New Politics Confab Mired In Slough Of Racism

CHICAGO - (NPI) -- Racial antagonisms among white and Negro delegates at the recent National Conference on New Politics convention prevented the establishment of a new power base.

Billed as a coalition of left-wing forces, the delegates spent as much time putting each other down as condemning the Vietnam war, President Johnson, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other latter-day bugaboos.

Black delegates huddled in caucus meetings, rather than attending convention sessions, then took over the parley. Although a minority, the black delegates got their way at the convention by threatening to walk out. Then they pushed through a resolution condemning the "imperialistic Zionist war" -- a slap in the face at the large number of Jewish delegates at the convention.

AND THUS, the "Black Caucus" succeeded at the New Politics in doing what it had been unable to do at the Newark Black Power conference that preceded it. According to an observer at the conference, a "small group" of militant delegates at the conference had sought to issue a strongly worded condemnation of Israel, but there was sufficient opposition to such a move to have it voted down.

But oddly enough, the insidious attack on the "imperialistic Zion war" carried overwhelmingly at the interracial and inter-religious New Politics convention.

Answering the anti-Zionist charge made at the convention, the American Jewish Congress noted that Israel had long been supported by such African leaders as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Felix Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast; Leopole Sedar Senghor of Senegal; Haile Selassie; Prime Minister Leonard Mulamba of the Congo-Brazza; A. Milton Obote of Uganda, and Philibert Tsiranana of Malagasy.

ON THE OTHER hand, AJC noted, the Arab nations have a long-standing reputation in African countries as slave traders.

The attack on Israel wasn't the only ethnically hostile action taken at the New Politics convention. H. Rap Brown, SNCC chairman, addressed the black caucus at the convention, but refused, on racial grounds, to speak to the entire gathering--hardly an indication of any interracial left-wing coalition to come.

The parley ended without the naming of a third-party slate. Delegates decided, instead, to concentrate their resources on local organizing projects. This decision was seen as an indication that no black-white coalition was in the works. Much of the convention debate was on the question of whether to present a third-party slate or to support a ticket not under party auspices in 1968. Many delegates felt the conference was not sufficiently organized for a political campaign yet.

But an even more telling reason for the lack of a third-party slate was given by Floyd B. McKissick, National CORE chairman, who said: "I don't believe black people are able to coalesce with anyone at this time and place and age. They must develop their own base of power and then they can think about joining together with others."

And Lincoln Lynch, CORE's associate national chairman, declared that "black people are not going to hang onto anyone else's coattails. They are going to come together with others."

AFTER HOLDING their own meetings, the black caucus charged that blacks had been "systematically excluded" from the decisionmaking process at the convention. This exclusion the caucus said, raises "serious doubts that white people are serious about revolutionary change."

Cowed by the black caucus' threat of a walkout, the predominantly white delegates agreed, by nearly 2 to 1, to caucus demands of 50 per cent Negro representation on all convention committees. The convention's delegates also agreed to resolutions such as these:

agreed to resolutions such as these: --Organization of "white civilizing committees in all white communities to humanize the savage and beast-like character that runs rampant through America, exemplified by George Lincoln Rockwell and Lyndon Baines Johnson."

--"Total and unquestionable support" to all so-called wars of national liberation in Africa, Latin America, and particularly in Vietnam.

--Restoration of Adam Clayton Powell's Congressional powers. --Support of black control of the political,

economic, and social institutions in black communities.

--Immediate reparation for the "historic physical, sexual, mental, and economic exploitation of black people."

--Support of all resolutions of the Newark Black Power convention.

IT WAS noted that the primary theme at the convention was social, as contrasted to the philosophical and economic themes of earlier radicalism. The talk was about "restructuring society," rather than alleviating poverty or



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rectifying injustice.

But strangely enough, with all the conference's "social emphasis," delegates failed in one central task--getting along among themselves.

