clear that the “new” line is against such a

movement, and their arguments are designed to “prove” that there is no objective base for such a movement. In order to “prove” what they not wish to support is impossible or unnecessary, they distort Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question, setting up a rigid test which the Negroes in the Black Belt will pass before they will be accepted as a nation having the right to self-determination. In fact so rigid is this test, that very, very few oppressed nations in the contemporary period could pass such a test. For example where does Comrade Allen expect to find an oppressed nation in the epoch of imperialism taking the ‘classic road to the formation of a nation?’ And, particularly when we are dealing with a submerged nation in the heartland of US imperialism, the main bulwark of the collapsing capitalist and colonial system? These dogmatic unhistorical structures would make support to a national revolutionary movement contingent upon the ‘maturing of all elements of nationhood.’”

(Harry Haywood: “On the Negro question”; November 1959; In “Towards Victorious Afro-American National Liberation”; Boston; R.O. Light ; Appendix B; p.397).

Haywood correctly argues that Stalin pointed out some elements of what constitutes a nation. But he hastens to add that these conditions only apply to the formation of nation under *pre-capitalist conditions*:

“The elements of nationhood- language, territory, culture etc. do not fall from the skies, but were evolved gradually in the pre-capitalist period. But these elements were in a rudimentary state, and at best, were only a potentiality, that is given the constituted the possibility of a nation in the future given certain favourable conditions. The potentiality

became a reality only in the period of rising capitalism with its national markets and its economic cultural centers.”

(The National Question and Leninism).” (Haywood, Citing Stalin “On the Negro question”; p. 398; Ibid).

Haywood completes this argument by stating that the “**classic**” means of nation formation is now unnecessary. This is because in the conditions of “present imperialist epoch,” the classic means of nation forming cannot occur. He argues that to insist upon a “Stalinist” line on this is to be “purist.” He advocates the model of China and the revisionist USSR of 1959:

“In the classic epoch the epoch of transition to capitalism, favourable circumstances for the conversion of this potentially into a reality were present in the bourgeois – democratic revolution – the overthrow of feudalism. In the present imperialist epoch, the epoch of transition to socialism, the essential condition for the dull development of oppressed nations is the overthrow of imperialist oppression and domination of weaker nations. It is socialism that offers the most favourable conditions for the consolidation and full development of oppressed nations and peoples. This is demonstrably proved by the experiences of the Soviet Union and the Peoples’ China in the solution of the national question, and the resultant flowering of the cultures of the formerly oppressed peoples.”

(Haywood “On the Negro question”; Ibid; p. 398).

Of course Haywood rather contradicts another point of Stalin’s, in “The National Question and Leninism.” Stalin points out that in nations in the usual sense, arise precisely in the era of

capitalism and imperialism. There is only one distinction from the “bourgeois nation state”; and this is the socialist nation:

“The bourgeoisie and its nationalist parties were throughout this period the chief leading force of such nations. Class peace within the nation for the sake of ‘national unity’; expansion of territory of ones’ own nation by seizure of the national territories of others; distrust and hatred of other nations; suppression of national minorities; a united front with imperialism-such is the ideological, social, and political stock-in-trade of these nations. Such nations must be qualified as bourgeois nations. Examples are the French, British, Italians , North American and other Similar nations.”

(Stalin, J.V. “The National Question and Leninism”; Vol 11; Moscow 1954; p.353).

Leaving aside the differences with Stalin, there are further problems with Haywood’s analysis. He denies reality. Haywood, is forced to deny even the **factual evidence** of the “Great Migration”:

“Another claim that has no basis in fact is that there had been a ‘radical decline’ in the ‘ratio of Negroes to whites’ in the rural Black belt, the traditional area of Negro majorities. Negro majorities still exist in the rural counties. It is the cities which reduce the proportion of Negroes to whites, and in those cities an unprecedented majority in their population! For example the Negro population of Memphis Tenne., increased from 37.2 in 1950 to 51.2 in 1955. And by that same year, the Negro had become 49% of the population of Birmingham , Ala., 35% in New Orleans; 34.6% in Atlanta, Ga.; 38% in Charlotte, N.C.; and from 20.3% to 42.5% in a number of other cities in or near the Black Belt...The growth of the

Negro urban population is unquestionable But is it correct to assume that Negroes residing in towns and villages are, ipso facto, urban workers? Perlo notes that 'there are increasing numbers of Negro town and village dwellers who are farm labourers, migratory or seasonal workers. Consequently there has been an actual increase in the proportion of Negro people who earn their living mainly from agriculture.' Perlo notes further that 'the number of Negro people in the old south has remained stable,' contrary to assertions that the Black Belt Negro community is no longer a stable community. He foresees on the basis of this study, a 'sharp increase in the Negro population of the old South' by 1970, and adds:

'The potential increase in the proportion of Negroes among the farm population of working age is especially marked. In 1940, 46.7% of all farm children less than 5 years of age were Negroes. In 1950 this proportion had increased to 49% in the six states as a whole, and to more than 60% in South Carolina and Mississippi.' The perspective then is for an explosive increase of the Negro population in the rural Black Belt, such as occurred in the period between 1910 and 1930 when, despite the mighty migrations of that period, it showed an actual increase of 192,000. Moreover in the Census South, the Negro population grew by some one million between 1930 and 1950.'

(Haywood; "On the Negro question"; Ibid; p. 397).

These latter statements purport to be facts, and as such they can be either verified, or refuted. Unfortunately for Haywood's theory, the facts do not confirm his analysis.

- **There are very serious implications in these statements by Haywood.**
- **Modern day proponents of Haywood, those who call themselves today “Marxist-Leninists,” have a duty to the rest of the Marxist-Leninist movement.**
- **This is to bring Stalin’s analysis of “the nation” up-to-date.**
- **The rest of the movement, including Alliance, would be indebted to them if they can substantiate the deficiencies of Stalin’s analysis that demand such up-dating. Those of the Marxist-Leninists who have resisted “updating” Stalin on this and many other questions, should be shown the error of our ways!**

3. THE CHARACTER OF THE COMINTERN AFTER LENIN’S DEATH

We have in previous writings dealt in detail, with this theme. Here we summarise some key aspects to facilitate this review of the “Black Nation” theory.

- **The basic contention put by Alliance and Communist League of UK, is that the Comintern was increasingly led into incorrect lines.**
- **In effect, it was hijacked after the death of Lenin, and by 1928, Stalin had been fully excluded from its running. A summary of this prior work, must encompass three facts:**

1. That Zinoviev, as President of the Comintern, effectively moved the Comintern away from correct Marxist-Leninist lines after the death of Lenin.

2. That the subversion of the correct Marxist-Leninist line on the Colonial Question occurred in China (with the ECCI agent

Borodin) in an alliance with the revisionist Communist Party of China; this led to Stalin's exclusion at the 6th World Congress of the ECCI.

3. That, by and at, the 6th World Congress the ECCI was now effectively in control of the other remaining revisionists, Bukharin, Manuilsky and Kuusinen. They completed the perversion of the correct tactics in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

At a time when the international Marxist-Leninist movement is re-forming itself organisationally, it is remarkable that uncomfortable historical facts are avoided by parties world wide. Even bourgeois historians now challenge the mythology of the "all controlling Stalin!" This leads Robert Conquest to fulminate against his fellow academic "revisionist historians," who dare to challenge his own propagandist views of a "bloody dictator Stalin." Yet, Marxist-Leninist forces have not risen to the challenge of re-assessing significant sections of their history; and if need be refuting assertions on the basis of a principled debate. In fact various of them state airily and from a great height, that this is all a myth. If so, a counter argument is merited.

i) The Role of Zinoviev and Ultra-Leftism

Even before Lenin's death, the Comintern leadership, as President, was given to **GRIGORI ZINOVIEV**. The major thrust of the Comintern was under Zinoviev's direction. But as Zinoviev himself stated the influence of Lenin whilst still alive was enormous:

"Inasmuch as in a thing like the Communist International one may speak about the role of an individual, one may consider it as Lenin's creation."

(Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachovitch; Lenin and the Comintern Vol 1; Stanford 1972;" ; p . 50).

Zinoviev created a triumvirate that ran the Comintern, with Karl Radek, and Nikolai Bukharin. Zinoviev later formed close links with the Trotskyists, culminating in the anti-Bolshevik conspiracy. It is not surprising then that after Lenin's death, the Comintern slid off track. This first revealed itself to Stalin over the issue of the attitude of the Comintern to the "**Lenin Testament**" so called (This is detailed in Alliance # 15). Lenin's terminal illness became a pawn in the hands of the Trotskyites, who had isolated Lenin from Stalin on the pretence of illness. Trotsky then used a "Testament" against the wishes of the Bolshevik Central Committee to surreptitiously attack Stalin. The documents were given to **Max Eastman**, and they were published as "Lenin's Testament." Stalin wished to fully expose this intrigue, by means of publishing the complete correspondence, but he was prevented by Manuilsky and Zinoviev (This is detailed in Alliance # 15).

By 1926 **the British General Strike**, had revealed intense struggles at the top levels of the CI. Stalin's approach was to win over workers within reformist trade unions. Stalin opposed Ultra-leftists, who proposed setting up Red "paper" unions. The rationale of the Ultra-leftists was that the era was one of a decline of capitalism. In reality, capitalism was at this time undergoing only **partial stabilisation**. Opposing Zinoviev, Stalin's general assessment of the General Strike was that it was "a provocation":

"A provocation of the general strike by the British Conservatives, was capital's attempt to solidify stabilization-that is in this case capital not revolution was on the attack...Stabilisation had not ended, although it has been and continues to be shaky."

(“Stalin’s Letters to Molotov”; Edited Lars T. Lih; Oleg V. Naumov; and Oleg V. Khlevniuk; Yale 1995. Letter 16; 3 June 1926. Ibid; p.108).

Although this provocation would not succeed in its aim, it also was not likely to lead to success for the workers movement. The General Strike:

“Did not lead to a strengthening of stabilisation nor could it. But it also did not lead to a triumphant development of the workers revolutionary struggle or to the destruction of stabilization; moreover as a result of the strike some categories of workers were not able to preserve even their former conditions of work and struggle.” (J.V. Stalin; In “Stalin’s Letters”; Ibid; p.108).

- The tendency to Ultra-Leftism was by no means confined to elements within the **MINORITY MOVEMENT** of Great Britain. Proposals emanated from **Zinoviev** and Salomon Lozovsky to:
- Firstly, to break with United Front Tactics within the reformist trade unions; and;
- Secondly, to build “minorities” movement outside the “reactionary trade unions”; i.e. to build so called “**Red Trade Unions.**”

But Stalin characterised Zinoviev’s overall position as “fundamentally incorrect”:

“Basically Zinoviev’s theses proceed from the premise that 1) Stabilization is ending or has already ended; 2) We are entering into or have already entered into a phase of revolutionary explosions; 3) the tactic of gathering forces and working in the reactionary trade unions is losing its viability and is

receding into the background; 4) the tactic of a united front has outlived itself; 5) We must build our own trade unions by relying on the initiative for an outright break with the General Council. In the general historical circumstances, this entire premise is in my view, fundamentally incorrect because it plays into the hands of Amsterdam and the Second International and dooms our Communist parties to sectarianism.”

(J.V. Stalin; Letter 16, Ibid; p.108).

Stalin summarised his view of the international climate as one of a **“continuing stabilisation”**:

“As a result we do not have a new phase of stormy onslaught by the revolution but a continuing stabilization, temporary, not enduring, but stabilisation nonetheless; fraught with new attempts by capital to make new attacks on the workers, who continue to be forced to defend themselves.”

(J.V. Stalin; Ibid; Letter 16; p.108).

In terms of the practical decisions flowing from this analysis, Stalin warned against isolation, while coupling this with advice to expose the bourgeois leadership. These are complementary strands:

“Our task is to continue to gather forces and form a real united front; to prepare the working class to resist new attacks by capital; to turn this Defence into a broad based revolutionary attack by the proletariat against capital, into a transition to a struggle for power.

6)Hence the need for more intense work by the Communists in the reactionary trade unions for the

purpose of internally transforming them and of taking control of them...

7) hence the need for a determined struggle against Zinoviev and Trotsky, who have been advocating splitting the trade union movement and have opposed a united front...

8) Hence a decisive rebuttal of Zinoviev and Trotsky's line which leads to the Communist parties isolation from the masses and to the abandonment of the masses to a monopoly of the leadership by reformers....

10) Hence a decisive rebuttal of any attempt to take upon ourselves the initiative of splitting the Soviet Trade Union Council from the British trade union movement, since a break with the General Council under these conditions must surely lead to a break with the trade unions of England in favour of Amsterdam....

11) The break with the General Council will surely lead to a disruption in the policy of a unified trade union movement in France and Germany as well, since the reformers in France and Germany are not better than the British reformers....

15) Ruthless criticism of centrists and leftists in the General Council is absolutely necessary..

18) The trade union minority and the British CP should launch a vigorous campaign for new elections to the executive committee of the unions and the General Council aiming at the exclusion of the Thomas traitors and their hangers on among the leftists; the British party should support their replacement with new revolutionary leaders."

(“Letter 15” “Stalin’s Letters”; Ibid; p. 108-9).

In fact as far Stalin was concerned, Zinoviev represented more of a danger than Trotsky.

This was due to his position in the Comintern. (Detailed “Letter” No. 21, written 25.6. 1926):

“1) Before the appearance of the Zinoviev group, those with oppositional tendencies (Trotsky the Workers’ Opposition, and others) behaved more or less loyally but were tolerable.

2) With the appearance of the Zinoviev group those with oppositional tendencies began to grow more arrogant and break the bounds of loyalty;

3) The Zinoviev group became the mentor of everyone in the opposition who was for splitting the party; in effect it has become the leader so the splitting tendencies in the party;

4) This role fell to **Zinoviev’s group** because:

- a) it is better acquainted with our methods than any other group;
- b) It is stronger in general than the other groups and **has control of the Comintern Executive Committee (Zinoviev is chairman of the Comintern Executive Committee, which represents a serious force;**
- c) because of this it behaves more arrogantly than any other group, providing examples of “boldness” and “determination” to those with other tendencies.”

(“Stalin’s Letters.” Ibid; p.115).

It was for this reason, that events in the Comintern took on special meaning, as Zinoviev and Trotsky manoeuvred to gain control within the USSR. Zinoviev allied with **M.M. LASHEVICH** to hold anti-party, underground and factional meetings in the USSR. They organized with international Ultra-Leftist including **RUTH FISCHER (Germany)** and **BORDIGA (Italy)** to try to disrupt the line:

“If Lashevich is organizing illegal meetings, if Zinoviev is organizing R. Fischer’s flight to Germany, & if Sokolnikov is being sent to France to the French CP V Congress- it means they have decided along with Trotsky to break the party through the Comintern.”

(Letter 20; dated 15 June 1926; Ibid; p.113. “Stalin’s Letters”).

IT WAS IN FACT ZINOVIEV WHO OPENED AFRESH THE ISSUE OF THE BLACK NATION AS A POTENTIALLY NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE CPUSA.

Haywood writes that:

“**H.V. PHILLIPS and BOB MAZUT** (A young Russian representative of the Young Communist International (YCI) to the Young Workers Communist League)...told me of a discussion he had on the eve of his departure from Russia. Zinoviev, then President of the Communist International, had asked him to look closely into the Afro-American Question in the United States and to see if he could find any confirmation for his belief and that of other Russian leaders that the right of self-determination was the appropriate slogan for Black rebellion. Zinoviev added that he had long believed that the question would become the

‘Achilles heel of American imperialism’. I told Mazut that...I didn’t feel that the slogan of self-determination was applicable to U.S. Blacks... Mazut nevertheless raised the question of self-determination for discussion in meeting of the Chicago District Committee of the YCL...He was literally shouted down by the white comrades.”

(H. Haywood: “Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist”; Chicago 1978; p. 134).

Even after Zinoviev’s removal from the Comintern leadership, there were left ample enough revisionist leaders, that allowed a further pushing of the line of the “Black Nation.”

ii) The Perversion of United Front tactics in the Trade Unions

The suggestion that a new trade union international should be founded was made by Zinoviev, in March 1920, to the Congress of the Russian Communist Party. At a meeting in Washington sponsored in part by the Second International, there had been a development, for an international trade union council, which became **the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)**. Consequently the Russian trades unions joined the Comintern, and asked other trades unions to do the same. An international trade union council was formed to make preparations for an “international congress of trade unions.” A letter was sent by the ECCI to the trades unions of all countries. This proclaimed the following:

“The new trade union movement should throw overboard all vestiges of the craft spirit. It should make its task the direct struggle – shoulder to shoulder with the communist parties-for the

dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet system...It should place in the foreground the weapon of the general strike and should prepare for combining the general strike with armed insurrection. The new unions should cover the entire mass of workers and not only the labour aristocracy. They should implement the principles of strict centralism and organisation by industry, not by occupation...The new unions should start a revolutionary struggle for the immediate nationalisation of the most important industries, while remembering that unless the proletariat establishes a Soviet regime no genuine nationalisation is possible.”

(Extracts from Letter From ECCI to the Trade Unions of All Countries”; J. Draper (Ed) A Vol 1; p.88-89).

These were in general correct tactics, that followed the spirit and letter of Lenin’s counsel on the approach to the reformist trade unions. This is shown by the letter that soon followed to the French Socialist Party. By July 1920 Red Trade Unions were being organised in France, but the counsel given by the Comintern was to stay inside the old reformist unions. However the letter also points out that there was being organised, at an international level the **RED CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS**; in opposition to the older reformist, yellow, **AMSTERDAM, OR SECOND INTERNATIONAL** unions. These were organised by the **INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LABOUR UNIONS (IFTU)**. The French were urged to participate:

“You ask what our attitude to the French trade unions is...We are opposed to revolutionaries and communist leaving the unions...Revolutionaries and

communists must be where the working masses are...We ask our adherents in France not to leave the unions in any circumstances, On the contrary they are to perform their duty towards the Communist International they must intensify their work within the unions...We must wrest these unions from the control of the capitalists and social-traitors, and to do that we must be in the unions; to do that we must direct our best forces there. In every union and in every branch we must organise a communist group...We must open the eyes of the members... Red trade unions are beginning to be organised on an international level...An international congress of red trade unions is to be convened for August or September in opposition to the Amsterdam international of yellow trade unions. Support this move in France. Get your unions to associate themselves with the international of Red unions and to break once and for all with the yellow unions. This is the task of the revolutionaries in France.”

(Extracts From A Letter From the ECCI to the French Socialist Party; Septem July 1920; J. Draper (Ed) A Vol 1; Documents of the Communist International; Ibid; p. 1237-8).

At the Second Congress, Zinoviev reported the first and preliminary steps taken to found the **RED INTERNATIONAL OF LABOUR UNIONS (PROFINTERN OR RILU)**. The line taken was to split the International movement away from the leaders and representatives of the reformists sitting in Amsterdam:

“We must split Amsterdam...’We can now say to every union: Leave the Amsterdam International. You now have an international of red unions and you should join it.”

(Introduction to : Extracts from a Manifesto to All Trade Unions On the Decision to Found a RILU; Sep 1920; In J.Draper (Ed); Vol 1; London; 1971 p. 185).

But despite the inflammatory verbiage, the line itself was correctly stated. The wording used terms such as taking over the existing unions and ridding them of reformist leadership:

“The Communist International summons all workers who stand for the social revolution and the proletarian dictatorship to fight vigorously for the adherence of their unions to the International Council of Trade Unions established in Moscow on 15 July by the Unions of Russia, England, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, France and Georgia...The Second World Congress of the CI summons you to active struggle for the unions. Take into your own hands these powerful organisations, not shrinking from the most resolute struggle against those who are distorting the workers’ organisations into instruments of bourgeois policy. They try to frighten you with splits and expulsions...The Communist International does not want to split the trade union movement, does not aim at it, but does not fear it either... It is not necessary to split the unions, but it is necessary to expel from them the treacherous group of leaders who are making the unions into a plaything of the imperialists.”

(Extracts from Manifesto to All Trade Unions On.. Found a RILU; Aug 1920; In J.Draper Vol 1; p.187-188).

But the sense of a dichotomy between national work (work within the unions) and the international line (split the unions) was confusing. For some, like those of the **American**

International Workers of the World (IWW), the injunction to work within the unions was anathema. **Alfred Rosmer** recalls that after these theses had been adopted **John Reed** said to him:

“We cannot go back to America with a decision like that. In the American unions the Comintern has friends only in the IWW, and we are being sent into the AFL where it has nothing but bitter enemies.”

(“Manifesto to All Trade Unions On the decision to Found a RILU; Cited J.Draper Ibid; Vol 1; p. 185).

This reflected the heavy base of Ultra-Leftism that was throughout, a major problem for the American party. In the ECCI however, even by 1922, a correct line was still being taken. This correct line was **designed in fact to prevent splitting**. It was carefully delineated that, if there were “splitters,” these were to be clearly seen as in fact the **Yellow Second International** – who wished by splitting, to hermetically insulate **“their”** workers against the revolutionary plague injected by the revolutionary elements inspired by the Comintern, working **INSIDE** the reformist unions:

“5. In the forthcoming period the task of the communists is to extend their influence in the old reformist trade unions to fight the splitting policy of the Amsterdam leaders, and to carry out carefully and consistently the tactics of the united front in the trade union movement. However large the minority within an individual union or trade unions Federation is, communists must see that this minority stays within its organisation and fights for carrying through the programme and tactics of the minority. The adherence of such trade union minorities to the RILU can only be an ideological one, which they must demonstrate by the practical execution of the decisions of the first congress of the

revolutionary unions and by following the Profintern tactics.

6. Communists are obliged to work in favour of the individual unions affiliated to the RILU remaining inside the international trade and industrial secretariats.”

(ECCI Resolution on the Tasks of the Communists in Trade Unions Feb 1922; Degras Vol 1; Ibid; p.321).

And by December 1922, still the ECCI was adhering to the correct tactics. As late as June 1923 a correct line was taken; as expressed at the **Third ECCI Plenum on the Trade Union Question**. (In J. Degras; Ibid p.33 Vol 2). The 1922 expression still held. As it stated in 1922:

“Nothing weakens the proletarian resistance to the capitalist offensive so much as splitting the unions. The reformist leaders are well aware of this, but since they are also aware that they are losing ground...They are anxious to split the unions which are the irreplaceable instrument of the proletarian class struggle so that the communists will inherit only the fragments and splinters of the old trade union organisations...The reformists need a split. The Communists are interested in rallying all the forces of the working class against capitalism. The United Front tactic means that the communist vanguard must take the lead in the day-to-day struggles of the broad working masses for their most vital interests. In these struggles the communists are even ready to negotiate with the treacherous social-democratic and Amsterdam leaders. The attempts to the Second International to represent the United Front as the organisational fusion of all ‘workers parties’ must of course be decisively rebutted.”

(From Theses on Tactics Adopted by Fourth CI Congress, Dec 1922; In J. Degras; Ibid; Vol 1; p. 423-424).

But by 1929 there had been a significant change in the orientation of the ECCI towards the Unions. Now a dangerous **ULTRA-LEFTISM** had begun to enter. This was led by **THAELMANN** of the KPD, and by **LOZOVSKY**, and was expressed at the Fourth RILU congress (Moscow 17 March - 3 April 1928):

“Thaelmann explained the concentration on unorganised workers as reflecting the shift of emphasis from the unions, which were becoming fascist to the factories; Lozovsky explained the ECCI’s approval of new unions in the US by saying that there 90% of the working class was unorganised. The CPGB had resisted the formation of a breakaway union from the Scottish miners, but their resistance had been overcome. We argued with the CPGB for about a year. Whether or not communist parties should start new unions was a question to be decided not theoretically but on practical grounds according to the given situation. Lozovsky had examined the resolutions and decisions of the Comintern and its sections on Trade unions, the industrial struggle, etc. He listed 94 defects and deficiencies... They ranged from underestimation of the radicalisation of the masses to underestimation of the use made of reformism by militarisation and imperialism; virtually all of them were right wing failures...The main Resolution at the Fourth Congress of RILU said...There must be a vigorous struggle against the idea of ‘unity at whatever price’, for unity is not a goal but a means to a goal. A single trade union international was still the goal, but this could only be attained by fighting

the reformists and Amsterdam. The policy adopted against strong opposition, called for the 'independent leadership of the industrial struggle' by communist and RILU supporters."

(Intro. To 'Extracts from Theses of the Tenth ECCI Plenum on the Economic Struggle and Tasks of Communist Parties.' July 1929; J. Draper Vol 3; Ibid; p.52).

In the **Theses of the Tenth ECCI Plenum on the Economic Struggle and the Tasks of the Communist Parties**, from July 1929, and printed in Inprecor on 4 September 1929, the new line was put under the heading **"II. The Radicalization of the Working Class and the Reformist Trade Unions"**:

"1...Just as social democracy is evolving through social-imperialism to social-fascism, joining the ranks of the vanguard of the contemporary capitalist State in the suppression of the rising revolutionary movement of the working class.. The social-fascist trade union bureaucracy is, during the period of sharpening economic battles, completely going over to the side of the big bourgeoisie... In this process of rapid fascization of the reformist trade union apparatus and of its fusion with the bourgeois state, a particularly harmful role is played by the so-called Left wing of the Amsterdam International (**Cook, Fimmen** etc) who under the cloak of opposition to the reactionary leaders of the Amsterdam International are trying to conceal from the workers the real significance of this process and are forming an active and constant part (and by far not the least important) in the system of social-imperialism."

("Theses Tenth ECCI Plenum, Economic Struggle and Tasks." July 1929; J.Draper Vol 3; Ibid p. 54).

“3. The present stage of internal development in the reformist unions conforms to the general transitional period in the co-relation of class forces on the whole. The working class has already become sufficiently strong to be in a position to take up the counter-offensive. The trade union bureaucracy is still influential among certain sections of the workers, but the revolutionary trade unions and the revolutionary trade union opposition are increasingly winning over large masses of workers belonging to the reformist trade unions. This predetermines also the tasks of the communists in the reformist trade unions: not to withdraw from these unions but to contribute in every way to the acceleration of the process of revolutionization of the rank-and-file members of the reformist unions by placing themselves at the head of the class struggle of the proletariat.”

(“Theses Tenth ECCI Plenum, Economic Struggle and Tasks.” July 1929; J.Draper Vol 3; Ibid p. 55).

The same article goes on to delineate the way forward. Under the heading III. The Economic Battles and the revolutionary Trade Union Opposition, the “legalism” of the old unions and its residue on the new unions is assailed:

“3. In countries in which there are no independent revolutionary unions, trade union legalism is still the greatest shortcoming of the revolutionary trade union movement.

4. Another shortcoming in these countries is the fear to apply the new tactic of the revolutionary trade union opposition, believing that they would thereby weaken their positions within the reformist trade unions. This is exactly what the rights and conciliators are now harping on.”

(“Theses Tenth ECCI Plenum ..Economic Struggle and Tasks..” July 1929; J.Draper Vol 3; Ibid p. 56).

But the correct line was not fully jettisoned yet, as there remained a **half-way house** – this was the instruction to stay in the old unions: “Not to withdraw from the (reformist trade unions),” as noted above under Number 3. (“Theses Tenth ECCI Plenum ..Economic Struggle and Tasks..” July 1929; J.Draper Vol 3; Ibid p. 54). However very soon, by 1930, this half-way house had gone. As Degras comments of Lozovsky:

“The establishment of communist controlled unions had long been urged by **Lozovsky**. At the 16th Party Congress CPSU he argued that there was far too much ‘trade union legalism’ in the American, British, German and other communist parties; they submitted to trade union discipline in preference to party discipline and independent leadership. The old opportunist leadership of the Russian unions, he said, had sabotaged the RILU, interpreting the united front as fraternization with Amsterdam, and not as a revolutionary tactic to expose the IFTU leaders...A year earlier in the trade union commission of the ECCI (Feb 1929) **Piatnitsky** had been extremely critical of the CGTU and the communist unions of Czechoslovakia (where some members, he said, had acted as strikebreakers). The time might come when it would be necessary to split the German unions; the harder they worked in the reformist unions now, the better their chances later.”

(Introduction to “Extracts From a Circular Letter On Factory Cells of the Organisation Department of ECCI Endorsed by Polit Sec., Dec 1930; In Inprecorr 1930; Cited; Vol 3; J.Degras; p. 143).

“The 5th RILU Congress was held in Moscow in the latter half of August 1930.. The Resolution adopted said the congress ‘marked a turning point in the strategy and tactics of the RILU in Western Europe’. The congress ratified the decision of the revolutionary trade union opposition in Germany and Poland to drop the slogan of ‘into the reformist unions’. Parallel red trade unions were to be established wherever the situation warranted this step, in preparation for taking over the leadership of the class struggle. The splitting tactics of the social-fascist trade union leaders had to be vigorously combatted, but this did not run counter to the need to build independent unions.”

(Introduction to “Extracts From a Circular Letter On Factory Cells”; Ibid; Vol 3; J. Degras; p. 142).

iii) The Distortion of the Colonial Question From 1921 Onwards

The Marxist-Leninist line on the Colonial Question was hammered out by **Lenin in intense debate with M.N. Roy at the Second Congress of Comintern**. Over the next Comintern Congresses however it was perverted. The Comintern took a Leftist line advocated by Trotsky and initiated after the Chinese Revolution failed. The failure was used to remove Stalin and M.N. Roy from any effective control in the Comintern. At the 6th Congress of Comintern in 1928, a disastrous Ultra-Left line was taken that destroyed the Workers and Peasant’s Parties of India (See Alliance 5).

The Theses on the National and Colonial Question were adopted at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International in 1920. As Lenin stated, the issues raised by Roy were important . Lenin and the ECCI, had ended up stating that a united front with the

revolutionary bourgeoisie was important to establish in the colonial and semi-colonial national liberation movements. But when **Trotsky** delivered the **Main Report at the Third Congress of the CI in 1921**, he rejected Lenin's solutions.

According to Trotsky; all the bourgeoisie of a colonial type country is essentially a comprador bourgeoisie "intimately bound up with foreign capital," and "represents a large measure an agency of foreign capital"; and the struggle of the bourgeoisie of colonial type country against foreign imperialism is not merely "inconsistent" and "half-hearted," but "semi-fictitious." Trotsky concluded that the development of a working class in such a colonial type country paralyses national-liberation aspirations on the part of the bourgeoisie; and that therefore even the national-democratic revolution can only achieve victory under the leadership of the working class. (L. Trotsky: Report in the World Economic Crisis and the New task of the CI, 3rd Congress CI, In : "First Five years of The Communist International." Vol 1, London, 1973; p. 275).

This line of Trotsky was later taken over by the Comintern entirely, by the **Sixth Congress**. This is seen in the attacks launched on M.N. Roy and the struggle in India. To foist the revisionist take over, Comintern foisted the **Communist Party Of Great Britain (CPGB)** onto the developing **Communist Party of India (CPI)**. To facilitate this take over, Roy was diverted on a special mission to the Communist Party of China in January 1927. Meanwhile **Ben Bradley and Philip Spratt** of the CPGB were given effective control of the CPI, and Roy's position was heavily attacked. (C.V. Rao "Bharatha Communist Party Nirvana Charitrea" ("Formation of CPI)", Vijyawadda 1943; p.26). But not all the CPGB leaders were compliant to the wishes of the Comintern. This was taken as reason to purge those leaders of the CPGB who did not prove sufficiently

revisionist. They were replaced at the 10th Plenum of the CI in 1929. The new CPGB leadership was sponsored by the revisionist CI, and included the crypto-revisionist **HARRY POLLITT** (who later inaugurated the policy of the so called “Parliamentary Road to Socialism”) and **R.P. DUTT**.

Whilst in China Roy had followed Stalin’s Marxist-Leninist line. Unfortunately owing to the revisionism of the **Chinese Communist Party (CPC)**, and another envoy of the ECCI, **Borodin**, this correct line was distorted. The resulting massacres of the Chinese workers were nothing less than a sabotage perpetrated by Borodin and the CPC itself (See Alliance/CL/MLCP (Turkey) (See “Joint Open Letter To Ludo Martens: Alliance, Communist League and MLCP (Turkey); Hamburg, 1996.- found on web site of CP Germany ML <<http://memebers.xoom.com/cpgerml>>). The ensuing massacre of the Chinese workers and peasants was not due to Stalin or Roy. It was **NOT** Stalin who had prevented a timely rupture of the CPC with the counter revolutionary Kuomintang (Communist League, M.N. Roy Report, Part II, London; December 1977. p.1-35). It had been the Comintern ECCI revisionists.

But this Chinese failure, allowed Trotsky to launch an open attack on Stalin, which was rebuffed. However **Dmitri Manuilsky and Otto Kuusinen** were more subtle. They used the debacle to distort the Marxist-Leninist line on the role of the revolutionary bourgeois. The ECCI, having first dislodged Roy as the leader of the Indian forces, now dislodged Stalin from the ECCI.

The **Comintern at the Sixth Congress** (17 July to 1 September 1928 in Moscow), **now implemented a disastrous Ultra-Left Turn**. In colonial type countries, this line denied the United Front with the revolutionary bourgeoisie. As part of this Ultra-

Leftism, “non-pure” Communist organisations, such as the “Workers and Peasants Parties” were destroyed. Although Stalin was elected to the Presidium of the 6th Congress, to the commission to draft the “Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International,” and to draft the Programme of the CI – crucially, he attended only the opening session of the congress. Stalin took **no** part in the proceedings of the 6th Congress.

The Congress President was **Nikolai Bukharin**. But sections of the congress were dominated by **Otto Kuusinen**. Kuusinen later showed himself as a proven open revisionist (See his participation at the infamous 20th Party Congress of the CPSU). At the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, Kuusinen attacked the powerful Workers and Peasants Parties of India:

“For a time **some comrades** considered the advisability of ‘labour and peasant parties’.. It is now clearer than before that this form is not to be recommended, especially in colonial and semi-colonial countries. It would be an easy matter for the labour and peasant parties to transform themselves into petty bourgeois parties, to get away from the Communists, thereby failing to help them to come into contact with the masses.”

(O.Kuusinen, Report on the Revolutionary Movement in The Colonies and Semi-Colonies, 6th Congress, CI In: “International Press Correspondence”, Volume 8, No. 70; October 4th, 1928, 1230-1).

The cryptic “Some Comrades” meant Stalin – who had favoured the formation of such parties in the colonial type countries:

“In countries like Egypt and China...a revolutionary bloc of the workers and peasants and the petty bourgeoisie...can assume the form of a single party, a workers and peasants party, provided however, that this distinctive party actually represents a bloc of two forces-the Communist Party and the party of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie...In countries like India...a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc...can assume, although it need not always necessarily do so, the form of a single workers’ and peasants’ party, formally bound by a single platform.”

(Stalin, “The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples’ of the East”, Vol 7; CW; Moscow, 1954; p.149,150-1).

But the attack on the Workers and Peasants Parties (WPP) was entirely in line with the documents written by Trotsky in June 1928, and submitted to the congress:

“The cardinal question for us here as everywhere and always, is the question of the communist party, its complete independence, its irreconcilable class character. The greatest danger on this path is the organisation of so-called “Workers and Peasants Parties” in the countries of the Orient...Stalin advanced the formula of the ‘two-class Workers’ and Peasants’ Parties” for the Eastern countries...It is a question here of an absolutely new, entirely false and thoroughly anti-Marxist formulation of the fundamental question of the party and of its relation to its own class and other classes.. Without a relentless condemnation of the very idea of workers and peasants parties for the East, there is not and cannot be a programme for the Comintern.”

(Trotsky : “Summary & Perspectives of Chinese Rev”, In “Third International after Lenin” Lond; 1974; p.162-71).

The considerable opposition to the 6th Congress Theses was crushed. As Kuusinen said:

‘Our greatest weakness there is the fact that we have not established ourselves as a Communist Party, A good many Indian Communists have worked in the ranks of the “Workers And Peasants Party” (WPP). We have advised them to endeavour to induce these Parties to reorganise themselves, to assume another form, in keeping with the principles of Leninism.”

(Overstreet G.D. and Windmiller M; “Communism In India”; Berkeley; 1960; p.139).

The Ultra-Left turn devastated the CPI and its mass links, the WPP.

iv) The Sixth World Congress

As stated above, a major presence at the congress was Bukharin, as the Secretary of the ECCI. In fact Bukharin gave the main report on behalf of the ECCI. In this very long report, Bukharin presented the viewpoint that there had been a relative stabilisation of capitalism. Bukharin had departed from a normal and expected practice of delegations. Instead of discussing the Report as a draft with the members of the CPSU(B) delegation – his own delegation – he simply presented them to the CPSU(B) at the same time, as it was being distributed to the foreign delegates. This created the potential dilemma of a fait accompli. This dilemma was put by Stalin:

“The theses proved to be unsatisfactory on a number of points. The delegation of the CPSU(B) was

obliged to introduce about twenty amendments to the theses. This created a rather awkward situation for Bukharin. But who was to blame for that? Why was it necessary for Bukharin to distribute the theses to the foreign delegates before they had been examined by the delegation of the CPSU(B)? Could the delegation of the CPSU(B) refrain from introducing amendments if the theses proved to be unsatisfactory?”

(J.V. Stalin, “Speech On Right Deviation in the CPSU(B); to “Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU(B),” Works; Moscow; 1955; Volume 12; p. 21).

At the Congress this had not been clear. This was only first exposed, in a speech made by Stalin to the Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU(B), entitled “**The Right Deviation In the CPSU(B)**”; in April 1929. This was of course, a full 8 months after the ending of the 6th World Congress. That it had taken eight months for a full exposure of the events at the Sixth Congress, is another indication of how little Stalin “controlled” the Sixth Congress.

The delegation to the Congress of the CPUS(B), had concentrated its counter-attack, on the major thrust at the Congress. This was the **characterisation of the world period**. It is on this that certain “Disagreements in Regard to the Comintern,” were reversed by the Marxist-Leninist members of the CPSU(B) delegation. What were these disagreements, that forced some corrections by the CPSU(B) delegation? Stalin states these totalled 20, requiring amendments; but there were four major ones Stalin comments that these amendments in entirety had that amounted to “practically new theses on the international situation” (Stalin; “Speech On Right Deviation in CPSU(B);” Ibid: p. 22). The most important of these related to

the **“character of the stabilisation of capitalism”**. Bukharin had alleged that capitalism was reconstructing itself. Stalin points out that:

“According to Bukharin’s theses it appeared that nothing new was taking place at the present time to shake capitalist stabilisation, but that, on the contrary, capitalism is reconstructing itself and that on the whole, it is maintaining itself more or less securely. Obviously the delegation of the CPSU(B) could not agree with such a characterisation of what is called the Third period, ie the period through which we are now passing. The delegation could not agree with it because to retain such a characterisation of the third period might give our critics grounds for saying that we have adopted the point of view of so-called capitalist ‘recovery’, ie. The point of view of Hileferding, a point of view we Communists cannot adopt. Owing to this the delegation.. Introduced an amendment which makes it evident that capitalist stabilisation is not, and cannot be secure, that it is being shaken and will continue to be shaken by the march of events owing to the aggravation of the crisis of world capitalism. This question comrades is of decisive importance for the sections of the Comintern. Is capitalist stabilisation being shaken or is it becoming more secure?.. The amendment.. Is a good one, for the very reason that gives a clear line based on the.. prospect ..of maturing conditions for a new revolutionary upsurge. (Ed- And “Of a new revolutionary upsurge, a period of preparation for future class battles).”

(Stalin; Speech Right Deviation in the CPSU(B); Ibid; p. 25).

The **three other major points**, mentioned by **Stalin** related to the struggle within the **Communist Party of Germany (KPD)**. In total, **Bukharins'** steps would have **strengthened** the hand of **the right wing led by Bukharin inside the International**. **These were the following:**

1. The Wittorf and Thalmann case.

ERNST THALMANN was being attacked by “conciliators” in the CC of the **KPD**, on the weak grounds that he was associated with an embezzler. This was in violation of the Sixth Congress directive to fighting the Right wing deviationism. This was supported by Bukharin. This was fought by the CPSU(B) delegates. (Stalin Speech Right Deviation in the CPSU(B); Ibid; p. 25-26).

2. On The Brandler and Thalheimer factions of The KPD.

These had been expelled by the CPG. But Bukharin refused to make this an issue to be taken up and settled. Bukharin's positions were rebuked. (Stalin Speech Right Deviation in the CPSU(B); Ibid; p. 27)

3. The recall of Heinz Neumann and rebuke of Thalmann

Bukharin demanded the recall of Neumann and the criticism of Thalmann for having criticised. This would strengthen the hand of the Right wingers in the international. The delegation of the CPSU(B) foiled this. (Stalin Speech Right Deviation in the CPSU(B); Ibid; p.28).

In summary, by the time of the Sixth World Congress the Comintern had been subverted from a clearly Bolshevik instrument, into a forum in which two forces contended:

1. Marxist-Leninist forces in a minority; in particular, Stalin had been excluded from effective participation.

2. Revisionist forces in a majority.

**WE WILL NOW RETURN TO THE USA, AND THE
FORMATION OF THE CPUSA, AND ITS ADOPTION OF
THE THEORY OF THE “BLACK NATION.”**

*In hard copy only: DIAGRAM OF SPLITS AND UNIONS
TOWARDS CPUSA*

4. THE FORMATION OF THE CPUSA

So far we have put the following views:

- **That the line of “Black Nation” cannot be attached to Marx, Engels, Lenin or Stalin;**
- **That the Line was associated with certain revisionists – Zinoviev, Sen Katayama, Kuusinen, and Manuilsky.**
- **That there are very good grounds to question the assumption that Stalin controlled the Comintern after the Sixth World Congress;**

Thus far we have not offered:

- **a detailed explanation of how the Line of the “Black Nation” came to be accepted by the CPUSA.**
- **We also have not examined what influence did Lenin and Stalin have on the developing CPUSA.**

To do this; we must now enter the **quagmire** of vicious factionalism and in-fighting of the CPUSA. Of course, the masses were drawn into the conscious class struggle, by the CPUSA, for all its faults. But the intensity and the narrow-mindedness of the factionalism, was a good part of the serious problems of the CPUSA.

Here, we do have a smoking gun, in the shape of Stalin’s critiques.

i) The Situation Before the Russian Bolshevik Revolution

We left the American socialist movement at the time of Engels. (See Issue 22 of Alliance – Also on this web site listed as “MARXUSA.HTML”). Engels predicted that as the movement was at a low theoretical level, it would commit many mistakes. As well, Engels warned that the German Marxists, needed to become truly American – to enter the American movement, in order to help Marxist development. Only after the Bolshevik revolution was the passage from syndicalism and labour politics, through to conscious working class communist tactics navigated. Engels had described in the introduction to the American edition of “The Condition of the Working Class,” three forces in the US workers movement. To recapitulate these were the forces represented by Henry George; the Knights of Labour, and the Socialist Labour Party (SLP).

The best of the Germans were led by **JOSEPH WEYDEMEYER, ADOLPH DOUAI; and FRIEDERICH SORGE**, who we met earlier in the era of the Civil War and the abolition struggles against slavery. Although Sorge became the leader of the First International in the USA, the International was soon breached by the petty bourgeois elements of **Steven Pearl Andrews and Victoria Woodhull**. This effectively killed it by July 1876. **(This is described in detail – Alliance 19- Please see web site of CP Germany ML for this document).**

But only four days later, labour radicals and working men formed the **WORKING MEN’S PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES**. This was attended by Sorge and **OTTO WEDEMEYER**, Joseph’ son. With 2,500 members, it became in 1877 the **SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF NORTH AMERICA**. The SLP was overwhelmingly controlled by the German immigrants, but not of the type of Sorge and Wedemeyer. Initially the party was at the forefront of the strike

waves of 1874-75. This included the mining strikes led by the Irish immigrant workers – the secretive “**Molly Maguires.**” But, the German provincials prevailed, they became a narrow party that entered purely electoral roads. Sorge was thereafter sidelined in this organisation, and his last 25 years were spent in reporting on the labor movement.

Even by 1890 the SLP was still overwhelmingly German. The SLP had become an electoral party by 1883, losing many members. Using this approach, it formed short lived alliances with Henry George and the “Single Taxers.” Shortly they separated ways again. Under the leadership of **DANIEL DE LEON**, it started to forge strong alliances with the Knights of Labor. But they first contended with the electoral **POPULIST PARTY**. The electoral programme of Populism, proposed the Government ownership of railways and against monopoly. They were also for the small farmer. As such they objectively represented a reactionary petty bourgeois current. By 1891, De Leon citing this, withdrew from alliance with them. Unfortunately he also withdrew from any broad front work with them, defining Populism as:

“A fake movement, which had confused the judgement of our people, weakened the spring of their hope and drained their courage. Hence the existing popular apathy. Hence the backwardness of the movement here compared with that of Europe.”

(De Leon Cited: David Herreshoff; “The Origins of American Marxism”; New York; 1967 p.118).

His rejection of the Populist movement had sectarian strands, with implications for the day-to-day work of the militants of the SLP. Nevertheless, De Leon now forged firmer links with Labour. The **KNIGHTS OF LABOR** were founded in 1869 by

URIAH S. STEPHENS, and from their origins in the garment industry, they spread rapidly. The Knights were very progressive, having many Negro workers in its ranks and with 10% of members being women. Ideologically, the Knights were an eclectic mix of Marxism, Lassalleanism and “pure and simple” trade unions. Its program had a goal with the Lassalean objective:

“To establish co-operative institutions such as will tend to supersede the wage system by the introduction of a co-operative industrial system. It proposed a legislative program which included labor, currency, and land reforms, and also government ownership of the railroads and land reforms.”

(William Z. Foster; “History of the CPUSA”; New York; 1952; p.68-9).

For all its limitations, the Knights of Labour was described by **Engels**, as **the first organisation of the whole working class in the USA**. It had a large mass base. It:

“Was the most powerful movement of unskilled workers in America prior to the CIO.. It was a formidable rival to the American Federation of Labour. The Knights were an all-purpose labor movement deeply involved in political action and producers’ co-operatives as well as in strikes. They sought to organise the entire working class rather than restrict themselves to the skilled craftsmen as did the AFL, and while the AFL was plodding modestly ahead, they experienced huge gains and losses in membership in the middle eighties. When De Leon joined them the Knights were slumping rapidly. Having reached a peak membership of 7,000,000 in 1886, they had fallen off to half a million in 1887, a quarter of a million in 1888, and a

100,000 in 1890. The Knights ebbed away altogether before the turn of the century.”

(Herreshoff: Ibid; p. 121).

The disintegration of the Knights of Labor in large part, derived from a sectarian battle for influence within the Knights of labour between the Populists and De Leon’s SLP. Meanwhile the **AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR (AFL)** was formed in November 1881, from 6 trades or crafts – painters, carpenters, molders, glass workers, cigar makers, and iron & steel & tin workers. It had been set up in an opposition to the Knights of Labor, by elements who had objected to the central autocratic Knights; as well as its neglect of specific craft interests as opposed to the more political issues.

The AFL was dominated by **SAM GOMPERS, P.J. McGUIRE, and ADOLF STRASER**, who were bureaucratic labour lieutenants of capitalists. As such they were concerned to keep the labor movement “apolitical,” and “clean” from any socialist influence. Having organised the skilled, or craft workers, the AFL had no interest in going on to organise the semi-skilled and the unskilled workers. Early on, during the Eight Hours Movement, discussed by Marx and Engels, the AFL began to outstrip the Knights in membership. But the reactionary stance of the Gompers leadership retarded it to a large extent, and it also spawned the reaction of more militant working class unions.

The American Railway Union was an **INDUSTRIAL-UNIONISM** (as opposed to the **CRAFT-UNIONISM** of the AFL style) headed by **EUGENE V. DEBS**. In 1894 it was strong enough to proclaim a rail general strike. The Miners were also organising in separate unions. But both these and other industrial workers unions were repeatedly sabotaged by

Gompers. The **Haymarket Provocation** by the capitalists in 1888, indicated the rising class tensions. In this battle Gompers displayed his class collaboration. In the 1887 trial of the **Haymarket Martyrs**, framed for deaths of workers, resulting from the violent provocations of police suppressing a strike, Gompers stated:

“I have differed all my life with the principles and the methods of the condemned.”

(Cited William Haywood: “Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood-1929”; 1983 ed New York; p.73).

This attitude disgusted working class militants. De Leon refused his members to have any contacts with the AFL, despising Gomerism. De Leon was a militant who understood the need for revolution, but this was sectarian and it alienated many workers. In addition he rejected any linkage with radical elements still under the sway of Populism. Furthermore, he embraced syndicalism, and rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat. All these issues came to a head in a struggle over De Leon’s dogmatism. This led to the formation of the **SOCIALIST PARTY** in 1900, led by **MORRIS HILLQUIT** and by Eugene V. Debs. Both the SLP and the SP were anti-imperialist. Debs and De Leon had both condemned the Spanish-American war, and both condemned the seizure of the Philippines by the USA. But the SP developed a policy of “neutrality” to the trade unions. This went to the other extreme, from the De Leon pole in its attitudes to Gomerism and the class collaborationist policies of the AFL.

Repugnance of the workers with the AFL led to a more representative and militant organisation – **THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD (IWW)**. This constituted what came to be called “**Revolutionary Dual**

Unionism.” Dual Unionism was a term coined, because it was set up as a “revolutionary union” in parallel, and in opposition to, the reformist trade unions of the AFL. The IWW strongly argued for revolutionary and violent change to the existing order. The IWW was born at a meeting of the Western Federation of Miners in 1905. Its manifesto written and signed by **WILLIAM HAYWOOD, MOTHER JONES and EUGENE V. DEBS** amongst others, sounded a clear note linking labor union organisations and a political working class struggle against capitalism. It stressed violent revolution. In its political stance it became strongly syndicalist. Subsequently a Founding Convention was held in June 1905 in Chicago. The SLP with its own labor front, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance took part. The De Leon tendency to syndicalism took firm hold in the militant IWW. IWW militants were hunted down by the state, and **JOE HILL** was only one of its members who were killed.

By the period of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the SP was quite dominant. The SP had 80,000 members in 1917, which soon shot up to 110,000 in 1919. Partly this was because of the entry of Seven “foreign language federations.” These were the Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, South Slavic and Lettish. (Draper “American Communism and Soviet Russia”; Ibid; p. 18). The foreign immigrants had all formed their own groupings. These had a major influence on the movement. The **LETTISH** (or **LATVIAN**) immigrant movement, formed the bulwark of the left wing of the socialist party. The **Dutch Left Wing** exerted a great influence and this extended to the notion of “mass action.” They derived partly from **S.J. RUTGERS** and from **ANTON PANNOEHK**. But the Right wing of the National Executive Committee of the SP expelled them and this precipitated the call for the National Left Wing Conference, that pushed for the formation of an American Bolshevik party.

As the Russian Bolshevik revolution threw all other trends into ideological ferment, so it affected the American movement. All the leading elements embraced Bolshevism. These elements included **LOUIS C. FRAINA**; who had been till then in the SLP. He embraced the notions of the “mass action” and with **MAX EASTMAN, FLOYD DELL AND WALTER LIPPMANN** he edited the journal “The New Review.” This was the forerunner to the journals **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL** and the **CLASS STRUGGLE**. With **LOUIS BOUDIN** this latter journal published the first English collection of Lenin and Trotsky, and began to publish the first issues of the new journal the Communist in 1919. All these various forces came together to attempt to form a new party. But this was riven by factionalism from the very outset.

ii) National Left Wing Conference: Attempts to form a new Leninist Communist Party

The Conference was precipitated by the expulsion from the SP of the seven immigrant foreign language federations. The meeting took place on June 1919, with 94 delegates in New York City. They split over the question of whether they should wait for the Socialist party Chicago convention ten weeks later. The Foreign language federations demanded an immediate formation. The English language majority wished to delay. Whereupon the minority walked out and set up a separate convention in Chicago in September to form a Communist party. The majority elected a National Council to pursue a goal to take over the SP. However five weeks after this split, some of the majority walked back – including **CHARLES RUTHENBERG**, and **LOUIS FRAINA**. Others like **JOHN REED** and **BENJAMIN GITLOW** refused to do so, resenting the “bullying methods of the Russian Federation leaders (like Alexander Stokilitsky –ed)” (Draper Ibid; p. 19). Two CP’s

then came into being, both organized in Chicago in September 1919. These were:

1. **The Communist Party of America (CPA)**, with Ruthenberg as National secretary and Fraina as International Secretary & Editors , with most of the foreign federation.

2. **The Communist Labor Party of America (CLP)** with **ALFRED WAGENKNECT** as Executive secretary and **JOHN REED** as International Delegates.

The CP claimed that the membership of the CP was 58,000 members, and the CLP about 10,000. (Draper Ibid; p. 19.). Quickly the objective need to unite became apparent to both parties. Under the pressure of police attacks and arrests (the so-called **PALMER RAIDS** of 1920) both parties suffered. The CP underwent further splits. By May 1920 Ruthenberg's minority group demanded unity with the CLP and left the CP. This led to the **UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY**, at the Bridgeman, Michigan meeting This had Ruthenberg as executive secretary. By 1921 this in turn united with the remaining CP into the Communist Party America (CPA).

By 1921, the **TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE (TUEL)** had joined, under **WILLIAM Z. FOSTER's** leadership. This latter was a significant gain for the party. The TUEL had its origins in the larger **INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION EDUCATION LEAGUE (ITUEL)**, which itself was formed in St. Louis in January 1915. It was based in Chicago under William Z. Foster's secretaryship. The ITUEL was avowedly syndicalist in origin. But Foster had unionised large new sectors including the Chicago stock yards. He had been careful to keep good relations with the AFL, and Gompers even vouched for him in a Senate committee in 1919.

But further splits of the CPA occurred over the issue of whether to retain a legal party. The majority answered “yes” and formed the open **American Labor Alliance**. This was later to be the **WORKERS PARTY OF AMERICA**, led by **JAMES CANNON**, and **CHARLES RUTHENBERG**. But a break away came in response to this tactic and was also called the CPA. But it then set up its own legal apparatus the **UNITED TOILERS**. By 1922 Ruthenberg as secretary of the Workers Party proposed to dissolve the underground CP. This led to the factional struggle between the so called Geese and Liquidators.

The **SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN** demanded the unification of the American CP and the United Communist parties. Even then, the Comintern had to send a delegation to the USA, consisting of **CHARLES E. SCOTT**, **LOUIS FRAINA**, and **SEN KATAYMA** to achieve the unity. But opposition to this unity continued. A **Second Comintern Delegation** was sent consisting of **H.VALETSKI**, **JOSEPH POGANY**, and **BORIS REINSTEIN**. During the **COMINTERN FOURTH CONGRESS** in November 1922 held in Moscow, Cannon and **MAX BEDACHT** met Leon Trotsky who also urged the two parties to unite. Written instruction to this effect were sent from the Comintern.

Finally it was only in the spring of 1923 (April 7th, 1922 at New York), that the legal and open **WORKERS PARTY**, united all three tendencies, as the single, and above ground, Communist Party. In 1925, the party was known as **The WORKERS (COMMUNIST) PARTY of AMERICA**. In 1929, the party was named the **COMMUNIST PARTY, USA**. Charles Ruthenberg said that the unified result had been only due to the interventions of the Comintern:

“Had there been no Communist International, no deciding and directing body with authority to pass

upon questions of principles and tactics for the revolutionary workers in the US and to direct their movements into the right channels, the factional struggle might well have resulted otherwise than it did. It is not an exaggeration to say that if there is today in the US one party-the Workers Party-in which all Communist groups are untied, this is because of the persistent effort and tactful guidance of the International.”

(Draper ; “American Communism and Soviet Russia”; Ibid; p. 27).

But as events would show the root of the party was still beset by a rabid factionalism. This allowed serious errors of theory and practice to emerge. Furthermore, the Comintern had left a significant destructive “present.” This was the accession to leadership of **JOSEPH POGANY alias JOHN PEPPER**. He had come to the USA as a member of the Second Comintern delegation led by Valetski in 1922. The Secretary of the new party was Ruthenberg. The Central Executive was balanced between the two factions of the **Geese** and the **Liquidators** (The story goes that as the “Geese” had complained of the proposed dissolving of the underground wing by the Liquidators – they were accused of cackling; to which they promptly replied that the cackling of geese had once saved Rome from invasion).

To break the deadlock between Geese and Liquidators, two so-called “non-factional” members were appointed. One was **John Pepper**, and the other was **William Z. Foster**. John Pepper was born in Hungary, and was a leader of a Soldiers Soviet in Budapest in 1919. However he initially supported Count Karolyi’s policies. In that role he arrested some of the Communist leaders. But he switched sides. By March 1919, when the Hungarian Socialist and Communist parties merged,

he was one of five who signed the document for the socialist party. He played a part in two failed revolutions, the Hungarian and the German:

“When the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed that month, he became the peoples’ commissar of national defence, then deputy commissar of foreign affairs, and finally commissar of public instruction; he was also a member of the party’s control commission. When the Hungarian Soviet Republic fell he fled to Vienna and then to Moscow, where he held important positions in the Comintern apparatus for about ten years. In March 1921 he went with Bela Kun to organise the March Action of the KPD; after its defeat he returned to Moscow and.. was sent to the US where.. He became the de facto head of the CP America.. In the Fifth Congress of the Comintern he was the American party’s main spokesman and member of the political commission.”

(B. Lazitch & M. M.Drachovitch; “Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern”; Stanford; 1973; p. 314-315).

Pepper’s history of adventurism was perfectly suited to disrupt the developing CPA. Draper alleges that Zinoviev promoted Pogany against Lenin’s views (Draper; Ibid; p. 59). Pepper’s star American pupil was **JAY LOVESTONE**. In opposition to the growing power of John Pepper and Lovestone, by 1924, an opposing faction was in effect formed of, James Cannon, Earl Browder and William Foster. The key supporters for Pepper, Lovestone and Ruthenberg in Moscow were Zinoviev, and then following his exposure, Bukharin. The key supporter of the Foster group was Lozovsky. These factions hardened into place after the debacle of the Farmers and Labourers’ Party.

iii) Dual Unionism And Broad Front Work

The previous era struggles, of the radicals and Marxists in the USA resulted in a complex co-existence of opportunism and a fierce ultra-leftism. The legacy to the Workers Party, or the Communist party of the USA, was a fertile Ultra-Left base. In this base germinated many anti-Leninist weeds. The concrete issues that the party disputed were the nature of work with non-communists, the broad front and the Third Party, and work within trade unions.

In a natural reaction to the class collaboration of Sam Gompers, the IWW Ultra-leftism and syndicalist thought took hold. This was expressed as a conscious policy of **One Great Industrial Union**, to amalgamate all workers. The IWW said it would work for not only economic but also social and poetical change. This would culminate in the seizure of power by the union. The IWW was thereby consciously syndicalist, thinking that unionism culminates in the seizure of state power. To this end, the IWW organised in conscious opposition to the AFL, to build up revolutionary unions. This policy was therefore one of **DUAL UNIONISM**.

The **TRADE UNION EDUCATION LEAGUE (TUEL)** was organised in November 1920. It was not a factor in the trade unions until 1922. As Foster explains the predecessor of the TUEL had been openly syndicalist:

“A syndicalist organisation, the ITUEL was anti-political endorsed industrial unionism, and opposed the war. It held that trade unions as such were essentially revolutionary, whether led by conservatives or revolutionaries.. they were class organisations...the ITUEL falsely assumed that the (trade unions) could eventually culminate in the overthrow of the capitalist class by the economic

power of the trade unions.. By spring 1917, the ITUEL had disappeared.”

(Foster, “History CPUSA” Ibid; p. 137).

After its collapse, the leading militants of the ITEUL continued to organise. Still under Foster’s leadership, the **CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR** organised the railroads. This resulted in an unofficial strike of 200,000 members. Fairly soon after came the meat packing industry, which had never before been unionised. The AFL had dismissed the industry as “impossible to organise.” From 1917-1918 the Chicago stockyards were fully organised legally and had obtained dramatic improvements in work conditions. There were many Negro workers in this section, about 20,000 of 200,000. Thereafter the steel industry was part organised, against the massive forces organised by Gompers and the AFL. The TUEL was formed in 1920, and was largely the result of the lost steel battle. As Foster says:

“It was an important source of recruits for the CP.. The TUEL was not so definitely syndicalist as its predecessors.. Foster was invited to the First Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU), on July 3rd, 1921. There the RILU definitely repudiated dual unionism.” (Foster, “History CPUSA” Ibid; p. 185).

The leftism and anarcho-syndicalist tendencies of the previous era were confronted by the Comintern. The IWW, and the SWP had refused to work with or within the AFL. The Comintern **Second Congress** instructed communists and militants to do so. In this struggle to convince the American trades unionists and communists of the importance of Leninism versus syndicalism, the TUEL became important. The TUEL under Foster had for

long been a supporter of the **“boring from within”** point of view. Foster had acquired this belief from the French syndicalists, and this led him to jettison his connections with the IWW, by 1913. By 1917 he could write:

“The trade unions will not become anti-capitalist through the conversion of their members to a certain point of view or by the adoption of certain preambles; they are that by their very makeup and methods.”

(Cited Draper; Ibid; p.64).

This viewpoint put him at odds with the IWW, who could not conceive that the unions of the AFL were “progressive” to any extent. For the IWW, a union was only progressive if it adopted its viewpoint of the unity of the economic and revolutionary struggle. Foster meanwhile could continue to work with the AFL, and Sam Gompers in fact vouched for him at a Senate Committee in 1919.

Lenin had long criticised ultra-leftism in work with both trade unions and with Social Democratic parties, such as the Labour Party of Britain. Lenin again called for work within the “reactionary trade unions,” in 1921. This call hit the USA movement hard. But Foster had already come to a viewpoint close to this. Accordingly he went by invitation of the first Comintern delegation to the First Profintern Congress in Moscow in 1922. At this time, Foster became close to Lozovsky, who later was his supporter in Moscow:

“A pact was struck between the TUEL’s leader, Foster, and the Profintern’s leader, A.Loosovsky (S.A.Dridzo), and for many years thereafter Loosovsky served as Foster’s chief mentor and protector in Moscow.”

(Draper; Ibid; p. 70.).

For his part Foster was quite clear that the Comintern had broken “Dual Unionism” in the USA:

“To the Third International, and particularly to the Russians at the head of it, is due the credit for breaking the deadly grip of dual unionism in the American labor movement”

(Draper; Ibid; p. 70).

One logical extension of breaking Dual Unions was an amalgamation of the already split unions. At first, Foster was successful in achieving this, which angered Gompers, who then ruptured his links with Foster. By the fall of 1922, the Workers Party had considerable influence within the unions by this policy. Foster followed a policy of supporting progressive elements inside the unions against the AFL hacks. He was aided by the President of the Chicago Federation of Labour, **JOHN FITZPATRICK**. By this stage, **JAMES CANNON and EARL BROWDER**, who had both worked with Foster at various earlier stages, found their way to the Workers party. Foster publicly denied his links with the Workers Party, working through Browder and Cannon. Initially, Fitzpatrick was positive in his dealing with the Workers Party. Under the sectarian influence of Pepper however, this would soon change. This became clear in the moves to the Farmers and Labourers Party. After this, moves to amalgamation came to an abrupt end.

iv) The Third Party – Farmer-Labor Party; the LaFollette Movement

Foster=s work in the Chicago trades unions, stimulated a strong relationship with a progressive faction within the FARMER-

LABOURER party (FLP), which had broken away from the Conference For Progressive Political Action (CPPA). This created an opportunity for the new CP to find a mass forum within which to work. The FLP was formed by John Fitzpatrick when, incensed by a recent failure of a machinists strike in 1918, he urged a “Labour party.”

But the leftism of the Workers Party had to be overcome. Lenin had been urging the British CP to join the Labour Party at the Comintern Second Congress. Lenin discussed this with Louis C. Fraina, who argued against him. This was consistent with the American Party’s view. But at the Third Comintern Congress, Lenin again raised the issue, this time meeting with the entire American delegation. (Draper; “American Communism and Soviet Russia”; Ibid; p. 32). Although Lenin’s advice was directed mainly at the British party, to consider a united front with elements of the reformist Labour Party, the same concept applied to the USA. The FLP had called for the nationalisation of all public utilities, basic industries, natural resources, and banking and credit systems, and for workers participation in industry. In the climate of intense victimisation of workers, the call by the FLP to a Conference for the Progressive Political Action for February 1922 acquired major significance. But the Communists were not invited, partly because their first program had made clear to even their own sympathisers, their reluctance to get involved. They proclaimed:

“There can be no compromise either with Labourism or reactionary Socialism.” (See Draper; Ibid; p. 31).

But Lenin had proposed not a compromise but a tactical alliance. The confusion between the two was never resolved in the minds of the leaders of the Workers Party. **ALEXANDER BITTLEMAN**, one of the executive leaders of the CP later admitted:

“And only after the party became more intimately familiar with the United Front tactics of the Comintern and particularly with Lenin’s advice to the British communists, to fight for admission into the labour party, did the central executive committee finally feel justified in adopting a complete thesis which committed the party to a labor-party policy.” (Draper Cited Ibid; 32).

By 1922 the party came out in a modified line, in the pamphlet “For A Labour Party.” But it was still very leftist in tone, and insisted for example upon a pure “class party.” Its actions confirmed its beliefs. This tendency was to destroy moves to a labour party.

The Second CPPA conference was held in Cleveland in December 1922. The FLP led by Fitzgerald, supported the right of the CP to be present. The FLP tried to commit the CPPA for a move to form a new party. But the CPPA vote went against this resolution due to AFL reformist pressure. The FLP resigned from the CPPA in March 1923. The FLP now moved to organise such a party in Chicago. The FLP leaders – Fitzgerald and **EDWARD N. NOCKELS** and **JAY G. BROWN** had worked for some time with the Chicago Communists: **ARNE SWABECK, EARL BROWDER, JACK JOHNSTONE.**

But the New York leadership of the Workers party led by Pepper and Ruthenberg, insisted upon personal control of all contacts with the FLP. Pepper and Ruthenberg, alienated the FLP leadership. By the time of the convention, Fitzpatrick suggested a delay. Partly, this was because the FLP call was boycotted by the AFL and other unions, and the SP. But although Ruthenberg was prepared to accept this, Pepper refused. This sealed a confrontation with the FLP. At the Conference, some 6,000,000 workers and farmers were represented in Chicago in July 1923. At the meeting the Communist leadership of Pepper and

Ruthenberg split the forces, by pushing through a move for a new separate party, one that was distinct from the FLP, and led by the Communists. This was called the **FEDERATED-FARMERS' LABOUR PARTY (F-FLP)**. As Fitzpatrick said:

“What have they done? They have killed the FLP, and they have killed the possibility of uniting the forces of independent political action in America, and they have broken the spirit of this whole thing so that we will not be able to rally the whole forces for the next twenty years.” (Draper Cited Ibid; p. 46-7).

And so it proved, because the victory of the Workers Party was a hollow one, for the links with a wider labour circle were in effect broken by the sectarian battle fought and won by the Workers party.

The line of Pepper and Ruthenberg had a Left Sectarian approach to the whole matter of labour and progressive alliances. The membership of the F-FLP was in effect the same membership of the WP. These tactics cost the TUEL the tremendous support it had won. It had even been able to challenge Gompers by the proposed amalgamation of all Trade unions. But now, the embittered Fitzpatrick turned against any dealing with the sectarian Workers Party. In fact later, in 1957, Foster publicly declared at the American Communist Convention in 1957 that the error had been one of the two biggest in party history.

Yet another opportunity was lost for the creation of a broad labour front at the time of the **La FOLLETTE** movement of 1923. Senator Robert La Follette, of Wisconsin, was a representative of the petty bourgeoisie who had begun to rally the former Farmers and Labourers supporters behind him in a move for a Third party. This was going to contest the

Presidential elections. The party only gave luke warm support to this movement, but recognised it as a potential for united front activity to draw in as yet, uncommitted radicals. At first both the Pepper wing and the Foster wing was united on this point. The Communists pitted the remnants of the old FLP against La Follette's movement. As it became clear the FLP wanted to back La Follette more definitely, the Workers Party split on the issue. One part wanted to have a separate FLP candidate, preferably and either control. Another section wanted to hew close to the FLP wish and select La Follette if that was the wish of the convention of May 30, 1924. The latter faction, led by Foster won.

An internal factional struggle for power in the Workers Party had broken out between two factions:

1. CANNON; FOSTER; BITTLEMAN; LORE; and BROWDER.
2. PEPPER; RUTHENBERG; LOVESTONE.

At the Workers Party Third Convention, of December 1923, the Foster faction had won the majority. They won the seat of Chairman for Foster, with Cannon as Assistant Secretary and Ruthenberg remained as Executive Secretary. But the controlling margins were in Foster's factions: By a vote of 8:5 in the Central executive Committee and a vote of 4:3 in the Politbureau. The issue of the Third Party was a major point of division between the two factions. Foster supported it, and Pepper did not.

The two factions appealed to the Comintern for "arbitration." Pepper asked the Comintern to remove Foster and vice versa. Because Lore had initially been a Trotskyist, Pepper used this historical fact to attack Foster in 1924. The Plenum of the ECCI in April-May 1924 was the "judgement" ground. Here Zinoviev held sway, after the death of Lenin. But he was forced to deal

with an attack from Trotsky. Trotsky alleged “opportunism” included the policies of alliances of the US Workers Party with LaFollette. Zinoviev used this attack from Trotsky, to denounce cooperation with social democratic parties. This applied to the American Party.

At the Fifth Plenum Zinoviev put the Resolution of the fifth congress Comintern on the Report of the ECCI (26 June 1924), which said:

“12. Right wing deviations were also apparent on the question of the united front in England and America, and on the attitude of the CP to the Labour Party leaders (In America, the so called Third party). The Executive was able to convince the English and the American comrades of the necessity to revise their ideas; the new and peculiar problems of the revolutionary movement in the Anglo-Saxon countries were considered in great detail by the Executive many times, and the parties there will need much greater attention in future from the international leadership.” (In J.Degras; Vol 2; Ibid; p. 105).

And, in the July 1924 *Theses On Tactics Adopted by the Fifth Comintern Congress*, the line of Pepper was endorsed by Zinoviev. In fact the germs of a future revisionist idea were laid, that of the identity of social democracy with fascism:

“In America a great fuss is being made about the foundation of a “third” party of the bourgeoisies (the petty bourgeois). In Europe social democracy has already become , in a certain sense, the “third” bourgeois party. This is particularly obvious in England where, in addition to the two classical bourgeois parties which took it in turn to rule, a Labour Party which in fact pursues a policy close to that of one of the two wings of the bourgeoisies...

For a number of years social-democracy has even been caught up in a process of change; from being the right wing of the labour movement, it is becoming one wing of the bourgeoisie, in places even a wing of fascism. That is why it is historically incorrect to talk of a ‘victory of fascism over social-democracy.’ So far as their leading strata are concerned, fascism and social-democracy are the right and the left hands of modern capitalism.” (J.Degras; Ibid; Vol 2; p. 147).

Swiftly the factional leaders of the US party jumped towards this policy. The furthest jump was made by Foster, who now discarded his previous support of it. Foster went even further – he actually proposed that the Workers Party run its own candidates against the FLP (Draper; Ibid; p.109).

At the same time the Comintern took the step of agreeing with Foster that Pepper should be removed from the Workers Party, and be instructed to return to Moscow.

It is clear that various factions in the USA were being “picked up” at various times by various of the Comintern revisionists. Already we have noted that Foster was supported by Lozovsky and Zinoviev. But, Radek (then head of the American Commission of the Comintern) said of Foster:

“As far as the work of Comrade Foster is concerned, I believe that we may have serious difficulties with this comrade.” (Comments of Lovestone; Cited; Draper; Ibid; p. 110).

Radek supported Pepper and later, Pepper’s pupil, Lovestone. Pepper was able to attend the Comintern’s Fifth Congress (June 1924), and became chief of the Comintern’s Information Department. Zinoviev was also supporting Pepper at various

times. The conclusion grows clear that the Comintern itself was assisting and fanning the factionalist fires at various times.

The Comintern's verdict was against the Third Party, and the result was that the communists stood separately from the FLP, for election, with Foster as Presidential nomination and **BENJAMIN GITLOW** as vice president. This effectively killed the last support that FLP members had for the communists. The votes were:

Coolidge 15,720,000 votes;

Davis 8,380,000;

LaFollette 4,825,000;

Foster 33,300.

Bittleman attacked later, the sectarian mistake that had been made:

“All our tactics all our literature, all of our slogans formulated, were based on this general idea of the third party alliance, and then at a certain moment the Comintern said to our party you cannot do it, and the Central executive committee was confronted with a very critical situation... Completely reorientating ourselves practically within 24 hours.. A reorientation... Under the fire of the enemy, because... at the same time La Follette and Gompers opened their attack on... the communists.” (Draper Ibid; p 113).

Even the Comintern itself now reversed itself. At the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI, meeting in March-April 1925, 34 sections attended. The Plenum, came fairly close to admitting that moves to a Labour Party were in fact correct:

“The American delegation was as usual, sharply divided. The majority of the CC led by Foster and Cannon, disappointed by their failure to make headway in LaFollette’s Farmer-Labour Party, argued that the policy of trying to form a labour party on the British model was opportunist, and wanted to concentrate on capturing the unions. The minority led by Ruthenberg and Lovestone disagreed, and were supported by the ECCI. The Workers Party said the resolution drafted by a commission composed of Bukharin, Zetkin and Kuusinen, should not proceed immediately to the formation of a labour party, but should try to get support for the idea among the unions. The US had overcome the economic crisis at the expense of the working class and small farmers. The working class though not revolutionary, was becoming more class conscious; the politically inexperienced masses followed the La Follette party, which acted as a capitalist safety valve.” (Introduction to Fifth Plenum; by J.Degras; In Degras; Vol 2; Ibid; p. 186-87).

As cited by Draper, the Comintern gave:

“Full credit to LaFollette for an important victory in the elections.” (Draper; Ibid; p.137).

The Comintern of course, had one year prior stated clearly and vigorously, along with Trotsky, that even the idea of a Third party was incorrect! BUT this view was contrary to that of Lenin before that statement; and Stalin after that statement! The ECCI had to some extent in that year, trimmed sail, in order to sail the factional seas of the US party better.

But the retraction of the ECCI was only partial. That Stalin fully agreed with Bittleman, that a sectarian mistake had been made, IN THE USA, even as late as 1927, is easily inferred. This is

from the comments he made in his interview with members of the First USA Labour Delegation. After first answering their questions, he then asked them if he could put some to them, in return. One question that Stalin posed was:

“How do you explain the absence of a special mass workers’ party in the United States? The bourgeoisie have two parties the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, but the American workers have no mass political party of their own. Do not the comrades think that the absence of such a mass workers’ party, even like that in Britain (The Labour Party) weakens the working class in its political fight against the capitalist?” (JV Stalin: “Interview with the First American Labour Delegation”; Works; Vol 10; Moscow; 1954; p. 146).

It appeared from the answers that Stalin got, that he was not satisfied with the analysis offered by the US Labour representatives. The history of the American attitudes to the FLP and the LaFollette movement show, that the CPUSA did not take firm note of Lenin on the United Front. Indeed it appears that the Comintern knowingly ignored Lenin on these matters.

v) The Factional Battles Come to the Sixth Comintern Congress

The factional struggle in the CP was notorious. But it reflected the factional, more hidden battles of the ECCI itself. As we saw, the Foster faction held control of the party. Zinoviev at the Fifth Plenum of 1925, (where there had been partial retraction of the mistaken ECCI line on the LaFollette episode) tried to impose a continued Foster majority, But Ruthenberg refused, and the ECCI was no longer quite so dominated by Zinoviev. A decision was taken that at the forthcoming American Fourth Congress, a “neutral comrade” from the ECCI was to have powers to settle

matters at the “Parity Commission.” This “neutral comrade” was a delegate of the ECCI named **SERGEI IVANOVICH GUSEV**. Gusev had been an Old Bolshevik, and had been a member of the Revolutionary Military Council under Trotsky. But he had sided with Stalin against Trotsky in the disputes over the Southern Front (Draper; Ibid; p. 141).

At the Fourth Congress in Chicago August 21, 1925, Foster was elected chairman by a large vote. Certain sections of the party had “armed themselves with pistols, and barricaded” in the expectation of a split. (Draper; Ibid; p. 143).

But Gusev intervened with instructions sent by cable from the ECCI. These ensured in the demands; that Ruthenberg would get 40% Central Executive Committee seats; and that Ruthenberg be considered “more loyal to the ECCI than Foster”; that Ruthenberg be retained in post of secretary; that Lovestone be placed on the Central executive; demanded the Foster majority to refrain from factionalism. (Draper, Ibid; p.144).

The majority left to the Foster faction was even further constrained. This was shown in the statement made by Gusev at the first meeting of the new Central executive committee on September 1; 1925. Far from being “neutral” Gusev had been given instructions to always support the Ruthenberg faction:

“Of course we now have a parity CEC, but it is not exactly a parity CEC. With the decision of the ECCI On the questions of the groups in the American party there goes parallel instructions to the CI representative to support that group which was the former minority... Although we have a nearly parity CEC, we have a majority and a minority in the CEC.” (Draper Ibid; p. 147).

Since at this time the ECCI was under Bukharin's increasing control, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that both Ruthenberg and Lovestone were the favored sons of Bukharin. The line of the TUEL was swung away from Foster's control now. It was now "converted" into a broad left bloc organisation. Foster's mentor, Lozovsky tried to intervene in his capacity as Profintern head (Draper Ibid; p. 220.) When the Workers Party under Gitlow and Ruthenberg moved to disrupt an anthracite strike using the name of the party and not the TUEL, they failed. This allowed Foster and Lozovsky a counter weapon. The strike at Passaic mills, saw the emergence under party direction of a "Red Union" in the shape of an United Front Committee which was acting as if it was a new union (Draper; ibid; p. 225).

At the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI in February 1926, the Foster faction was given control of the Trade union committee. Despite the ECCI granted control of the Central Committee to the Ruthenberg faction. This was decided at the American commission, and so important was it that Zinoviev Bukharin and Stalin – all attended (Draper Ibid; p. 228).

Following Ruthenberg's death, in March 1927, the party leadership was seized by his protege Jay Lovestone. At the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI in Moscow a precarious balance between the two factions was again achieved, appointing Foster and Lovestone as "Joint secretaries." But this was then disrupted by further factionalism from the Foster group, who formed an "Opposition Bloc" (Draper Ibid; p. 261). The balance was overturned in the ensuing squabble, and factional infighting. Now Kuusinen could ensure that Lovestone was the "first" of two secretaries-the other being Foster (Draper Ibid; p. 264).

The line of Lovestone was to follow the assessment's of the ECCI under Bukharin's domination. As such, the ECCI had endorsed the views of EUGENE VARGA. Varga had

pronounced that American capital was in healthy situation. The 1925 Resolution by the ECCI on America took a similar line, and Varga proposed at the Comintern Sixth Plenum, that “American capitalism was on the ‘upgrade’” (Draper Ibid; p. 270). As the January 1926 ECCI Agitprop Theses for Propagandists on the Second Anniversary of Lenin’s Death expressed it:

“1. The 5th World Congress of the CI noted an improvement in the position of world capitalism...

4... The US which changed its former debtor position in regard to Europe into an uncontested financial and economic hegemony and with emerged from the world war as the strongest imperialist war...With the London conference of 1924, which adopted the Dawes Plan, America began to bring Europe under its economic and political control...

6. ..The US and the England have won the economic hegemony of the capitalist world, but the rivalry between them for sole supremacy reflects...Inner contradictions of capitalism...The rivalry can be summarized in simple formula-America is trying to break up the English world empire from within, by bringing the Dominions particularly Canada and Australia under its financial and hence its political sway.” (Degras; Vol 2; Ibid; p. 237-8).

This view that USA capitalism had achieved stability, and was not yet at its peak, allowed the poor impact of the American CP to be somehow “excused.” Bukharin endorsed this. However, an attack was launched by **M.N. ROY** at the Comintern Seventh Plenum of Comintern, on whether or not the American party had assessed the stage of US capital correctly:

“I must declare before the the plenum of the Communist International that the general view

prevailing in the Comintern regarding the strength of the American party is absolutely incorrect. The American party is not a negligible factor.” (Roy, Cited; Draper; Ibid; p. 272.)

Furthermore, at the Fourth RILU Congress Lozovsky now attacked the American party. But since he had been switching toward the policy of the Red Unions, he attacked saying that the American party was “afraid of dual unionism.” (Draper, Ibid; p. 287). In the March 15, 1928 issue of The Communist International, Lozovsky told:

“The Americans to ‘stop dancing a quadrille the whole time around the AFL and its various unions.” (Draper, Ibid; p. 289-90).

This ultra-pseudo leftist attack of Lozovsky, enabled a critical mine strike that had been long prepared by the CP under the slogan of “Save The Union” to be completely destroyed. In the process an alliance with John Brophy, a key Progressive in the Union Mine Workers, was destroyed also (Draper, Ibid; p. 290). A strange alliance now arose between Pepper (who had returned to New York against Comintern instructions to go to Korea); and Lovestone and Foster. This was consummated at the plenum of the American party in May 1928. They took as the starting point the issue a resistance to Lozovsky’s instructions on Dual Unionism in the USA. This position of Foster had been long integral to his political thinking. He could not jettison it now.

The Foster coalition fell apart and Cannon spear-headed an attack on Foster. During this process Cannon and Lozovsky were to be proven incorrect by the push of the AFL and the CIO, to form new unions. Now the Workers Party set up a presidential campaign. By the time of the Comintern Sixth Congress, in July 1928; there were two dividing issues that had caused major

upheaval. The attitude of American stabilization -ie American Exceptionalism; and the attitude to the new formation of Dual Unions.

But despite the apparent unity of Foster and Lovestone regarding the issue of the new unions, their “alliance” fell apart in the Comintern Sixth Congress. They were both aware that Bukharin was himself attacking verbally the “Right wing.” They both jumped onto this bandwagon, in an attempt to curry favour. Foster had to relinquish the battle to his henchmen Bittleman and Cannon as he could not himself face the issue of New Unions. But Foster still was a key member and secured an interview with Stalin. He claimed that Stalin had supported him. As we shall see this was not correct, in writings made available in 1929.

At the Sixth Congress, the resistance of the Americans to the critiques on “American Exceptionalism,” were to be dealt with again. In the meantime, James Cannon had discovered Trotskyism and so was born American Trotskyism. And the Negro Nation line was put.

vi) The Black Movement In The USA

Even in the early days of the Abolition movement against slavery, there was a tension between “Afro-American Nationalist” separatists and the integrationists. The differences between **MARTIN ROBINSON DELANY** and **FREDERICK DOUGLASS** reflected this:

“Some Negroes in America showed an interest in Africa before the 1860’s – usually in the face of the criticism of the black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass who considered the African dream a dangerous diversification of energies which were needed in the fight for emancipation and civil rights

at home.” (George Shepperson, “Notes on Negro American Influence on African nationalism”; *J African Hist*; 1, No 2; 1960, p.301; Cited by Harold Cruse; “Crisis of the Negro Intellectual”; New York; 1984; p.4).

In 1852 Martin R. Delany stated whilst advocating a Negro nation on the eastern coast of Africa for “coloured adventurers from the United states and elsewhere,” that:

“We are a nation within a nation, as the Poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria, the Welsh, Irish, and Scottish in the British dominions.” (Cited Draper; *Ibid*; p.317).

Douglass disagreed and argued for betterment of Negro life and full equality in the USA. Other advocates of a “Back To Africa” movement in the post Civil War era included Bishop **HENRY M. TURNER**. There were some attempts to form a predominantly Negro state in parts of Oklahoma or Texas. These came to naught. (Draper; *Ibid*; p.317).

This tension was to echo down to through Garveyism, to the speeches of Malcolm X more recently. But other trends of the Negro movement also developed. Openly subservient leaders were always available, such as **BOOKER T. WASHINGTON**, who accepted a subordinate state of the Negro. Wilson Record gives an overview of Washington:

“The Negro was to accept the biracial system and this subordinate status. He was to seek advancement within the confines of his segregated black world. He was to develop the friendship of the influential whites and use their assistance. By cultivating habits of hard work, thrift and honesty he was to demonstrate his claim to wider acceptance and better treatment. Above all he was never to present any

organised challenge to the existing order of things or engage in movements which might be regarded by whites as detrimental to their economic and political interests.” (Wilson Record: “The Negro and The Communist Party”; Chapel Hill, 1951; p. 6).

The original strength of Washington’s movement, rested on the Educational college at Tuskegee Alabama, which he had founded in 1881. It was this that gave rise to the term “The Tuskegee Machine.” This machine was oiled by Washington’s assiduous cultivation of rich and prominent people. This began when he came to national attention in 1895 at the Atlanta Cotton Exposition, where he gave a speech (Dubbed the “Atlanta Compromise” by Dubois), only seven months after the death of Frederick Douglass. In this speech he offered the labour of the Negro to the rulers of the South. “Cast down your buckets where you are;” was his call to the Negroes to prevent further out-migration from the Cotton lands. He said to the white planters in turn, that this offer of labour from the Negroes, was to be matched by Planters “casting down their buckets” into the labor of the Negro, and hiring them. Washington later organised the **NATIONAL NEGRO BUSINESS LEAGUE** in 1900. We can agree with Haywood’s description of Booker T. Washington:

“Here definitely was the voice of the embryonic Negro middle class.” (Cited by Foster in “Negro People In American History”; New York; 1954; p. 414).

By the turn of the century, significant Negro intellectuals were repudiating both the “Back To Africa” movements of Delany and the servile fore lock tugging of Washington. They formed the **NIAGARA** movement, which was focused on the personality of **W.E.B. DuBOIS**:

“Its purpose was to form a national protest organisation with branches in a number of states to wage a fight against segregation and discrimination on all forms. It was extremely critical of Booker Washington, who along with this may white friends, in turn vigorously opposed it. The Niagara movement floundered for a few short years...a few years later a number of its leaders were instrumental in organising the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLOURED PEOPLE (NAACP), which took over a number of important points in its programme.” (Wilson R; Ibid; p. 10).

The **NAACP** was founded in 1909, from amongst others, the leadership of **WILLIAM WALLING ENGLISH**, **FLORENCE KELLEY**, – both socialists of the Socialist Party; and many progressive reformers like **OSWALD VILLARD** , **RABBI STEPHEN WISE**, **REVEREND JOHN HAYNES HOLMES**. This grouping unified a number of Negro protest groups. Later **JAMES WELDON JOHNSON** was to join. From the beginning the mandate of the NAACP was somewhat divided, but Dubois was its best element. He recognised clearly what role Washington was playing:

“The vested interests who so largely support Mr. Washington’s programme.. Are to large extent men who wish to raise in the South a body of labouring men who can be used as clubs to keep white labourers from demanding too much.” (David Levering Lewis; “W.E.B. DuBois – Biography of a Race. 1868-1919” New York; 1995; ; p. 401).

The NAACP worried those conservative whites who supported Washington, and they formed the National Urban League in an attempt to counter the influence of the NAACP.

Although the NAACP contained socialists of the SP, these socialists did not yet think in a Leninist way. The lessons of Lenin, including those of correct work in broad front organisations had not yet penetrated the Socialist Party. As Foster says:

“There were it is true, several prominent Socialists among the founders of the NAACP; but they acted more in the spirit of liberals than socialist Party members. There were no trade unionists among this group...Few Negroes became socialists. Dr. Dubois joined the party in 1911, but sinking no roots in its infertile soil, he quit in 1912.” (Foster; “Negro People In America History”; Ibid; p. 429).

Although DuBois was a powerful Black fighter, he failed to see the unity of Black and white transcended capital. He said in 1940:

“The split between white and black workers was greater than that between white workers and capitalists; and this split depended not simply on economic exploitation but on racial folklore grounded on centuries of instinct, habit and thought...This incontrovertible fact, imported Russian Communism ignored, would not discuss.” (Cruse H “Crisis of the Negro Intellectual”; Ibid; p. 176-77)

In the Socialist or Communist movement, there was a general neglect of the Black movement. At worst there were the chauvinist positions of the Socialist Party’s Southern based branches. They went so far as to call for segregation of Negroes and whites in a “Socialist” separate America. Although Debs did not agree with this, he said simply that:

“The Socialist Party is the party of the whole working class regardless of colour – the whole working class of the world.” (Cited Wilson “Negro and CP”; Ibid; p.19).

Whilst this was true, it did not attempt to make any specific strategy for the special oppressions of the Negro workers in the USA. There were insufficient attempts by the SP to organise in the black working class. The IWW upheld the battle against racism, and issued many Negroes with membership cards. In the meantime further Black movements were forming that were to later enter the Communist movement. These were centred on the “Messenger.”

THE MESSENGER was established in 1917 by a group of Negro intellectuals and trade unionists including **A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, CHANDLER OWEN, RICHARD B. MOORE, AND CYRIL BRIGGS**. They were influenced by the Socialist Party, in fact. Other Negro members of the SP, despite its low total Negro membership, included such prominent Negro socialists as **OTTO HUISWOOD, LOVETT FORT WHITEMAN**. Huiswood later became the Executive secretary of the Comintern’s International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers. A. Philip Randolph went on to organise the negro-led Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He did not drift towards the communists.

By 1920 there was for the:

“First time in the Negro’s history, a left wing or radical core,” proclaimed the “Messenger.” (Cited Wilson “Negro and CP”; Ibid; p.19). Both Huiswood and Fort-Whiteman gravitated quickly to the Communists.

It was Cyril Briggs who married “self-determination” strands to Socialist strands. He promoted his ideas that were influenced to

some extent by Garveyism (See below), in the Amsterdam News, a Harlem paper, he explained in terms reminiscent of Delany:

“Security of life for Poles and Serbs – Why Not for coloured Americas?...Considering that the more we are outnumbered, the weaker we will get, and the weaker we get the less respect justice or opportunity we will obtain, is it not time to consider a separate political existence with a government that will represent, consider, and advance us? As one tenth of the population...We can with reason and justice demand our portion for purposes of self-government and the pursuit of happiness, in one-tenth of the territory of continental US.” (Cited; Draper Ibid; p. 323).

Interestingly he thought the “coloured autonomous states” should be in either Washington, Oregon, Idaho, or California or Nevada. Not in the Southern US. Briggs started “The Crusader” in 1919, and now began urging the Negro state should be in Africa, South America, or Caribbean. *The Crusader* attacked the Garvey movement, for its “one-man movement”; meaning that Garvey rejected the offers to combine forces with Briggs. Briggs went on to form the magazine **THE AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD (ABB)**, calling for African Liberation and redemption. One of its eight points incorporated anti-capitalist struggle. Although smaller than the Garvey separationist movement, it was to link with the American Communist movement. Zack was put in charge of the task of developing the Negro movement for the Communists. He got in touch with Briggs and Richard B Moore. Most of the ABB joined the party. It became the cadre of the American Negro Communists, supplying many later important figures including such as **OTTO HALL AND HARRY HAYWOOD**.

The tensions between “integrationist” and “segregationist-nationalist”, were seen also in the career of **MARCUS MOSES GARVEY**. He was born in the West Indies where he started in 1914, the **UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (UNIA)**. When he came to the USA, at Washington’s invitation, the UNIA took root. Growing very fast, it developed branches all over the USA. Its programme was for a militant struggle against Negro oppression of all forms. But, this was to culminate in a “Back to Africa” movement. A complex and absurd hierarchy (Knights of the Nile, Dukes of Nigeria etc) was adopted and a pseudo-army was made. Huge embezzlements of the Negro people, were undertaken to float the “Black Star Line,” which would transport the Negroes back to Africa. This venture collapsed, though the extent of Garvey’s personal involvement in the financial corruption is unclear. But Garvey was imprisoned until his release by Presidential pardon in 1925. The whole Garvey movement had collapsed in the interim, leaving many disillusioned followers. Yet, in the high flown anxiety to find “legitimate” predecessors of the later “Black Nation” line, William Z. Foster and Harry Haywood, find the charity to make Garvey a forerunner of the Black Nationalists:

“The UNIA was a Negro bourgeois nationalist movement, a sort of Negro Zionism; and Garvey was a bourgeois nationalist leader. Garvey talked mainly in terms of ‘race’; but on the whole import of his movement was in the spirit of a Negro ‘nation’. Often in fact, Garvey did speak in definitely nationalist terms. This was the meaning of his whole concept of an African empire with a nobility and army and state trappings. Garvey said: ‘The Negro must have a country and a nation of his own.’ ... Authorities on the Negro Question are generally agreed that Garvey was an outspoken Negro

nationalist. Haywood correctly sums up the Garvey movement as follows: ‘The movement led by Garvey cannot be explained purely by the personality of its leader...Garvey.. had a deep feeling for the intrinsic national character of the Negro problem.’” (Foster, “Negro People In American History”; Ibid; p. 450-1).

The CPUSA was supportive of Garvey, despite the overtones of “Negro Zionism.” Just prior to the collapse of the UNIA, **ROBERT MINOR** a prominent CPUSA central committee member in charge of the work on Negroes, continued to praise them:

“A breaking up of this Negro association would be a calamity to the Negro people and to the working class as a whole...The organisation itself represents the first and largest experience of the Negro masses in self-organisation...It is composed very largely, if not almost entirely of Negro workers and impoverished farmers, although there is a sprinkling of small business men. In any case the proletarian elements constitute the vast majority of the organisation...We believe that the destruction of such an organisation of the Negro masses under the circumstances would be a calamity.” (Record; “Negro & the CP”; Ibid; p. 41).

Yet Garvey was not only mystical and obscure, he was reactionary:

“Early in the 1920’s Marcus Garvey came out against the Communist movement as follows: ‘I am advising the Negro working man and labourer against the present brands of Communism...As taught in America, and to be more careful of the traps and pitfalls of white trade unionism in affiliation with the American Federation of white

workers and labourers.” (A.J. Garvey, cited Cruse
“Crisis of the Negro Intellectual”; Ibid; p. 46).

At the 1921 Comintern third congress, a proposal from the South African delegation came forward to study the “Negro question or the proletarian movement among the Negroes.” At the Fourth congress a Negro communist took part for the USA party for the first time. This was Otto Huiswood. Against opposition from the party, the famous Black poet, **CLAUDE McKay**, also took part as a “special delegate.” (Cruse H: “Crisis of Negro Intellectual”; Ibid; p. 54-55). There, McKay accused the American Communists of discrimination, and also of giving a over-optimistic gloss to the likelihood of American revolution at that time. (Draper; Ibid; p. 327; & Cruse H: “Crisis of Negro Intellectual”; Ibid; p. 54-55). The Comintern appointed the **Negro Commission which wrote the “Theses on the Negro Question,”** which were presented at the **Fourth congress**. In these it is stated that:

“The history of the Negro in America fits him for an important role in the liberation struggle of the entire African race...in a single world Negro movement.”
(Draper; Ibid; p. 327).

The leadership of African liberation struggles was placed in the hands of the American Negro. At this stage the ECCI and its Commission were confronting the notion of the “Black Nation.” The Program commission of the Fifth congress reported back that it could not substantiate the Black Nation. **AUGUST THALHEMIER** reported:

“It was pointed out that a number of national questions exist in countries like the US with an extraordinary national mixture of populations where it cannot be said that the slogan of the right of self-determination is the solution for all national

questions, in which the race question is also involved...The Program Commission was of the opinion that the slogan of the right of self determination must be supplemented by another slogan: 'National equality for all national groups and races.'" (Cited; Draper; Ibid; p. 328-329).

Draper points out that the Commission also decided that it was "virtually impossible" to define the concept of nation to satisfy all requirements. (Cited; Draper; Ibid; p. 328-329). It is obvious that these formulations are remarkably similar to those of Stalin when dealing with the issue of the complex geographical areas such as Transcaucasia. The party and Pepper noisily agreed. Fort-Whiteman however demanded further emphasis on "race," and stayed on in Moscow. The Comintern stayed firm at this stage, that the primary goal was the proletarian revolution.

The problem of Garvey-ism was at this stage seriously impeding organisation in the Negro working classes. The Comintern advised the formation of an **AMERICAN NEGRO LABOR CONGRESS (ANLC)**. This was established in October 1925. The national organiser was made Fort-Whiteman; and the communist **H.V. PHILIPS** was made National Secretary. It was consciously seen as United Front that could bring the party into touch with Negro masses. The ANLC was bitterly attacked by the AFL and branded "disruptive."

It never made bridges effectively, and within 5 years was dissolved into the League For Struggle for Negro Rights. The leadership of the broad Negro movement had already been contested by the NAACP they had:

"Held an uncontested position as spokesman for Negroes in their fight for legal justice and civil rights. At the time the NAACP was composed largely of individuals from the white and Negro

middle classes. It was not hostile to the labor, but lacked any important ties with the trade unions movement. Its aim was to secure by judicial and legislative action a more equitable role for the Negro in the major phases of American life. It was opposed to the Communist programme, and had consistently refused to be drawn into any joint activity with the leftists.” (Record; “Negroes & CP”; Ibid; p. 36).

The NAACP clearly had the widest circle that should have been penetrated by the Communists. They had relinquished tactics of fighting for Negro rights within the trade unions and had isolated themselves there. The NAACP, despite its hostility was also “avoided” by the CP. As Record comments:

“During the period from 1919 to 1928, the Party took a definitely hostile position towards practically all moderate Negro organisations. The NAACP and the National Urban League were in particular vigorously condemned. There was some basis in fact for such criticism. The NAACP had been extremely cautious in its legal and legislative work for Negroes during the early 1920’s, and the National Urban League (NUL) had applied a questionable role in a number of the large industrial strikes during the immediate post-war period.” (A. Record; “Negroes & CP”; Ibid; p. 38).

In a further direct challenge to the NAACP, the CP set up the **INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE LEAGUE (ILD)**. But although the CP had some reasons to distrust both the NAACP, and the NUL, it had effectively isolated itself in yet another key front, this time the Negro front.

BY NOW THE WORKERS PARTY HAD WORKED IN AN INCORRECT AND GENERALLY SECTARIAN MANNER IN THREE KEY FRONTS:

THE TRADE UNIONS; THE THIRD PARTY; AND THE NEGRO STRUGGLES.

The factional fights had not only played a part, but they were central to obstructing the formation of a clear and a correct Marxist-Leninist policy on any question! American Exceptionalism was an excuse to avoid the reality – that there was not a united party. The Comintern had played its part in the factional battles. In the middle of these factional battles, the incorrect theory of the “Black Nation” was endorsed.

vii) The Attitude of Stalin to the American CP in 1928

What do we know of Stalin’s attitude to the American CP? It so happens that we are fortunate to know a great deal. After the Sixth World Congress, Stalin was to speak his mind in front of the Presidium of the ECCI that had been struck to examine the question of factionalism in the American party, and their allegations of American Exceptionalism. It will be remembered that they had put the thesis that American capital had stabilized itself and was therefore to some extent immune from the crisis of capitalism. They had drawn this “theory” from two primary sources, Eugene Varga and Nikolai Bukharin. The attack launched by Stalin on the issue of stabilization of capital has already been discussed in his address to the Plenum of the CC CPSU(B) in 1929. He had also previously attacked the notion of capitalist “stabilization” at the 15th Congress of the CPSU(B).

At this juncture, Stalin was trying to assess the way forward for the USA party. He saw the position of the CPUSA as of immediate and great world significance. But the weaknesses of both the minority and the majority factions were “opportunistic.” Moreover Stalin points out that in the context of the inner-

Comintern struggle then going on, it was not surprising that significant errors had been made by the CPUSA:

“It has become evident during the course of the discussion that both groups are guilty of the fundamental error of exaggerating the specific features of American capitalism. You know that this exaggeration lies at the root of every opportunist error committed both by the majority and the minority group. It would be wrong to ignore the specific peculiarities of American capitalism...But it would be still more wrong to base the activity of the CP on these specific features, since the foundation of the activities of every communist party, Including the American Communist Party, on which it must base itself, must be the general features of capital, which are the same for all countries and not its specific features in any given country...Specifics features are only supplementary to the general features. The error of both groups is that they exaggerate the significance of the specific features of American capitalism and thereby overlook the basic features of American capitalism which are characteristic of world capitalism as a whole. Therefore when the leaders of the majority and the minority accuse each other of elements of a Right deviation, it is obviously not without some measure of truth. It cannot be denied that American conditions form a medium in which it is easy for the American Communist Party to be led astray and to exaggerate the strength and the stability of American capitalism. These conditions lead our comrades from America, both the majority and the minority, into errors of the type of the Right deviation.” (Stalin’s Speech to the Presidium in the American Commission of the ECCI; May 6th; 1929; In “Stalin’s Speeches on the American Communist Party”; as re-printed in “The Communist

International In America; Documents 1925-1933”; by the Bolshevik League of the US New York, nd; c.1982; p. 80).

Stalin leaves no doubt that in his mind these “opportunist errors” stem from factionalism in CPUSA and Comintern:

“What are the main defects in the practice of the leaders of the majority and the minority?

Firstly that in their day-to-day work they, and particularly the leaders of the majority, are guided by motives of unprincipled factionalism and place the interests of their faction higher than the interests of the Party.

Secondly that both groups and particularly the majority are so infected with the disease of factionalism, that they base their relations with the Comintern, not on the principle of confidence but on policy of rotten diplomacy, a policy of diplomatic intrigue.” (Stalin Ibid; p.81)

To illustrate this, he describes the behavior of the two factions in trying to curry favour:

“Let us take a few examples. I will mention such a simple fact as the speculations made by the leaders both of the majority and the minority regarding the differences within the CPSU(B). You know that both groups of American Communist Party, competing with each other and chasing after each other like horses in a race, are feverishly speculating on existing and non-existing differences within the CPSU. Why do they do that? Do the interests of the CPA demand it? No of course not. They do it order to gain some advantage for their own particular faction and to cause injury to the other faction.

Foster and Bittleman see nothing reprehensible in declaring themselves ‘Stalinites’, and thereby demonstrating their loyalty to the CPSU. But, my dear comrades, that is disgraceful. Do you not know that there are no ‘Stalinites’, that there must be no ‘Stalinites’? Why does the minority act in this unseemly fashion? In order to entrap the majority group...of Comrade Lovestone, and to prove that the Lovestone group is opposed to the CPSU, and hence to the basic nucleus in the Comintern. That is of course incorrect. It is irresponsible. But the minority cares nothing about that: their chief aim is to ensnare and discredit the majority in the interests of the faction of the minority.” (Stalin Ibid; p.81)

Having shown the Foster group in “disgraceful behavior,” he describes the Lovestone group as “even more disgraceful”:

“And how does the Lovestone group act in this connection? Does it behave more correctly than the minority group? Unfortunately, its behavior is even more disgraceful than that of the minority groups. Judge for yourselves. The Foster group demonstrate their closeness to the CPSU by declaring themselves ‘Stalinites’. Lovestone perceives that his own faction thereby may lose something by this. Therefore in order not to be outdone, the Lovestone group suddenly performs a ‘hair rasing’ feat and at the American party Congress, carrels through a decision calling for the removal of Comrade Bukharin from the Comintern. And so you get a game of rivalry on the principle of who will outdo whom. Instead of a fight on principles you get the most unprincipled speculation of the differences within the CPSU.” (Stalin Ibid; p.82)

The Comintern had made several demands that Comrade Pepper return to Moscow. The CC of the CPA had resisted and:

“In fact ignored a number of the decisions of the ECCI regarding Pepper. Thereby the majority of the American CP demonstrated its fellowship with Pepper, whose opportunist vacillations everybody knows...Fosters’ group utilizes this situation against the Lovestone (and Gitlow-ed) group, stating that the majority group within the CPA is against the Comintern. Accordingly the Lovestone groups performs another ‘hair-raising’ feat and expels Comrade Pepper. The same Pepper whom only the day before they had defended against the Comintern. How can we explain the resistance to the decisions of the Comintern regarding Pepper on the part of the majority group? Not of course in the interests of the Party. It was exclusively in the interests of the majority faction. Why was it that the majority made a sudden right-about-face and unexpectedly expelled Pepper from the party? Was it in the interests of the Party? OF course not. It was purely in the interests of the Lovestone faction, who were anxious not to surrender a trump card to their enemy, namely the Foster-Bittleman factional group. Faction interests above all!” (Stalin Ibid; p.82-3)

Stalin’s prescription was clear: End factionalism:

“In order to put an end to these foul methods and place the American Communist Party on the lines of Leninist policy, it is necessary first of all to put an end to factionalism in that Party...What is the solution? Comrade Foster mentioned one. According to this proposal the leadership should be handed over to the minority. Can that solution be adopted? No, it cannot. The delegation of the ECCI committed an error when it sharply dissociated itself from the majority, without at the same time dissociating itself equally sharply from the minority. It would be very unfortunate if the commission of the Presidium

repeated the error of the delegation of the ECCI. I think the Commission of the Presidium of the ECCI should in its draft dissociate itself both from the errors of the majority and from the errors of the minority. And for that very reason that it must dissociate itself from both, it must not propose to turn over the leadership to the minority. ...The American delegation proposed a different solution directly contrary to the proposal of Comrade Foster. ...Ten points. The substance of this proposal is to the effect that the leadership of the majority should be fully rehabilitate, the factional work of the majority should be considered correct that the decision of the Presidium to eh ECCI to withdraw Comrade Lovestone should be annulled and that thus the practice of suffocating the minority should be endorsed. Can this solution be adopted? No, it cannot, for it would mean, not eradicating factionalism, but elevating it to a principle.” (Stalin Ibid; p. 86-7)

“What then is the solution?

1. The actions and the proposals of the delegation of the ECCI must in the main be approved, with the exclusion from the proposals of those points which approximate to the proposals of Comrade Foster.
2. An open letter must be sent in the name of the ECCI to the members of the American Communist Party setting forth the errors of both sections of the party and sharply emphasizing the question of eradicating all factionalism.
3. The action of the leaders of the majority a the Convention of the Communist party of America particularly on the question of Pepper, must be condemned.

4. And end must be put to the present situation in the CPA, in which the questions of positive work, the questions of the working class against the capitalists, questions of wages, working hours, work in the trade unions, the fight against reformism, the fight against the Right Deviation, – when all these questions are kept in the shade, and are replaced by petty questions of the factional struggle between the Lovestone group and the Foster group.

5. The Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the American CP must be reorganized with the inclusion of such workers therein as are capable of seeing something more than the factional struggle, the struggle of the working class against the capitalists, who are capable of placing the interests and the unity above the interests of individual groups and their leaders.

6. Comrades Lovestone and Bittleman must be summoned to be placed at the disposal of the Comintern, in order that the members of the American CP should at last understand that the Comintern intends to fight factionalism in all seriousness.” (Stalin Ibid; p.87-88)

Lest any one was deceived, Stalin made it clear that this was not any ordinary party, because it had a job of work that was “decisive” for the “world revolutionary movement.” There was all the more reason to get it right in the CPUSA:

“A word or two regarding the tasks and the mission of the American Communist Party. I think comrades that the American CP is one of this few CP’s in the world upon which history has laid tasks of a decisive character from the point of view of the world revolutionary movement. You now very well the strength and power of the American capitalism.

Many now think that the general crisis of world capitalism will not affect America. That, of course, is not true. It is entirely untrue, comrades. The crisis of world capitalism is developing with increasing rapidity and cannot but affect American capitalism. The three million now unemployed in America are the first swallows indicating the ripening of the economic crisis in America. The sharpening antagonism between America and England, the struggle for markets and raw materials, and finally, the colossal growth of armaments – that is the second portent of the approaching crisis. It is essential that the American CP should be capable of meeting that historical movement fully prepared and of assuming the leadership of the impending class struggle in America. For that end the American CP must work for the complete liquidation of factionalism and deviations in the Party. For the reestablishment of unity in the American CP ... To forge a real revolutionary cadre and a real revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, capable of leading the many millions of the American working class towards the revolutionary class struggles.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 91).

Second speech:

Unfortunately the factions continued their own way even after this clear, but comradely upbraid from Stalin. In between the first and the second of the speeches that Stalin made on this question, the members of the American Majority delegation – Gitlow and Lovestone made a declaration. This contravened the standards of the Comintern in that it ruled out the agreement of the American delegation to any of the declaration of the ECCI Presidium. Stalin called attention to this:

“The fundamental nature of this declaration is that it proclaims the thesis of non-submission to the decisions of the Presidium of the ECCI. That means the extreme factionalism of the leaders of the majority has driven them into the path of insubordination, and hence of warfare against the Comintern.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 91).

Of course Stalin agreed that discussion and principled debate, was right, and he upheld the Communist’s rights to disagree. But he pointed to the need for individual rights to bow, after a full and principled discussion to the view of the majority:

“It cannot be denied that our American comrades like all Communists, have the right to disagree and the have the right to oppose it. And as long as they confine themselves to the exercise of that right, there is not, and cannot be anything wrong. But the trouble is that the declaration of May 14th does not stop there. It goes further: It considers that the fight must be continued even after the draft becomes the decision of the Presidium of the ECCI. Therefore we must put it the question squarely to the members of the American delegation: when the Draft assumes the force of an obligatory decision of the Comintern, do they consider themselves entitled not to submit to that decision?” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 91).

Stalin goes on to expose the manoueverings and “petty-fogging” and “deceit” of the Majority (He uses those words – ed). He then turns to the Commission’s draft:

“What is the basis of the draft of the Commission which is now offered for the consideration of the

Presidium the ECCI? It is based on the idea of maintaining the line of the Comintern, on the idea of Bolshevizing the American Communist party, on the idea of fighting the deviation from the Marxist line, and, above all, the Right deviation, on the idea of Leninist Party unity, and finally, and above all on the idea of completely liquidating factionalism. For it must be realized after all, comrades, that factionalism is the fundamental evil of the American Communist Party.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 95).

Again Stalin points out that both wings were being **factionalist**. But he also points out again, but in more detail, why it is that factionalism is weakening to the party. **He mentions three reasons. The First:**

“Wherein consists the evil of factionalism within the ranks of a Communist party? Firstly in that factionalism weakens the party spirit, it dulls the revolutionary sense and blinds the Party workers to such an extent that in the factional passion, they are obliged to place the interests of the faction above the interests of the party.. Did not Comrade Lovestone and his friends know that they should have held themselves aloof from Pepper and they should have repudiated him so as not to compromise themselves as revolutionaries.. Factional blindness compelled them to place the interests of the factions above the interests of the party..Did not Comrade Foster know that he should have held aloof from the concealed Trotskyites that were in his group? Why.. did he not repudiate them at the time. Because he behaved first and foremost as a factionalist.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 96.)

Stalin points to the **second reason** for fighting factionalism as being its interference with:

“The training of the Party in the spirit of a policy of principles.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 97).

And, the **third reason**:

“that factionalism by weakening the will for unity in the party and by undermining its iron discipline, creates within the Party a peculiar factional regime, as a result of which the whole internal life of our Party is robbed of its conspirative protection in the face of the class enemy, and that party runs the danger of being transformed into a plaything of the bourgeoisie.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 97)

He now paints the consequences of the actions of the American factions:

“The evil of factionalism lies in the fact that it completely nullifies all positive work done in the party, it robs the workers of all desire to concern themselves with the day-to-day needs of the working class (wages, hours, the improvement of the material welfare of the workers etc); it weakens the Party in preparing the working class for the class conflicts with the bourgeoisie and thereby creates a state of affairs in which the authority of the Party must inevitably suffer in the eyes of the workers.” (Stalin: Speech May 14th, 1929 to the Presidium of The ECCI On the American Question: In ; p. 98).

Stalin advised that Lovestone and the others should accept the proposal of the ECCI Presidium. As they comforted themselves with being popular, he advised that their popularity would vanish if the Comintern rejected them; because the masses followed the line of the Comintern. But Lovestone and Gitlow rejected this.

- **A second speech by Stalin on the same day, to the same Presidium, pointed out that eight of the ten American delegates had refused to accept the draft of the Commission.**

Stalin reminded them, that the Bolshevik CC had been divided on some occasions, such as in the 1907 controversy to partake in Duma elections. But, Stalin pointed out, that at that time the minority had bowed to the wishes of the majority. He pointed to the ability to act collectively, to conform will of individuals to the “will of the collective,” as the major test of “Bolshevik” behavior. He then pointed out that Gitlow, Lovestone and Bloor had stated, that their consciences did not allow them submit to the Presidium. Stalin commented:

“What they said amounted to this, that since they do not agree with the decision of the Presidium, they cannot submit to that decision and carry it into effect. But only Anarchist can talk like that, not Bolsheviks, not Leninists...Members of the American delegation, do not think that the conscience and convictions of Comrade Gitlow are above the conscience and convictions of the overwhelming majority of the Presidium of the ECCI Do you begin to understand that if each of us starts to act according to his own will without reckoning with the will of the collective, we shall never come to any decision; we shall never have any collective will, nor any leadership?” (Stalin Second Speech of May 14th In Ibid; p. 106).

The factions of Lovestone were expelled for intransigent disregard of the Comintern injunctions against factionalism. In the middle of all this, the theory of the “Black Nation” became part of the CPUSA programme. Summarising the overall international state, at the 1930 Meeting of 16th CPSU Congress, Molotov reported that the:

“Comintern had 53 parties and 3 sympathising national-revolutionary parties. He said that right-opportunist tendencies had been so marked in a number of central committees (he mentioned Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and the United States) that their composition had to be changed.” (Cited in Degras J. Vol 3; Ibid; p. 102).

CONCLUSION

We believe that we have shown good evidence that:

- 1. The CPUSA was riven with factionalism.**
- 2. The Line of the “Black Nation”; is not supported by a thorough reading of the Marxist-Leninist literature; nor by facts of Negro migrations and their lives.**
- 3. There were serious departures from Marxism-Leninism in the Comintern that allowed the mistaken theories of Red Trade Unionism; and Black Nation to arise in the CPUSA.**
- 4. The general pattern of Ultra-Left sectarianism, impeded the implementation of a correct policy to a Labour Party in the USA.**

These questions must be further examined. Let the Marxist-Leninist movement shred this analysis – if it so chooses. But it should for the movement’s sake, do so only on the basis of

factual and scientifically reasoned Marxist-Leninist analysis. We have had enough dogma.

Failing that, we are condemned to more self-serving opportunism, or honest meanderings between Africa and the home of the USA blacks – the USA. In the process more false routes will inevitably divert our best and most militant youth. In this article we have not analysed some of the later mistaken routes: the Black Panther Movement and the Malcolm X phenomenon. We will endeavour to do so shortly.

The formation of a Marxist-Leninist party of the USA and Canada is an urgent priority.

LONG LIVE MARXISM-LENINISM!

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