

COMMITTEE EXHIBIT No. 4

[PLP internal document concerning "nationalism"]

[HEADING ILLEGIBLE]

Racism as it has developed in our country is a form of nationalism. Its development is designed to maintain and expand profits and, of course, political power for the ruling class. Essentially this is what any form of nationalism is all about. Maintain and consolidate the power of the bourgeoisie by winning workers to chauvinism. And nationalism--whether in the form of white supremacy or black or Latin nationalism--divides workers.

Nationalism is at the present time the most serious weakness within the international communist movement. However, because of the specific nature of the class struggle in the U.S., racism is a qualitatively greater danger than nationalism here. Over the long run, this situation could conceivably reverse itself--nationalism might eventually become the primary weakness in the U.S. revolutionary movement--but now and for the foreseeable future, we must view racism within both the mass movement and the party, as primary. Our tactical approach must flow forth from this analysis.

For years the party held the incorrect position that nationalism had both reactionary and progressive aspects. Therefore--because it based the fight against racism on unity with so-called "progressive" nationalists--it failed to develop a revolutionary perspective and practice concerning racism. However, when the party changed its line and arrived at the correct position that all nationalism was reactionary, another error was made. We did not clearly see and act upon the primacy of racism. Thus, in the student movement for example, for more than a year after the change in line, PL combatted nationalism much more vigorously than racism.

Further secondary problems persisted. Even though we made a qualitative change in our line, we didn't thoroughly change our practice. This was most evident in a persistency to call for all-black or all-Latin formations, and to not really integrate our black and Latin comrades in the total sweep of the party's work. For an example, the Black Workers' Council was established in N.Y. even though some of our black cadre opposed it on principled grounds. And certainly, no sections of the black workers really called for it. In addition we still tend to place all our Puerto Rican members or friends around Desafio, rather than try to get them into assignments which would strengthen their international outlook.

Within the U.S. working class, racism is by far the main reactionary trend. However, there is a persistent tendency within the party to exaggerate the importance of nationalism. This has been contradicted time and again by the class struggle itself. Nowhere in the recent upsurge of class battles have black workers refused to unite with white workers. On the contrary: even in cases where black workers are guided by nationalist thinking they have nonetheless consistently provided the most militant overall leadership in these struggles. The postal strike was but one example.

Furthermore, no black organization--with the possible exception of the Baptist church--has developed a significant organizational hold on black workers. The Panthers, who never had much of a base among black workers even during their hayday, are on the decline. Neither they nor any other black nationalist group poses a serious obstacle

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to communist work among the black working class. It is pointless to continue flogging dead horses.

The weakness of PL comrades in developing ties with black and Latin workers and students constitutes a serious racial error and must be overcome. Every member of the party is to build a base for M-L among black and Latin workers or . Those who are unwilling or unable to do this should have their membership re-evaluated. This weakness is also related to the overall question of winning white workers and working class cadre to the party in general. In this case, as in the case of racism-nationalism the party pursued an incorrect line for a considerable period of time, then it sent ex-students to organize workers in the shops. Given this situation, PL was unable to win black and Latin workers to M-L and was unable to win white workers either to M-L or to fighting racism. With the implementation of the rectification-reorganization proposed six months ago, the situation to . Putting forward Challenge-Desafio in a and organized way has brought a significant number of black Latin, and white workers around the party in a few short months--and this is only the beginning. By the fall, the party will recruit a relatively large number of workers, and a high percentage of them will be black and Latin.

The situation in student work has not improved as dramatically. A relatively large number of black and Latin students have come into contact with the party and have become somewhat friendly to the line, but very few are as yet ready to join. This situation can be rectified by intensifying the internal struggle to basebuild the black and Latin students via Challenge-Desafio, by increasing the quantity and quality of work at community colleges, and by advancing the worker-student alliance.

One of the major weaknesses in the work presently being carried out with the black and Latin workers and students who have come around the party is a hesitancy to win them to an internationalist, working-class outlook. Too often, the party has taken the lead in organizing them into nationalist formations. Thus, in one city, an "all-black" workers picnic took place. In another city, the party initiated a "Third World" contingent in an anti-imperialist demonstration. In other cities, "Third World" study groups have been set up. In New York, the Black Workers' Council was formed.

While it is true that a nationalist reaction to racism may force us to work in or, upon rare occasion, set up nationalist formation, this is a tactical question. Setting up nationalist formations of any sort is not a principled question. In fact, the opposite is the case: the principled M-L position is to promote internationalism. It is racist to make the assumption that a group of black or Latin workers or students close to PL (or even center, for that matter) are so nationalist-oriented that they will work only in national formations. Almost all of the party's recent experience indicates that the show is on the other foot. The party and not the black and Latin workers and students in its base--has taken the lead in promoting nationalism. Thirty black workers didn't ask for an "all-black" picnic; black and Latin workers and students don't necessarily demand

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"Third World" anti-imperialist contingents; and nowhere have black and Latin workers or students refused to be in party study groups with white people. (in one instance a "third world" study group was organized and led by a white Pler)

One of the questions that black and Latin workers and students may legitimately ask of PL is: are we winning white workers and students to fight racism? By actively promoting national formations where they are not necessary, we are in effect saying not only that minority workers and students don't want unity with white people, but also that the racism of white people renders unity impossible--and this at a time when the party and its revolutionary line are reaching masses of people in all sections of the population.

This approach is a holdover from the party's former incorrect position on nationalism. A specific consequence of this line was that when Bill Epton still belonged to the leadership, most black comrades, friends, and contacts were funneled off to work with him in Harlem. What this meant in practice was that white comrades were exempted from working with black people. Of course, many of the people who were sent to work with Epton were affected by nationalist ideology--but most of them were winnable. However, given the party's line at the time, they couldn't be won. How is it possible to win over a nationalist to revolution, the party, and the dictatorship of the proletariat when you try to do it with a nationalist line?

Another consequence of this line--a consequence that still persists to a certain extent--was that many comrades tended to regard leading black cadre in PL as "black" leaders rather than as leaders of the party. This led to the racist approach that the job of black cadre is only to work with black people, and therefore black contacts should be sent mainly to the black cadre.

In Epton's case, this approach had a doubly negative effect. In the first place, the line was wrong. In the second place Epton arrogance and individualism were that almost every black [entire line illegible] over-reliance very few black forces in or around PL were really won to the primacy of the party. When the line changed qualitatively from nationalist to proletarian, most of these people dropped away.

Epton himself is a case in point. Until the party changed its position, he had been ineptly trying to carry out the pro-nationalist line everybody else was trying to carry out. Even in this context, he had serious weaknesses, but then, so does everybody else. But his weaknesses were more serious than most. The antagonistic nature of these weaknesses did not become apparent until the line on nationalism changed a year and a half ago. When the line changed, the national committee struggled with him to get a job and basebuild for the party among workers. He refused every time this was raised. Self-critically, the national committee was too liberal on this question, and should not have given in so easily. His political work went from bad to worse, and he was finally removed from the national committee six months ago. He did take a job this time, but he consistently opposed the line on winning workers by putting forward Challenge-

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Desafio and refused to sell the paper himself. To avoid repetition of the recent steering committee report and make a long story short, he became an enemy of the party and was expelled a few weeks ago. (This was unanimously approved by the national committee.)

The position he and his little group of nutty vipers now advance is nationalism. But to view this as his basic motivation is to miss the boat on the essence of the question. His vounted political differences with the party are nothing more than a cover for his monumental individualism. To put it bluntly, the man is on a cosmic ego-trip. He has no loyalty to revolution, to the working class, or to anything beside himself. He couldn't take criticism and didn't want to change. Given the rigidity of his attitude once the party's line changed, the process of his degeneration didn't take very long. This should serve as a lesson to all of us; individualism is a fundamental political question. Unless comrades are willing to act upon criticisms and transform their outlook, PL cannot become the revolutionary vanguard of the working class.

The conclusion of the national committee meeting is that the party is on the war to rectifying its past errors and that it can expect to recruit a significant number of black, Latin, and white workers in the very near future. Despite all of our past mistakes, M-L ideology and a M-L party are capable of winning specially oppressed black and Latin workers. This is true because capitalism--even capitalism sugar-coated by national formations--has little or nothing to offer these workers. More black and Latin workers have come close to the party in the recent period than ever before. We must avoid complacency and struggle to overcome the racist isolation that leads to the pitfalls and errors described above.

In summary, the over-riding error in work over the years was pursuing a wrong line. The line was not an internationalist line, but a nationalist line. This nationalist line fed the worst tendencies in the party: white racism and nationalism. This was concretely exposed in our Puerto Rican and Latin work because we relied for years on Puerto Rican cadre who were essentially nationalist. This was a racist error also, inasmuch as white party members did not want to struggle with Puerto Ricans or blacks around an internationalist line. This combination of racism-nationalism always ended in one debacle after another. These errors were all compounded by extreme individualism in Bill Epton's case and others. If the report and proposals are taken seriously, we have a good basis to move ahead. This seems to be happening now.

Specifically, for the coming period of time, the NC proposes the following:

1. Every comrade must have close personal-political ties with black and Latin workers, students, etc. Close investigation of possibilities for winning these friends to PL.

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2. We should not at this time form separatist-nationalist organizations either inside or outside the party (PL study groups, mass orgs. etc. In those instances where we are working in pre-existing nationalist [next four words illegible] much more vigorously for a revolutionary
3. We should write more anti-racist literature specifically aimed at white workers. The "Don't be a sucker" pamphlet should be revised and updated. It will be printed in large numbers.
4. We should hold discussions via articles and internal bulletins on various strategies for organizing black, Latin, and white workers to fight racism.
 - A. Community defense organizations in ghettos.
 - B. A youth organization (primarily for high-school and community college students) whose basic thrust would be anti-racism. An internal bulletin should be circulated re a programmatic approach to this.
5. We should initiate and organize struggles against racist education and ideology in high-schools, colleges, tv, movies, etc.
6. We should issue a brief public statement in Challenge PL on Bill Epton's expulsion.
7. The student leadership should initiate a major effort to win students in the all-black colleges of the South.
8. A closer investigation should be made of how to use and improve Desafio outside NYC.
9. Develop immediate responses in all sections of the community to anti-racist struggles and ruling-class racist terror.

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Dear Comrades,

Some time ago we initiated an internal discussion in the party, and among our friends, concerning differences between our party and the Chinese comrades on the question of nationalism. It is our intention to pursue this discussion. We are preparing a draft discussion piece for the party and our friends over the summer. After a thorough discussion in and around the party, we will publish it in the fall-- if this is the feeling of the party.

However, at this moment, the NC would like to point out very briefly a number of unfortunate developments which we cannot overlook:

1. The elevation of Prince Sihanouk to leadership of the Indo-Chinese war.
2. Virtually full restoration of relations between the CPC and the revisionist Kim Il Sung.