

There were four areas of discussion following the NQ Outline.

- I. Introduction, framework.
- II. The basis for self-determination.
- III. Development of the National Question by the CP.
- IV. Study Questions

I. Introduction, framework.

As a framework two concepts were introduced. These were then referred back to in the course of the discussion.

1. The National Question is a question of the reconstitution of society. It answers the questions of how society is organized on a new basis; how nations will resolve their affairs and how subjugated people will govern their lives.

Reconstitution of society is material. Instead of existing boundaries - states, counties, etc., constituted for reasons of political domination, reconstitution will be on the basis of self-determination of subjugated people.

The Soviet Union is an example of a reconstituted society.

2. We are part of the New Socialist Movement. Our development was influenced by Mao and the Chinese revolution. Features of the new movement as influenced by Mao are the integration of theory with practice and the need for ideological struggle. We have consistently followed this path. We have used the tools of On Practice and On Contradiction as a guide to action in day to day practice.

In regard to the National Question, we do not approach this question abstractly, as a theoretical exercise, but rather study it using the tools of DHM, as a guide to helping to solve material problems in our society.

II. The basis for self-determination.

We followed the process of development of the Afro-American nation from the post-reconstruction period to the present. We concentrated on the historical stages in this development, posing the fundamental contradiction at each stage, and the forms of organization and struggle that developed to speak to the fundamental contradiction.

Afro-Americans in this country have the following outstanding demands for solutions. To this day these problems have not been resolved, despite years of struggle by Afro-Americans. The problems are:

- 1) Poor health care
- 2) Poor education

- 3) Poor housing
- 4) Unemployment
- 5) No job training
- 6) Drug addiction and crime

Stage I - Fundamental contradiction is legal. Afro-Americans are denied their legal rights to vote, be educated and use public accommodations.

The Civil Rights movement struggles for abolishment of Jim Crow Laws, integration of public schools and facilities.

The Voting Rights movement struggles to register black voters, and to physically protect them while they execute their right to vote.

Stage II - There is a political transitional period. Once the legal problems are resolved the struggle becomes one for political power. There are connections made to other anti-imperialist liberation struggles and to other groups within the U.S.

The Anti-War Movement, the Human Rights Movement, the Black Liberation Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, etc.

There is a movement to elect black officials to office to gain political power for Afro-Americans. Many black officials are elected; there are many black mayors, Jesse Jackson ran for president, etc.

Stage III - The limits of gaining political power within the existing economic system become exposed. The fundamental contradiction is economic. Afro-Americans need to get control over economic resources, have the power to invest and reinvest capital in their own interest.

Essentially, the outstanding problems listed above are not yet resolved. It has become clear and will become clearer that they cannot be solved by political means, but must be solved by a redistribution of wealth.

In referring back to Stalin's definition of a nation, the Afro-American nation does not fully meet the definition of having an economic life; it is economically dependent on the U.S. economy. This does not mean that there is not an Afro-American nation, but that the economic life is underdeveloped.

Emerging in this period are economic forms of organization and struggle. Examples are in Boston, East Cleveland and Washington D.C. People in these cities are struggling to control their own economic resources. The form these struggles are taking is to set up autonomous cities, so as to control the resources of the area, and the distribution of tax dollars.

Atlanta is an example of a city that has addressed the economic question. There has been 4 billion dollars of investment in Atlanta since A. Young has been mayor. This resource has been controlled within the black community. The source of the investment was international capital; A. Young has international contacts and was able to attract the investment. Internationally, the U.S. is in decline and the 3rd world is rising. There is a basis for some countries, e.g., China, to invest in Afro-American concerns.

We distinguished between cities such as Chicago and Detroit where black political leadership has emerged in a sense in default after the withdrawal of capital investment from the city and the emergence of the new in Atlanta and Boston, etc., where the issue of capital investment is being addressed directly. It was not ruled out that grass roots activity may already be occurring in Chicago which may later develop into a demand for forms of economic autonomy.

III. Development of the National Question by the C.P.

As an external condition, Marcus Garvey had organized an economic enterprise to improve the economic condition of Afro-American people. It was in this context that the CP sought to advance black leadership in the U.S.

The history of the CP and the Internationals in relation to the national question reinforce the lessons we learned in studying Davis's W, R, and C. While the C.P. held a correct position on the national question and gave material support to Afro-American struggles, the U.P. and the struggle advanced. On the other hand, when the C.P. abandoned the struggle for Afro-American self-determination and socialism, the effect was that it weakened itself and the struggle for socialism.

IV. Study Questions

1. Issues that will cause the spread of the movement for African-American autonomy and/or secession.

Basically we discussed the list of problems to be resolved from above - poor health care, poor education, poor housing, unemployment, no job training, drug addiction and crime. The resolution of these problems require different priorities in the allocation of resources -- thus push the movement for autonomy.

2. Discussion of the economics of the objective side of the movement for self-determination.

We discussed the decline of the U.S. on a global scale, and a resultant limit on available internal economic resources leading to the withdrawal of investment in the cities and social programs. On the other hand, the third world has a potential to become the source of

capital investment in the U.S. In particular, there is a basis for investments to be made by certain third world countries in concerns controlled by third world people in this country.

3. What position should women take on self determination and how will they benefit?

It was clear from our discussion of W,R, and C how tightly linked the struggle for self-determination is to women's struggles. Gains by Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities have historically also benefited women.

4. Discussion of the model of the Afro-American nation.

The discussion centered around the city of Atlanta, although we did not know much about the particularity. What was discussed was the influx of international capital and the economic development taking place.

We also discussed the housing project in Washington D.C., where once the community had economic control, it reinvested its capital and developed economically.

5. What is it important to study the National, Women and Class questions?

It became clear in the discussion that we study these questions because we must understand them in order to solve problems and learn to take positions correctly. We discussed the original framework of being part of the new movement, linking theory with practice in relation to this question. We discussed how the Soviet Union, China, and the CP in this country had advanced based on study and a correct analysis of these questions.

6. In a reconstituted society, how will National, Women and Class questions be addressed politically, socially and economically.

We as a group were not very clear on this question. Generally we felt that the requirements of the subordinate aspect would be addressed in all these areas, but did not get very concrete. One example was given of Cuba, where women wrote the marriage law, which helped define their social and political position in the new society.

- 7 Case Studies:

In some cases, the perceptual assessment of the group was that a nation did exist with a right to self-determination. (e.g. Basques, Native Americans, Palestinians). In other cases (e.g. Sikhs) this was not clear without knowing more about the political and economic history. We did learn through discussion that assessing the existence of a nation's right to self-determination requires concrete analysis and historical understanding.

Example of resident ownership in Washington, D.C.

Kimi O Gray, President of Kenilworth Parkside Resident Mgmt. Corp. in Washington, D.C. related this experience:

Kenilworth was a housing project serving low income people, all or mostly black. The conditions were very poor- buildings in a state of decay, broken windows, garbage not being collected, rats and bugs. There was a high drop-out rate among the children and a high crime rate in the area.

Kimi O Gray said that change started to take place back when there was a voter registration drive and a struggle to elect a black mayor. Since no one was really running Kenilworth, some of the residents demanded that they take it over themselves. Significant capital was obtained to renovate the area, based on having elected a black mayor and continuous struggle on the political level with various government bodies.

The resident management corporation implemented the following programs:

- Insisted that children do their homework after school. To this end, they set up a central location for doing homework.
- Set up standards of discipline for residents and removed families who did not uphold the standards.
- Did their own contracting for services, awarding the contracts to blacks. In particular, she mentioned that for the first time the garbage was regularly collected.
- Made contact with appropriate agencies or people who could come to the project and help residents get into college
- Set up training for persons hired to be in the management corporation - these persons being residents.
- Started a daycare center
- Started a cooperative grocery store in the project
- Set up committees or bodies to deal with problems in the project, including discipline problems.
- Supported residents who started up their own businesses which could serve the project - one that was mentioned was a man who did repair work.
- Encouraged improvements, such as gardening, keeping up lawns, etc.

The leadership was coming from women. Kimi O Gray was a single parent on welfare.

She saw the direction to go now as being to try to keep money in the community - that is, that anything that is spent by the residents should in some way get fed back into the community. She emphasized starting businesses within the community which are black owned.

She reported that welfare and crime were reduced dramatically and that the basis is that the project was owned and managed by the residents for themselves.

This shows a change in direction that can take place when there is leadership and self-management. The capital was obtained at a time when public money was available. Kimi O Gray was holding workshops for people in Chicago on how to do this, and similar attempts are being made in Chicago. However, the money in the public sector is not generally available at this time.