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PLENUM DISCUSSION ON NEGRO STRUGGLE

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Editor's Note

As directed by the June 1962 plenum of the National Committee a transcript of the plenum discussion on the Negro struggle is published in this discussion bulletin.

The transcription was made from a tape recording of the plenum proceedings in which the participants spoke more or less extemporaneously.

Presentation by George Breitman *

At the panel on the Negro struggle held at the convention last year, so many delegates wanted to take the floor and couldn't because of the time limitations that the panel suggested a discussion on the question be held in the party; and the convention the next day voted in favor of holding a discussion. To help initiate it, I wrote out in expanded form what I had said at the panel and this was published in a discussion bulletin. But in almost a year since that time only one article, by Nat West of New York, was submitted to the bulletin. In addition, a letter was received from Comrade Kirk of Seattle just before the plenum, which is included in the folders distributed to you. So I think it would be fair to say that the discussion authorized by the convention never really got off the ground.

I am not going to give a report here for the Political Committee because for one thing what I am going to say has not been discussed with the Political Committee. In fact I am not going to give a formal report at all. What I am doing here is making an appeal -- that the proposed discussion be started here and continued from here into the party. I refer you to the two bulletin articles that have been issued so far; if you are not already familiar with them, it will be a little difficult to follow what I am going to say, because I am not going to repeat everything I said in my article. Instead I want to touch on some of the things I said before, partly for emphasis and partly because they are now almost a year old. I find I must clarify and criticize some of the things I said then. I have to do this myself because nobody else did it for me.

I began last time by pointing out the uneven and unequal development of the labor struggle and the Negro struggle. The Negro movement continues to show motion, expansion and progress as evidenced by a whole series of events that we listed last time. These include the sit-ins, starting early in 1960, the organization of the Negro American Labor Council a few months later, the demonstrations of sympathy with Cuba, the indignation and demonstration at the U.N. over the murder of Lumumba, the freedom rides, the growth of the Black Muslim sentiment and the beginning of a radical tendency.

* (Much of these remarks will not be understandable unless you are familiar with the discussion article, "New Trends and New Moods in the Negro Struggle," SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 22, No. 18, August 1961. Please read or re-read it. -- G.B.)

Meanwhile the labor movement has stood still or retreated or been driven back in general. Unlike Comrade Wohlforth, who said the other day that the American workers are not passive, I think they are passive if we use the term to mean the opposite of active. This is not a matter of placing blame for the workers' passivity on the workers; the blame obviously belongs on the labor bureaucracy. Anyhow the labor movement not only has been standing still but in regard to the duties it has to the civil rights struggle, the labor movement has been guilty of practical total default. This deserves more attention than I gave it in my discussion article because it is this default of the labor movement more than anything else that is responsible for the problems arising in the Negro struggle.

In the upsurge of the 1930's, through the war years, and even until 1949 when the cold-war advocates expelled the dissident CIO unions -- during that whole period the labor movement enjoyed a tremendous prestige in the Negro community. Not only among Negro workers, who finally gained entry into the basic unions, but among all Negroes, more than any other section of the population, there was great sympathy and solidarity with the unions. Unions were recognized with little question as the best, closest and most dependable allies the Negroes had among any sector of American society. The idea of a Negro-labor alliance in those years was not only assented to, but assented to with enthusiasm. Now this is greatly changed.

As the unions were housebroken and brought under the domination of a conservative bureaucracy, as life and initiative were drained out of them, it is true that the unions continued to pass civil rights resolutions and that the union leaders became members of the NAACP board of directors and so on, but it became plain to everybody by the middle 1950's that this was just lip-service and that the union leadership really didn't give a damn about civil rights. Then the vast reservoir of confidence and solidarity with unions in the Negro community began to drain away too. Eventually even the conservative NAACP leadership felt compelled publicly to denounce and virtually break with the union bureaucracy because of its failure to wipe out the remaining Jim Crow strongholds in the labor movement, as well as its failure to do anything about the mounting struggles in the South following the 1954 Supreme Court decision against school segregation. The same reasons led to the formation of the Negro American Labor Council by Negro union members who want to combat discrimination inside the unions and plants.

In the Negro community today, you therefore will find very mixed sentiments about the labor movement: A considerable amount of cynicism and even disgust rather than enthusiasm. Not anti-union attitudes in the sense of refusing to join unions or support strikes, there is none of that, but a disenchantment, a feeling that unions are not basically different from other white-dominated institutions and organizations and that Negroes can expect little from them without pressure and struggle. When you talk to them about a labor-Negro alliance, there is a markedly different response today than there was twenty years ago. It no longer seems to them so practical or so promising. They are more skeptical and even suspicious. And when you look at the state of the labor movement today, who can blame them for such reservations? No worthwhile alliance can be built on lip-service, which is all that the Meanys and Reuthers offer; and no alliance can serve the Negro people so long as they are treated as subordinates and not equals in the alliance. The entire blame for this retrogression in the relations between the labor movement and the Negro movement rests on the union bureaucracy, and it is this that is responsible for many of the peculiar, unique and unexpected forms that the Negro struggle is assuming.

Now this situation, as we know, will not continue forever. We know that the labor movement, the unions, the workers themselves are going to change, be transformed, radicalized, revolutionized. If we don't know that with all certainty in our heads and in our bones, we wouldn't be in the party. It will change -- nobody knows when, and when this will occur does not depend primarily on us, on our will. And when it changes, it will have a profound effect on the Negro struggle and will give new meaning to the labor-Negro alliance slogan and strategy.

Meanwhile the Negro struggle is not standing still, twiddling its thumbs and waiting for the labor movement to fulfill its responsibilities. The Negro struggle is advancing on its own, carrying a bigger burden because of the default of the labor bureaucracy, having to do double duty in a certain sense, but it is advancing anyhow and it will continue for a time to advance on its own. How long it will go on developing in this way before the labor movement experiences a new upsurge and meets the Negro movement halfway, we do not know. The longer things continue as they are now, the more the Negro movement is going to change in its forms and in its outlook. When the labor movement takes its next leap and they meet and join forces, it is not going

to be a mere repetition of the past, not even of the 1930's, but something new, more complex, on a higher level, with the Negro movement as a result of its experience in the interim, carrying greater weight in the alliance because it will be stronger, more experienced and more independent.

Another factor affecting the development which I didn't mention at all last time, and which I would like to thank Comrade West for touching on in his article, is the smallness and weakness of the revolutionary socialist movement; the way in which the Negro struggle develops would be somewhat different if the socialist movement was strong and growing. But this too basically is a result of the unfavorable objective conditions that have produced the relative lull in the class struggle and have reinforced the conservatism of the union leadership. Last year I tried to delineate four main tendencies in the Negro movement now competing for the leadership that was formerly monopolized by the NAACP: (1) The gradualist, reformist tendency, represented by the NAACP. (2) The non-violent tendency of King and CORE, which is also reformist, but differs from the NAACP in advocating certain kinds of direct action in addition to just legal court cases. (3) The nationalists, whose chief organized spokesmen are the Black Muslims. (4) A militant or radical tendency which I said was symbolized by people like Robert F. Williams. Some further comments on these four tendencies would now be in order.

I have virtually nothing to add on the NAACP that wasn't said last year and in the party's 1957 convention resolution, "The Class Struggle Road to Negro Equality." It is still the largest organization, but its influence is relatively declining and it seems likely that it will decline further.

Last time I tried to indicate the progressive significance of the sit-ins and Freedom Rides, which signaled the entry of a new force in the civil rights movement -- the student youth of the South, self-mobilized in a repudiation of the reformist leadership. The party has correctly taken a positive attitude to this new force supporting all of their struggles and distinguishing between non-violent tactics where they are appropriate and non-violence as a rigid dogma excluding all other methods of struggle. We all recognize the need to deepen our contact with them as they go through their own experiences, which will inevitably teach them the lesson that their present approach cannot cope with the key question of political power in the South. The main additional thing to be noted now is that already during

this last year or so a differentiation has developed inside the non-violent movement, in the form of a more militant wing, which is to the left of and critical of King and CORE, and is controlled by the students themselves -- the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

I also said last time that I discerned the beginnings of a militant or radical tendency whose representative figure is Williams. Although I stated perhaps the conditions were not fully ripe, I thought the possibility existed for the creation of a new Negro movement that would unite Williams and his sympathizers and other new groups like the On Guard Committee and the Liberation Committee for Africa. I thought we should publicly favor such an organization and participate in its formation, supporting it while at the same time recognizing it as an independent organization that would proceed in its own way and tempo. It seemed to me that Williams himself would naturally be the chief leader and unifying force of such a movement.

It is clear now that I overestimated the immediate possibilities. In particular I misgauged the maturity of such groups as On Guard and the Liberation Committee for Africa -- a judgment I make now separate from the difficulties that developed in the Monroe case, into which I don't intend to enter here. Also, the Monroe case unfortunately made it necessary for Williams to leave the country, which seriously weakened his own movement and prevented or postponed the possibility of his serving as the organizer and central unifying leader of a new organization. So I would say today that the prospects for a new organization in the immediate future seem weaker than a year ago. But I still maintain that one is in the cards and will arise sooner or later and I repeat my conviction that we should become active proponents and supporters of such a movement.

In addition, I had some things to say last year about Negro nationalism and general new moods and trends. First of all, I think some of the things I said about nationalism need correction or modification. I tried then to make a distinction between those who can be called authentic black nationalists because they advocate a separate nation (they also oppose integration and collaboration with any whites) and those who do not advocate a separate nation but who are called or call themselves black nationalists (and who may advocate integration rather than separation or who may leave the question of integration open.)

Unfortunately, nobody in the party has offered any comment on this attempted distinction, and on my own I have become increasingly uneasy and dissatisfied with it. It begins to seem like a mere logical distinction -- I say "mere" because nobody makes it in active practice or real life. It becomes like an argument over what a word should mean because of its origin, logic and so on, in disregard of how it is actually used and what it is taken to mean by the world at large. I take the total silence of the party on this point to be a certain kind of comment, a critical and negative one, and I am ready to go along in abandoning it. But that still leaves us with the problem of defining Negro nationalism, not as a logical category but as a living force or tendency, and of working out our attitude and relations with it.

What is Negro nationalism? I am not talking just about the Black Muslims, who we all agree are nationalists. I am talking about all those who call themselves or are called black nationalists. I don't know of any satisfactory definition that covers everybody generally included by this term. Is someone a nationalist if he says Negroes must form their own organization, have only Negroes as leaders, work out their own program and tactics -- is that nationalism? We favor Negroes doing those things, we always have, but we have never called that nationalism. Should we do so now? The difficulty arises of course because outside of the Black Muslims, and a few other groups, nationalism, is still more of a mood, of a feeling, than it is an organized tendency with a definite program. But it is a growing mood and if we hope to influence Negro militants today, we must strive to understand it even if we cannot yet write an exact and all-embracing definition.

About a year ago, the Liberation Committee for Africa had a symposium in New York, at which one of the speakers was the writer James Baldwin. In the course of his remarks, Baldwin attempted a definition: "The term nationalism means, as I understand it, that a certain group of people, living in a certain place, has decided to take its political destinies into its own hand. I don't think it means anything more than that, and I know it doesn't mean anything less than that."

Now is that what we mean by nationalism -- that a certain group of people living in a certain place has decided to take its political destinies in its own hand? If so, then it coincides completely with what we have always meant when we talked about self-determination. That is, the right of

the Negro people to decide for themselves what they shall do and how they shall live, a democratic right that Marx-ists have always supported. If this is what we mean when we talk about nationalism -- the right of self-determination and a movement to exercise that right -- we have always been for it, and we must be for it now, and we should adopt a completely positive and sympathetic and active attitude toward it. It is important to note that if we use such a definition, which I think has much validity as a description of the real tendency we are discussing, then the term nationalism should not be used interchangeably with the word separatism (in the sense of a wish to have a separate nation). Nationalism so defined is an open thing. It may or it may not culminate in a decision favoring a separate nation. It is an assertion of the right to make a decision on integration or separation, rather than the decision it-self.

Recently I heard of a Negro college student in Detroit who said: "It is not integration I am interested in, but equality." I think this is a growing sentiment in the North among militants and radicals. The student didn't mean that he is opposed to integration but he doesn't think that integration is the only road to equality and he leaves open ~~alt~~ alternative roads -- that is, separationist roads to the goal of equality. Five years ago, this same student's older brother would never have thought of making any distinction between integration and equality. This, I think, expresses something new -- a shift that has occurred in the consciousness of the Negro community in the 1960's, and what is involved when people talk about Negro nationalism.

All of this is closely related to some of the signs of new moods in the Negro community, which I tried to list last year. These signs are not yet universal, nor even predominant, but I think they are spreading fast and far, and bear repeating. There is an increasing impatience with the government, with the unions, with all white-controlled groups and institutions, including radical ones. Impatience, mistrust and readiness to criticize sharply and openly -- these are part of a process of self-assertion, inevitable when a group is preparing to speak for itself. They are part of the process of making a declaration of independence, which of course always arises from the conviction that you must depend mainly or only on yourself. This declaration of independence has a message for the white world, summed up in the warning that the whites now have a last chance. The implication is that if Negroes are not granted genuine complete equality through integration soon, very soon, if change in that

direction is not undertaken seriously now, then they are going to seek it elsewhere. And the alternative to integration is separation.

The trend for many years has been toward an integrationist solution and in a quantitative sense I believe that it is still dominant. But a counter-trend is developing real momentum and genuine force. In between stand a great majority of the Negro people, no longer content to wait while other forces decide their fate, and exhibiting signs that I now feel can only be described as incipient or not-so-incipient nationalism. Organizationally, this is taking the pronounced form of all-Negro organizations. I think that we can count on the spread of this form, whatever the final program of the Negro movement will be, whether it will be for equality through integration or equality through separation. We have for a long time stressed the progressive aspect of all-Negro organizations and I am sure that we will continue to do so as this feature becomes more prevalent.

In this connection, I want to call attention to the current issue of the magazine Studies On The Left. It has two relevant articles. One is a study of Negro nationalism by a New York radical, Harold Cruze, which should be discussed some other time. The second article is an interview with Robert F. Williams given in Chicago, well over a year ago, during his Fair Play tour in February 1961. This interview with Williams deserves reading and even study by all of the comrades concerned with this question. And I hope that in reading it, the comrades will not be misled by some unfair statements about us into overlooking the many acute and correct observations it contains. Here I shall mention only one, Williams' statement: "I believe, and a lot of other Negroes do too, that we must create a black left of our own." I believe that too; at any rate I believe that that's what is coming: That when a radical or revolutionary tendency crystallizes among Negroes, which is inevitable, it will be an independent group, and that a revolutionary Negro vanguard group will not be a simple replica of our revolutionary socialist vanguard party, but will have its own unique features and stages of development. And that our party must prepare itself, starting now, to meet this radical Negro organization and to work together with it as equals and partners.

If we are to do that, we must come to grips with the new elements, the elements I have been discussing that are new in the situation since our last resolution in 1957. We

must equip ourselves theoretically and practically so that our Negro members can take their place inside this developing movement and so that our party can measure up to the demands that will be placed on it as allies of this movement. We don't know now the forms and specific characteristics of the coming Negro mass movement nor of the coming radical Negro vanguard formation. They will depend on many factors: on when the next labor upsurge occurs and how far it will go; on how well prepared the revolutionary socialist movement is to provide leadership to the many-sided struggles that will develop then; on the international situation; on where the Negro movement becomes crystallized between the poles of integration and separation; and on the combination of these and other factors. These will affect the complexity and direction of the organizational and political forms. While we don't know all these things, it is clear, however, that the Negro struggle, now in the ascendant, will continue to expand and mature and is approaching that stage of self-determination about which we have spoken at a theoretical level in the past.

What are we going to say and what are we going to do about all of this now? That is what the present discussion is about. It is a big challenge and a big opportunity. For if the brightest spot in our picture today is the existence and growth of our youth movement, which is the best assurance of a healthy future for our party, then one of the weakest spots is the smallness and relative weakness of our Negro cadre, which is a danger signal for the future of our party. If we know what to say and what to do about the new developments in the Negro struggle, then we will be able to correct and overcome that danger, strengthen our Negro cadre immensely and give new vitality and morale to the revolutionary socialist movement in our country.

Seattle, Washington
June 1, 1962

To the Political Committee

Dear Comrades:

I welcome the forthcoming plenum discussion of the Negro struggle because recent developments have brought basic questions into such sharp focus that we should have something decisive to say publicly about them.

I believe that the main objective problem is clearly the crisis of leadership: this central international political question of our epoch is now reaching an acute stage in the Negro struggle in the U.S.

I believe further that it is imperative for us to intervene in this crisis and to try to find agreement on the character, method and form of our intervention.

We have posed the question in general correctly: mass action (or class struggle) vs. reliance on the courts (or government). But the programmatic failure causing the void in leadership requires a more concrete treatment.

The crisis of leadership arises around the question: How will victory in the South be won? We should answer this question concretely, relating it to the various aspects of the civil rights and labor struggle, and to the political picture as a whole. Only thereby can we help fill the political vacuum now prevailing.

I think that an N.C. Statement on the Crisis of Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement (or a similar title) is indicated. (And if such a statement could be issued jointly by us and the leaders of the Negro Labor Vanguard group, its effectiveness would be increased.)

The following is a brief elaboration of my thinking on the inter-relationship of the Southern civil rights movement and the northern labor movement.

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Ten years ago the NAACP raised the slogan "Free by '63." As the decade wore on this slogan was gradually played down and finally dropped. This confession of bankruptcy occurred during the rise of protest in the South which profoundly shook the civil rights movement. Thus, the NAACP's traditional monopoly of

leadership was broken by the first waves of mass struggle. But no sooner did the King-CORE leadership establish itself than it, too, faced criticism and challenge from the southern youth.

The NAACP program was based upon the idea that a gradual succession of legal victories would end discrimination. CORE, more sensitive and interventionist than NAACP, says it will win civil rights NOW through gaining dramatic publicity on the incongruities of segregation and the cruelties of the Southern system: the martyrdom of freedom-riders will shame the government into action.

The present parallel program of the NAACP and CORE for voter registration in the South clearly illustrates their common aim of ending segregation via the federal government exerting pressure on the South.

That this program is futile is apparent (in varying degrees) to millions of Negroes -- to southern student fighters and adult realists, to northern Negro radicals, etc. The Nationalists, born of despair, eschew integration and pretend to prefer separation. The students are floundering, seeking answers, and the brave fighters (Monroe, Montgomery, Tallahassee, Little Rock, etc.) could become disoriented by demoralization and defeat.

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Why the present lag and confusion?

Something is missing from the programs of even the boldest leaders. Not the readiness for mass action -- but an analysis of the sociological character of the Southern regime, from which all sound tactics must flow.

In the deep South, fountainhead of racial discrimination here and throughout the world, there are no adequate channels through which the democratic process may operate so as to achieve substantial and lasting reforms. The modern Southern states were established by the violent overthrow of the democratic regime of the Reconstruction and have maintained themselves in power not through the democratic process but through terrorism. Behind the legal parliamentary facade hides a brutal police state, fascist-like totalitarianism.

Is there any serious possibility that the federal government will come to the defense of civil rights fighters and bring the South under the rule of the Bill of Rights and the 14th and 15th amendments? The government has had a century to do this and is further from it today than it was eighty years ago.

These constitutional amendments are quite adequate laws; they dictate imperatively that the government throw its entire force -- use the most drastic methods -- to maintain the integrity of the democratic republic against totalitarian denial of civil liberties.

Yet the Kennedy administration -- like all of its recent predecessors -- hopes to keep its civil rights "integrity" intact by pleading the need for additional legislation -- impossible to achieve, of course, from a congress dominated by the balance of power of the Bourbon South.

Further, the ruling class privately and the fascists publicly want to extend the Southern system all over the country. The Southern system is now shaking under attack, it is in decay and disintegration and requires geographic nationalization to survive. American capitalism requires a national police state to reestablish its equilibrium at home and internationally.

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There are no adequate Southern channels for the democratic process. (This theme pervades all of Williams' broadcasts from Havana.) The federal government with a century of betrayal and equivocation behind it and dominated by the parties of Big Business, is obviously going to do nothing which would upset the status-quo in the South.

What should the people of the South do who demand freedom now and are prepared to fight for it?

The Southern militants must set their sights on the re-establishment of the democratic regime of the Reconstruction through their own mass action; they must overthrow the police state established and maintained by force and violence.

This is the only realistic means of achieving the right to vote, the right of assemblage, the rights of individuals, the right of free speech, trial by jury, the right of labor organization, etc. This is the perspective for the Southern militants.

But it cannot be resolved by them alone. The gigantic scope of the task of destroying the present Southern political system will require the maximum solidarity, support and assistance from the workers and students of the north.

This is as it was in the struggle against slavery. With this difference: the arena of preparation for anti-slavery was in the North, carried on by free Negroes and escaped slaves. Today,

the initiative is clearly in the hands of the Southern movement -- particularly the youth.

On the other hand the workers and Civil Libertarians in the north will learn that their democratic rights are vitally and critically endangered by the threatened nationalization of the Southern system. And when they do they will be able to strike a decisive blow in their own behalf by helping to destroy the Southern system -- root and branch.

The struggle must become nationally joined; the Southern leaders can inspire a united stand against Fascism because they have the initiative, because they are the ones who see and feel that the existing state of affairs is intolerable; because they are ready to act against it.

How?

What is the instrument of the broad political struggle: The Labor Party. Only such a party could unite the Negroes and the southern white workers. Only such a party could involve the broad masses of the north in effective support and assistance.

The Southern civil rights movement has the initiative today and Northern labor would listen to its representatives. An appeal to labor by the southern leaders to help establish democracy (as a basic prerequisite for Unionism) through the creation of a Labor Party would not only be extremely effective, but would increase the ferment in the labor movement.

Short of a Labor Party, the prospect of even union victories in the South is dim. Simply mass action, on a picket-line, mass meeting, boycott, negotiation, etc., basis is not enough for victory in a police state. Indeed, it can become suicidal as has been demonstrated. Local tactics geared to the real nature of the oppressor, plus the weight of national political pressure and the solidarity of the working class: this is the formula for Southern success. This is the historical difference between union organizing in the 30's and civil-rights organizing in the 60's: the former demanded class struggle in a bourgeois democratic republic; today what is needed is class political struggle under the iron heel of a brutal totalitarian state apparatus.

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The crisis of leadership in the Negro struggle arises from the fact that the concrete elementary and universally-agreed-upon demands are simultaneously modest and unattainable

except through revolutionary struggle.

For racial equality NOW. For elementary democratic rights. For the right of labor organization. These are the seemingly simple foundations of a transitional program for the South, a program which we should elaborate and publicize now, when our intervention is sorely needed. The power of these democratic demands in the South can prove to be as overwhelming as similar demands were in Cuba.

We must propose a revolutionary struggle for democratic reforms in the South as the only realistic means of obtaining them. We propose a Labor Party as the instrument by which these demands can be won. The democratic struggle will come into headlong conflict with Wall Street and of necessity become deeper and more profound in its social aspirations.

This revolution will become permanent, and provide a great impetus and inspiration to the whole social revolution in the United States. Its Labor Party will likewise become transformed into an instrument of socialism.

Comradely,

R. Kirk

Extended Remarks by R. Kirk

Comrade Chairman and comrades, this is the first time that I have been privileged to discuss the Negro question, as such, before the National Committee. I am grateful for this privilege and hope I will use my thirty minutes well. I am presenting a variation of the traditional conception of the Labor Party in the United States, one which I don't believe I will convince you of at this plenum but which I hope you will think about and discuss within the National Committee over the coming period.

One of the difficulties of the kind of discussion Comrade Breitman launched (in the Internal Bulletin) and possibly one of the reasons for the lack of subsequent participation, is that it was a discussion which does not lead to a decision. I am quite aware that a large number of you comrades believe that we have made all the decisions we need to make and all that we have to do is to implement those decisions. But I think the symptoms deny that conception. There are symptoms that the Negro question has become a crisis in the SWP.

I want to cite some of these symptoms. First, the correspondence between Comrade Breitman and the Political Committee. I had a certain sympathy with the procedural problem that Comrade Breitman faced here, but not much political sympathy, for two reasons: (1) Anytime that I am the reporter for the Political Committee on a convention resolution on the Negro question, I will stay at the center to implement and administer that resolution and see that it doesn't go wrong. (2) I believe that the tactical difficulties encountered there, regardless of whether or not Comrade Breitman had been in the center to implement the resolution which he reported, resulted from the ambiguities of that 1957 resolution.

The second symptom of crisis is the uneasiness with which comrades view the prospects of work in Harlem.

Third, an episode involving the Hansen tour. It is with a certain amount of misgiving that I bring it up, but I think I must. Comrade Hansen is my favorite propagandist and popularizer of the ideas of Marxism. He is an eminently qualified theoretician of our movement and an indispensable component of our central leadership. And I think my great

admiration for him may give me license to abuse him a little bit. (With the recognition that I think his hide is about as tough as his mind.) Comrade Hansen, in his public presentations on all questions dealing with Latin America, the international movement, the Kennedy administration, and all other political questions was sharp as a needle and slick as glass. It was a wonderful experience to go through the tour with him in Seattle. But when he touches the Negro question in the U.S., he is ill-at-ease, embarrassingly awkward and even wrong. This demonstrates that our resolution has not even provided for the central leadership a key to a feeling of security about the future of our relations with the Negro movement.

Fourth, the fact that Comrade Barry can report that in the Negro community at Fiske University, socialism is known as a white movement. And this is true, generally speaking, throughout the conscious Negro movement. Socialism is a white movement and Negroes are willing to discuss it on the basis of this animosity; nor are we able to demonstrate in life that it is different.

Fifth, I do not believe that there are many mentors of the Political Committee who have confidence in our ability to carve out and hold a Negro cadre. And at the time of the greatest movement, the greatest development in the Negro struggle since 1895, perhaps, we have not been able to create a substantial Negro cadre. We are effective, in relation to the Negro struggle, in support and assistance; in dramatizing the conflict between the civil rights movement and the government; in exposing the Kennedy administration, the Democrats, Republicans and all the politicians. We are extremely effective here. Our lines are clear and are leadership effective. But there is something missing, because there is a great ideological ferment in the Negro community around the crisis of leadership and, so far, we have not intervened and appear to be powerless to do so.

I don't think we are going to solve these problems at this plenum today, but we can lay the foundation for solving them. I'll give you a guarantee that if this cadre puts its mind to the solution of the question, we will do it. Nothing mysterious about it. Nothing terribly complicated about it. You have to set your mind to it and think about it. You have to come before the next convention with the beginnings of fundamental resolutions, enabling us to build a cadre. That's the first thing, the building of a cadre, before we can effectively intervene anyplace, anywhere.

There is a crisis of leadership in the Negro movement born of the failure of the integrationist leadership. The center of the Negro question is not Harlem, but the South. Everything in the North and West, however severe, is derivative, subordinate and secondary to the struggle in the South, which is the heart and radiating center of the race question in the U.S. and throughout the world. And the failure of the integrationist leadership lies in its being unable to give any realistic solution to the Southern question, on the elementary, democratic level of bringing the rule of constitutional law to the South. The integrationist movement is permeated with the idea held by the NAACP, by CORE, the Southern Christian leaders, SNCC, the freedom riders, and large sectors of the radical movement, that somehow or other, the government of the United States can be forced, step by step, to help in the solution to the Southern question, and, therefore, it is around this axis that the struggle must be organized. They hope to bring democratic rights to the South through forcing the government to do something.

I want to spend just a little bit of time on this, because this idea also holds currency in the party: that if you put up a militant enough fight, you can blackmail or embarrass or in some way force the government into favorable action. This is a fatal and disastrous illusion. The government is embarrassed, it's true, but the government has been actually embarrassed over this question at least since the early days of the Truman administration. It has survived in international affairs this question through money, force and violence, blackmail, coercion and help from what Langston Hughes calls "the blacks from the American social supermarket who are available in everything from intellectuals to entertainers," who go around the world spreading the gospel of how wonderful things are for Negroes in the United States.

But less and less is the United States government becoming dependent upon international public opinion. It is more and more depending on force and coercion. And although the international pressure has its effect on government policy, and nobody in the world can deny it, it can never become a decisive force in this particular struggle. Nor can any other form of pressure upon the United States government, as long as it is controlled by the Democrats and Republicans, force the government into decisive action. The United States government will not help solve the question of democratic rights in the South. We can use the vulnerable position of the government only on occasion. We can gain tactical benefits only in those small areas where pressure on the government is effective.

Why won't the government straighten out the South? Well, the problem has vast financial ramifications which are important. The Southern system, as it is, is a source of tremendous super-profits to American capital in the days of the falling rate of profit. This tends to equalize the terrifically high wages that are paid in some sectors. But this is only a secondary aspect of the problem of the South. What is more important is that democratic rights in the South would upset the political equilibrium of the whole country. They would also unleash a revolution in the South which might have no stopping point short of the total destruction of capitalism throughout the country, and the American capitalist class and their representatives know this. They are not going to tolerate any fundamental change in the status quo in the South. They are not going to do it whatever the pressure or embarrassment.

Alright, what is going to happen? Can the regime of the deep South be reformed through the democratic process? Let us examine it. What is its origin and social character?

The regime of the deep South was founded on a counter-revolution, on the overthrow of the democratic regime of the Reconstruction by terror. Big business unleashed the terror through the instrument of the Ku Klux Klan, based on the petty-bourgeoisie of the South. A petty-bourgeois, extra-legal terror created a regime which took the revolutionary forces unleashed by the Reconstruction and beat them to death in the same identical manner that the storm-troopers beat the German working class to death. That is the origin of the Southern regime. And from a scientific and strictly factual point of view, we may say that it has a Fascist-like origin because all the components are there, except one factor of national power. It never did create a national power, but, between the years 1875 and 1895, this regime was established over a wide area, embracing a large number of people, and it has stood. It created a social system which remains to this day.

Today, however, this system is in decomposition, a condition that our classic definition of Fascism would brand "post-Fascist Bonapartism." Industrialization of the South has had two vital effects: (1) It has under-cut the middle class and reduced its privileges, the real privileges derived from the early Southern regime. (2) Industrialization has urbanized an agricultural population. These two factors have resulted today in a "degeneration" (The destruction of its mass middle class base and the creation of an effective opposition power, the urbanized Negro. - R.K.) of the regime.

But the basic political framework established by the Klan remains. We must call it a totalitarian police state, of Fascist-like origin. With the obvious important differences: that it doesn't have national power, that it is surrounded by a democratic republic, and that it feels the pressure of the democratic movement around its periphery. But all these qualifications notwithstanding, that is the nature of the regime. This concept permeates all the broadcasts that Williams puts out from Havana -- the idea of the totalitarian character of the Southern regime.

Alright, how are you going to win Southern civil rights? That is the source of the crisis of leadership. The leaders don't say how you are going to win. Ten years ago, the NAACP said "free by '63." Then they dropped the slogan bit by bit and finally swept it under the rug. CORE says we are going to win freedom now, but they don't propose any fundamentally different program than that proposed by the NAACP ten years ago.

You have to overthrow the totalitarian police state. That is what has got to be said, frankly and honestly, before you can secure democratic rights in the South. The regime has got to be overthrown. You can have any number of formulations as to how you do it and why you do it and what your objectives are. One of them, which I suggested in my letter, might be that we aim to reestablish the regime that was overthrown by force and violence eighty years ago; that we reestablish the democratic regime of that period as our mission. The question of how you formulate it is unimportant. The fact of the matter is you have to say it: that the only way to victory in the South is the overthrow of the regime.

We pose thereby a political solution to the question in the South. It is not one of merely increasing militancy -- more, more, more on a quantitative scale -- but, the qualitative problem: the overthrow of the regime and the destruction of its organs of coercion, its extra-legal means of terror.

This is a political task which cannot be accomplished by the Negroes alone or by the workers of the South alone. In order to do this, they must break through to achieve solidarity with the Northern labor movement.

We propose to Negroes a vast political struggle. What sort of instrument do we propose that they use? (There must be a political instrument.) The only conceivable

instrument we could propose, at the present time, is the Labor Party.

Negroes are going to form, as Comrade Breitman suggests, independent vanguard formations and all kinds of independent mass organizations -- but they are not going to form a Negro political party. They know that the problems are vast and cannot be solved by them alone. The overthrow of the Southern system requires a broad political party of the white workers and Negroes; the Negroes will have to lead it and this is the point upon which the Negro militants have got to set their sights.

In the beginning, this party will not be based upon the labor unions of the South, because there is virtually no labor movement of the South, and what there is of it, you can discount. The labor party will be the instrument of creating unions in the South. Until you get a little democratic foundation for unionism through the labor party struggle, which will break open the police state, you are not going to have the objective foundation for lasting unions.

You may object: that the conception of the labor party demands that it emanate from the unions. But, comrades, the objective necessity for the creation of a political movement of labor in the South is more powerful than this conception. Negroes know and feel that the South is a police state, that the Bill of Rights doesn't exist there and never has since 1885. It just doesn't exist. (We are not speaking about a pocket like Harlan county or the coal and iron towns or even a reactionary state.) We are speaking about a total regime in which the whole social life of a large community embracing millions of people has been organized and regimented for nearly a century.

If the South is a police state, if the federal government is not going to do anything about it, if there are no adequate democratic channels for reforming this system and if a broad political struggle is the only chance for freedom now -- then the overthrow of the police state demands a political instrument. There is no other road. All other programs are either gradualism or forms of adaptation to segregation.

Gradual integration has resulted in the integration of a few individuals, at the price of their abject conformity to all the ideals, standards and politics of conventional white American society. And in the meantime, a great sociological change is finally coming to a head in the

North. The urbanization of the Negro masses (and the integration struggle) have resulted in the integration of a few and the creation thereby of a large white collar middle-class saturated with conformity, seeing individual assimilation as the solution to the Negro question. This has meant the intellectual castration of the "talented tenth."

Another product of urbanization is the growth of a huge lumpen proletariat -- dissociated individuals who gravitate toward crime, dope and rackets. In an attempt to escape from this trap, which the tremendous ghetto produces for large sections of urbanized Negroes, they join cults and religious sects, many of which have nationalistic or racial aims. The foundation of the Muslim movement is basically a reflex of the lumpen proletariat to gradualism, to the betrayal of the intellectuals and the default of the union movement. Nationalism, however, is a thoroughly reactionary political trend because it can only become a vehicle for a *modus vivendi* with segregation, and the struggle against segregation is the problem of the Southern movement. That is the heart of the question.

Another product of this degeneration of the white-collar middle class is the growth of trends among a few intellectuals to play with separatism in the process of groping to establish a new leadership. We can and must cut the ground out from under nationalism by demonstrating -- at first propagandistically -- how the struggle can be won in the South. That is going to determine, in the final analysis, the question of race relations in the United States.

As Negro militants assimilate these ideas, they will find ways to place effective and dramatic demands upon the unions which will create a great stir in the labor movement. The labor union militants in the rank and file and the secondary leaders fear the South. They fear the right-to-work laws that emanate from it. They fear the extension of the Southern system. Negro militants can play a tremendous role in the exploitation of this fear to cause breaks with capitalist politics. They can expose what the union movement is asking the Southern Negroes to do: to work in and through the Democratic party and try to honeycomb this organization which was placed in power by the Ku Klux Klan in the same way that the Nazi party was placed in power by the storm troopers. As Negroes develop these ideas, they will organize an effective propaganda in the Northern labor movement.

There is at present a tremendous ferment in the Negro movement, and it is seeking these answers. We do not say you have to have socialism in order to get democratic rights in the South, although this will be the end product. We say we must have a revolution to have democratic rights. We have to have a party for this, and what better party than a labor party? A party of working people.

We must shake up the assimilationist Negroes, criticize them and expose this illusory personal assimilation as a substitute for social integration. (A job we have left to Langston Hughes and Franklin Frazier.) Condemn the betrayal of the integrationist movement. Fight for Negro leadership, for the right of black leadership of the black movement -- as we expose and refute the idea of solving the race question through racial separation.

The struggle in the South is joined and its paths have been made clear and are going to be made clearer. The enemy is segregation and Negroes are going to fight against it, for integration. This is not just what I see. That is the historical pattern of the whole social milieu of the South. Separatism is a passing phase resulting from the reformist character of the integrationist leadership, but it is and must be only transitory because there is no solution to the struggle in the South through racial separation.

We can create a Negro cadre on the basis of this program for the solution of the Southern question. We can develop and hold it and its members will become educators and leaders, not only of the Negro movement, but of the Socialist Workers Party. Only then will we be in a position to grapple with the tactical questions which appear today so imponderable.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

B. WINNICK: Comrades, I recognize that the discussion has been on a level of high theoretical value and importance. My remarks deal with practical considerations arising out of a particular milieu. Perhaps the specific experiences we have had in the past year may serve as a commentary on the differences between Comrades Breitman and Kirk.

Some of you are aware of our stumbling beginnings in Negro work about a year ago. Since that time, there has occurred a very sharp and explosive local development. The errors made in our NAACP work were, fortunately, not serious enough to terminate our continued work in that area. Last fall, the local NAACP leadership proposed a sit-out demonstration to call attention to poor housing. There was a sharp clash. The national leadership came into town, crushed this militant proposal, and, in effect, created a receivership. Within a week after this meeting, a CORE chapter came into being. We were right in the center of it. It consisted of the militant Negroes from the NAACP, some SP-SDF students, and a few "New Left" people. The new CORE chapter held the "sit-outs." The community was stirred, because something had finally happened.

CORE and NAACP then introduced a Fair Housing ordinance. This was of great political importance to us because a coalition of Democrats and Republicans in the Board of Aldermen defeated it. There was a wave of indignation. The leaders of CORE and NAACP decided to hold a joint meeting and in a discussion with me indicated they would like to see a statement adopted by the meeting. So I drew up a statement entitled "Manifesto of New Haven Negroes." It was a blast of indignation at the defeat of the ordinance, and a statement of some of our transitional demands. The statement was printed by a local Negro newspaper as an editorial, and then reprinted by the Afro-American.

We have some Negro comrades and listen very carefully to their opinions and sentiments. We recently inquired of our newest Negro comrade as to his opinion of the Muslim movement and his attitude was: "It's just another Daddy Grace movement."

The basis of our participation and the extensive influence and contact that we have in the community is the fact that we did the preliminary work: The unglamorous, dull

work (which actually proved to be very exciting) of house-to-house Militant subscription work in the Negro neighborhoods. This has established a situation in which we are involved in every development. Our prospects look good for future growth and I feel that our experience would direct my support to the viewpoint of Kirk, and a sharp rejection of the attitude of Breitman.

C. De BRUCE: Comrades, I believe the key to aiding us in dealing with and resolving the problem we are now discussing was projected some time ago. What has been lacking is our ability to implement it. This epoch is characterized by the crisis of leadership. We have been discussing ways and means of intervening in the crisis of leadership within the vanguard and a recognition of the need to intervene in the crisis of leadership within the labor movement. As yet, we have not raised the question of how we can intervene in the crisis of leadership within the civil rights movement. In spite of all the betrayals, etc., of the NAACP leadership, I think we have to recognize the contradiction within this formation. In the South, the NAACP is on the subversive list, so to some extent in the South it has some standing. In the North, the corruption of the leadership has given rise to many other organization forms, which we have been discussing. I think basic to participation in all aspects of the class struggle, the building of a left wing is key to this problem also.

The 1959 SWP convention took place shortly after the suspension of Robert Williams from the NAACP. I was somewhat amazed to find out from delegates from different sections of the country that we had opposition caucuses in local NAACP chapters. But we did not have a unified approach centered around support to Williams' struggle within the NAACP -- which we knew was coming. I believe that the key to this problem is a consciousness on the part of the leadership of a need to go into this organization. In spite of all its tedious, long and drawn out work, at the present time, these individuals are participating in the struggle, misleading it, yes, but yet they are still participating in it. By supporting those militants who are conducting a struggle against the leadership within the Negro bureaucracy we pose the question sharply on a programmatic basis, out of which may come a split. Such a split would begin with a national left wing which could lay the basis for: (1) the disintegration of the NAACP, but; (2) at the same time the formation of a

genuine left wing movement that can unite the militant section of the South, cut across and draw from the better elements within the nationalist movement and; (3) at the same time orient toward participating in the struggle for socialism. That's the fundamental problem. Now, this cannot be achieved by any "Get Rich Quick" scheme.

We propose to the working class as a whole the need for a Labor Party. The level at this stage in the South, however, is not who you are going to vote for but trying to get the right to vote. All of the struggles that have taken place in the South have been relegated to specific areas, but not in a unified fashion. This would be the advantage of a national organization and this is still the importance of the NAACP. And you can't wish it off the scene. It has to be destroyed politically and it has to be done from within, not from without. There is an analogy to this in the labor movement; the rise of the CIO from the AFL. It seems to me that this is also part and parcel of the struggle within the Negro movement. Consider for a moment the nationalist movement. It has both positive and negative sides. We should recognize that there is also an analogy to a movement of this sort. The Garvey movement arose under certain conditions at a time when the Negro people were isolated. This impelled them to unite on their own. It is a similar situation, although not identical, in the sense that here is the labor leader, or I should say labor movement, which has for all intents and purposes forgotten the civil rights struggle; a Negro leadership committed to capitalism, at a time when the colonial people throughout the world are beginning to make tremendous strides forward. The nationalist movements all support the struggles of the Africans abroad. They mourn Lumumba, but they have not accepted or discussed what he stood for. He raised the ideas of socialism and not one nationalist movement has raised that idea as yet. At least I haven't heard of it and I have talked with quite a few members. So when they talk in terms of a program towards separation I think the question we have to ask is -- how do they plan to achieve it? Basically there are only two ways to achieve separation, neither of which will help the struggle -- the class struggle as a whole nor the struggle of the Negro people in particular. That is, either by compromise, getting the capitalist government to grant so many states to all the Negro people -- incidentally, the Muslims are not talking about states for all of the Negro people. We need to be clear on that. They are talking about only those who will adhere to the teaching and religion of the Muslim movement. Anybody else is an opponent.

The acceptance of a compromise from the capitalist rulers would have this effect, it would be similar to what happened in the Arab revolution. If the capitalists felt that to create such a state would stem the tide of the colonial revolution it is not excluded that they would not do such a thing. However, in the formation of such a state the Negroes are still under the domination of capitalism which means two things: (1) they have not resolved the fundamental problem and; (2) in addition, this same movement becomes the military arm to suppress all of the Negroes for capitalism. This is the logic of the development of the movement.

On the question of supporting the right of self-determination in relation to the Muslim movement, I think we can say to them, yes, we support your right of self-determination but we say you cannot achieve it under capitalism. And if you don't achieve it by compromise, you can only achieve it through armed struggle. With a minority constituting about 10% of a population it would mean annihilation, not only of that 10% of the people, but would set back the class struggle some 100 years. We should say to them, unite with us against the ruling class to destroy capitalism. Once we overthrow the capitalists if you choose to separate, that is your right and we will support it. This is a basis for unity. There is another analogy. The 1929 depression followed the decline of the Garvey movement. You would imagine under the conditions of such a depression a nationalist movement of this sort would expand by leaps and bounds. This wasn't the case. At that time you did have the beginnings of the Muslim movement -- the one we are talking about now -- but its origin paralleled the rise of the CIO which created conflicts within the Muslims' own ranks and relegated them to a small sect. Since the rise of the CIO, the Negro workers have developed a confidence in the labor movement which has been demonstrated over the years. They have confidence in spite of the labor leadership. Within the labor movement they have learned: (1) they may gain through unity with the labor movement; (2) they have made strides forward. But they also know that they have made these through Negro and white unity. An upsurge on the part of the labor movement will have the effect of drawing to it the Negro worker, and of impelling the organization of the unorganized throughout the South. But you will have a situation where the uneven development within this country -- the North and South -- is synthesized in a dynamic movement beginning on a union level. Because of the circumstances in the South, the movement will be compelled at its outset to take the road to independent class political action which will have repercussions up North.

This in turn will impel it toward the overall struggle for socialism.

I believe the program that has been outlined for the party over the years has been correct. I think we should not get stampeded because we are tail-ending a struggle. You don't overcome it by consciousness. And that's what is demanded of the leadership at this time between now and the convention -- the consciousness that will enable us to move up to get in step with this developing movement.

A. PHILIPS: Just a comment in passing on Comrade Kirk's contribution. I, for one, would like to think about it a little bit more, but it appears to me that he is calling for a mass revolutionary party, a mass Socialist Workers Party but wants to designate it as a labor party. These are a series of stages we have to discuss in evolution. But what I am more concerned about is a point in Comrade Breitman's remarks of an extremely important character and Comrade De Bruce has already indicated its nature. In general, the revolution in this country is going to be determined by the interplay of the objective situation with the labor movement, with the Negro struggle and then the interrelationship between the Negro struggle and the labor movement.

Let's say here in passing -- before I get to the main point -- I noticed that in the discussion of activities there has been a spilling over from one to the other. In some cases almost a repetition of people. You meet them in one field, FAIR PLAY FOR CUBA, CORE or the NAACP, CAMD and even to a certain extent in the peace movement and so on, a constant overflow. Now actually, here is an indication that it isn't a question of placing equal emphasis in either one of the half dozen fields but isolating the main mass field from which the other developments occur and placing that as the major emphasis in the course of development of our work.

Now to the main point, Comrade Breitman indicated a relationship between the Negro movement and labor movement which was missing one extremely important point; and this lack shows itself all the way through to its conclusions to a certain extent, although in general, the framework, the structure of his approach, I think, is essentially the correct one. Twenty years ago there wasn't a real relationship between the labor movement and Negro struggle for one very simple reason. The Negro struggle wasn't real as

compared to what is developing today. There was no -- and this is the key point -- there was no Negro working class emerging in self-confidence and with an identity twenty years ago which could challenge the bureaucracy in the labor movement. Now this is a positive feature, not a negative feature. Some may say that the labor movement has retrogressed completely and the Negro movement has gone ahead, therefore, that is the end of it. That isn't the end of it at all. There is an important key link here, the emergence of a Negro working class increasingly, and I think we will come later to the experience in this relationship that Comrade Winnick reported on.

Now this is really key. They are emerging in a manner that makes them the link between the white labor movement and the Negro struggle. And this has a kind of dual effect. In the first place -- I wish I had the time but I don't want to take too much time -- in the first place, we are seeing concrete examples of this. They are forming a physical basis within the union movement for the emerging class struggle left wing. That's point one, but then there is a further dialectical relationship which reaches into the Negro community. That is to say, as the left-wing begins to emerge from this clear physical base it revitalizes -- it is in the process of development right now -- it revitalizes and changes the character of the Negro struggle itself.

Now flowing from that, one final and important consideration in my opinion: The question of the significance of integration vs. separation. This is a factor of considerable importance when we evaluate its strength and potentiality. There is no doubt in my mind that we have to recognize that this is a possibility and recognize that because of the impatience of the Negro masses there will be temporary tendencies in this direction. But -- and this is the significant point -- to the extent that the emerging Negro working class shapes its influence within the general struggle of the Negro community as a whole, to this extent will the separationist tendencies be defeated. Now there is a very important reason for this. You see, you can talk about separation in the abstract and on a cloud, but if you think of Negro workers working on a Ford assembly line, you find it difficult to conceive of them taking their jobs with them into a separationist movement. They are bound by the objective circumstances of their existence. Now this is a sociological factor, the urbanization, of a great deal more significance than the question of the middle classes. This is the objective factor which in the last analysis is going

to prevent the Negro movement from taking on definitive and clear cut separationist attitudes and goals and programs. Now this I think again is what we have to watch and keep our eye on.

I want to finish just by referring -- because this is really completely in line, I think, with the experience of most of us -- when Comrade Winnick asked the rubber worker what he thought about in essence a separationist movement, even though it may have not spelled itself out entirely, the answer was the answer not of a Negro as such but of a Negro worker who knows he can't take his job with him in a separationist movement. Their fate is intertwined, it's got to work out that way and as a matter of fact it is.

MYRA T. WEISS: I don't want to give Comrade Kirk the impression that whenever a Salt Laker is assaulted all the other Mormons leap to their feet, but I'm afraid I must in this instance, for while Comrade Kirk prepared Comrade Hansen for a blow, he failed to deliver it. We ended up with the information, that Joe, in his Seattle speech appeared to be ill at ease and embarrassed. I heard his New York speech and he wasn't ill at ease or embarrassed and he was not wrong and he was on the line. So that I can only conclude that in Seattle it is possible that he got a small bubble of gas in his stomach at this particular point in his speech and it made him somewhat uncomfortable. Or else he saw Comrade Kirk beginning to scowl because of basic differences they have theoretically on this question and that made him ill at ease.

Now, Comrade Kirk also said that Negroes have the idea that the socialist movement is a white movement. He said this was an expression of hostility toward us. But when Jim L. and I, in the spring of 1960, went South and visited the Negro communities and the Negro campuses we were received with a great deal of hostility until we explained that we were socialists and then we were invited to speak at their meetings. They even offered to organize demonstrations for us on the spur of the moment. I don't say there isn't an expression of hostility that they regard the socialist movement as a white movement, but it is not that kind of hostility. They regard us as an ally and a very serious ally to the Negro struggle, those who are not political as yet as well as those who are more politically advanced.

Dick warns us against the illusion that the Federal government is going to grant concessions to the bourgeois democratic demands of the Negroes in the South. I am wondering if perhaps he doesn't think that I am somewhat guilty of having illusions in proposing that the police in Seattle be asked to defend the Socialist Workers Party headquarters. I assure you that if you think that I think the cops are going to come down and defend the SWP headquarters, you are mistaken. I propose that we ask the cops to defend our headquarters as a first move in destroying the police department, root and branch. The Negroes similarly in the South make their demands on the bourgeois government knowing that they are not going to get support and that they are going to have to fight for concessions, and in the long run the most advanced know already they are going to have to make a revolution. But that is in the nature of transition, where struggle itself brings us the consciousness to win complete emancipation.

Comrade Kirk says that we should ask them to organize a labor party. If I understood him correctly, this would be the same as getting up under the organizational report tomorrow at this plenum and proposing that the SWP organize a labor party. We are for a labor party and we will certainly play a role in it when it is developed, but we cannot organize it ourselves. Similarly the Negro movement is not the labor movement. As a matter of fact they are struggling in the South to get some support from the labor movement. They can't organize a labor party. They must fight as we must fight for the building of a labor party. They will play a great role in its formation. But they can't organize a labor party and that is what Comrade Breitman was trying to point out. The failure of the labor movement to come to the aid of the Negroes has created this situation whereby the Negroes have had to rely on their own forces. We have seen develop more and more nationalist tendencies because of this default, this isolation.

Now in conclusion I just want to say that I thought that Comrade Breitman's report was very clear and I agreed with what he had to say. The trend of his thought is also the trend of my thought on this question. But there seems to have been some confusion about what he said, judging from some of the discussion. I am a little concerned about this confusion and I am sure that further discussion will clarify the question and therefore we must do all in our power to develop it here at the plenum and continue it after the plenum.

For example, I heard the idea expressed that Comrade Breitman considers the nationalist movement reactionary. And I don't think that this is so. If it is, of course Breitman will correct me in his summary. We regard the nationalist aspect of the Negro struggle, that has resulted from the default of the white workers, as due to the betrayal of the labor bureaucracy. But we believe that this nationalist movement is one of the forms of struggle against Jim Crow, against white supremacy, against the forces that rule America today and can't therefore in any sense be considered reactionary. It may have reactionary aspects to it in the sense of dividing forces that are working for a socialist revolution. But if a nationalist resents my coming into Harlem to work, this may be reactionary in a sense but it is certainly not reactionary when he shows even more militancy and capacity to fight against the white cops and organize a struggle which makes it necessary for the police department to take extraordinary measures to defend itself in the Negro districts.

We have to view the nationalist movement, the separatist tendencies in the Negro struggle from the view of the permanent revolution. There are bourgeois nationalist leaders, there are proletarian nationalist leaders and there are petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders. The proletarian nationalists are going to be betrayed by the nationalist bourgeois leaders, as the bourgeoisie always will betray the struggle of the masses who rely upon them or who are in alliance with them. Only socialism will guarantee to the workers in the nationalist movement, the most exploited, a full realization of their aspirations, free choice as to what their aspirations are. Their aspirations are not reactionary and neither is their movement reactionary in character, at least as far as I can see. Now I think that if we properly understand this movement then we can intervene in the nationalist struggle with the development of a socialist wing and find for ourselves the kind of allies that we need in the further development of our revolutionary struggle.

J. BOULTON: The most evident fact of life for the party is that we have few Negro comrades. Even the Communist Party, which profited most by the intervention of the Third International decades ago, has very few viable cadres, Negro cadres, with which to relate to the developing struggle in the South. The subjective factor in history, the conscious

revolutionary party cannot unite the struggle of white and colored workers when the main force in the class is stagnated and the relationship of the party to the main forces of the working class is one of extremely limited cadres. Now there is an enormous disproportion between the amount of time, energy and activity that our party has expended in the field of Negro work and the actual Negro cadres in our party.

At this very conjuncture in history in American life, there is a Negro mass movement evolving independently. The SWP is strikingly bereft of the necessary cadre with which to act upon that movement. Now is this an accident? I don't think so. The impoverishment of proletarian forces with which the party can act in the labor movement flows from the general conditions that have obtained in the class struggle on the whole. And these are familiar to us. They are marked by deep collaboration predicated upon the extended credit prosperity in America and upon the extended period of domination by American imperialism in the world market.

With all of our shortcomings, the Socialist Workers Party, during a period of mounting labor militancy, 1943-1947, demonstrated its ability to recruit Negro workers on a fully extensive scale. We were unable to absorb these Negro workers or even to salvage candidates for a cadre. It would be difficult to find a Negro member in the party who dates back to that period. And it was difficult to find cadre material in this human mass just because we found a disproportion totally opposite to that with which we are faced today. We had too many Negro members in relation to our available, effective forces in the labor movement under the conditions that existed at that time and given the possibilities open for us in the development of the struggle.

Now Comrade Kirk once again restates the essential programmatic basis for a final solution of the Negro question and for traditional correct political line, a political action brought up to date with the sharp features of the ascending struggle in the South. But this is really not our problem. Our problem is that of winning those elements who can develop along the road as cadres. To the Negro militants aborning the promise in the alliance of Negro and white workers doesn't have an inspiring history. This is one of the reasons for the wide variety of currents which seek a petty bourgeois policy of some kind, including that of nationalism. For the most part, their experience has been with the petty bourgeois class collaborationists, white

and colored, both inside and outside of the labor movement, and they have been compelled to search for a new road.

Breitman's report was very clear in its estimate and even in the conclusions drawn. In life, the dialectic of development reveals itself in the evolution of Negro cadres, on forces independent of the Socialist Workers Party. And he quoted Robert Williams who of all Negro mass leaders in America has arrived to that point closest to the Socialist Workers Party. We must create our own black left. Breitman implies that the party will seek, and I think it will seek, those objective conditions which will favor the fusion of our party with the cadres of their movement and in no way did I interpret his remarks to mean that they were thinking in terms of moving in the direction of forming a Negro party. Now if we face this problem, the problem of the Negro cadre, on the assumption that we have the correct orientation in relationship to the Negro movement, I think we do. Lenin once said that a party which has the correct orientation can make errors but with the correct orientation it can find a road along which victory is possible.

Now I am going to indicate what I think is most important in my concluding remarks at this time. I noted that in the discussion of Farrell Dobbs' political report there lurked a big question mark in the minds of most comrades and that is: Is this the time for a revolutionary party to grow and how can it grow? It will be possible for us to fuse our party with the most revolutionary forces within the Negro movement, primary along the road of general development in terms of viable proletarian class forces. And there is no mechanical solution to the problem, no practical political program which would make it possible for those limited forces without an active class experience in the depths of the Negro working class in America to find an easy road to quick riches. This is an implicit factor in our whole historical experience with Negroes in our own party. We cannot say that Negro militants who have the possibility for developing a serious mass movement since there is no challenge, will be capable of sufficient steadiness, that is, a sufficiently stable socialist consciousness with which to avoid all of the petty bourgeois pitfalls that are opened up to every single Negro worker who takes the road of active politics. Nowhere is there such a great concentration of forces in capitalist society which seek to corrupt the worker in one hundred different ways as there is in the relationship to the developing political Negro forces in the United States. Hence, the most principled line of

struggle for us, rather the most principled character in the general work in the party is the surest guarantee for a realization of progress on that front in the future.

L. MC RAE: Sorry I wasn't here to catch Comrade Breitman's discussion on the Negro question. But I think one of the essential points he raised, judging from the discussions I heard afterwards, and one of the points he raised in the discussion bulletin after the last convention, was the idea of our attitude toward and our activity in relation to the new moods and new trends among the Negro people. I think that at various points we clarify and then confuse, but anyway I just wanted to cite some of the things I myself felt about it. I think that what we are describing here is a crisis of leadership, as I think has been pointed out, a crisis developing because of this new independent activity among the Negro people and secondly because of this struggle to get a programmatic expression for what is to be done.

On two points I think that we could have further clarification. Number one is the question of an alliance with the Negro people, two, the labor party. I don't think that it would be in tune or in step with the moods of the Negro people at this point to come out and advocate especially or to emphasize at least, the idea of a Southern labor party. I think that the Negro people have distrust of white workers. I think the distrust of white workers to Negroes is similar. If you read the last issue of "Studies on the Left" in which Robert Williams comments on this, I think you will find that he has given a very clear expression to this. We may say that this is a deficiency of the movement. We may say that this is not going to give any forward motion to the movement, but I think that if we try to overlook this attitude, and to make this the general emphasis of our program, that we are overlooking some of the other possibilities which exist.

For instance, Comrade Breitman stated in his last discussion bulletin the idea of Negro candidates and independent political action among the Negro people themselves. I think that this particular perspective would be a lot closer and a lot more in tune with the activities and feelings of the Negro people at this point. I think that this could be the step that would lead to the formation of a labor party. It would make the whole concept of the labor party better understood by Negroes. Discussion is needed on this particular point: Can Negroes participate in political action and electoral activity on their own, under

their own program, with their own leadership, and through their own struggling with program develop this concept of labor party? But I think that we have missed a particular stage here when we come out advocating a labor party.

On the question of self-determination, for us to ignore the nature that this question has to the Negro people of this period is really to miss one of the fundamental differences that the movement has with the movement a decade ago. The very growth of the Muslims, for instance, comes because of the subtle, underlying expression of the Negro people on this question of self-determination. The Muslims have simply joined the bandwagon, so to speak. They are pressured by the responsiveness of the Negro people to advocate, at least, different forms on this question of self-determination. I think it is a true expression of the Negroes and we have to recognize consciously that this consideration is being given by Negroes. I do however feel that such leader elements as the Black Muslims have used and abused the expression of self-determination. To give an example of the different attitudes of the Muslims: Many Negroes have a rah rah attitude to the Muslims. Yes, we think it is great, when they defend themselves against the white cops that come into Harlem. We think it is great when they opposed the cops in Los Angeles. We support them and even the black press is forced to support them in these instances. On the other hand, you have the expression Comrade Winnick heard, that the Muslims are simply another "Daddy Grace" religious group that is not going to solve our bread and butter problems. Nevertheless, I think that we have to recognize the essentials of this question of self-determination.

On the question, is nationalism reactionary, I think that we have to take the question apart and study its components and put it back together again and study it. I certainly think that Comrade Myra pointed out the very progressive elements of nationalism and I think that they are not very well understood by many of our comrades. On the question of the Muslims again, I think that we have to point out again and again, concerning separatism that the capitalists would not let even the Cuban people, 90 miles away, in territory not belonging to the U.S., set up their own nation. How can they be expected to allow the Negro people to do it in Kentucky or Alabama. I think that we can talk to and even recruit some of these Muslims. Our experiences in New York have pointed this out. We are able to talk to and to a certain extent work with some of the extreme nationalist elements.

Now, one other major point, the importance of our emphasis of the Negro question. In relation to intervention one thing we should do, that is being done today, but should be done more often, is to discuss our previous campaigns relating to the Negro question. What particular objectives did we have during the Woolworth campaign? Where did we make one turn when we could have or should have made another? I don't remember this ever being evaluated. On Myra's tour, this tour made one of the most valuable contributions to this question because it documented the fact that we could go into the South as socialists and represent our views to the people there and find some reception. We should discuss further how we can follow this up. On the question of our relationship to Cuban defense activities, I think that we have failed to recognize the contact we made with a substantial number of these leftward moving Negro elements. I cite the On Guard committee as one. I've a feeling that I am on somewhat unsafe ground but I think that we certainly became aware that there was developing a leftward Negro cadre that we are not in contact with.

Now, a last point, on the question of recruiting a Negro cadre, I think that perhaps we have less clarification, more confusion than on any other point. I strongly disagree with some of the comments concerning our relationship to the Negro cadre, how much they have learned, how dependable they are, etc. But I think that this will come about through our own participation. I think that we should fight on the question of black leadership. We should fight for an independent black leadership of these movements. I think that we should encourage this trend of an independent movement of the Negroes to the left. And I think we should make organizational proposals to existing organizations to initiate, as Comrade De Bruce suggested, oppositional caucuses in some of these places. One example I remember from Philadelphia was that when they had the membership drive in the NAACP, they created a great crisis in the organization there because they were recruiting members right in front of the factory and this conflicted with the policies of the pink champagne set in the NAACP. These are just some of the things that we need to have further clarity on.

I do feel that the most essential contribution of Comrade Breitman's presentations revolved around this question of a new independent movement of Negroes and specifically with relationship to this leftist cadre.

C. FEINGOLD: I have the feeling that in this discussion, while valuable as a continuation of the discussion we had at the convention, we are dealing too much with abstractions, arguing over the possible variant courses that could develop. I have the feeling that one of our problems is that we don't have too much intimate contact with the subtleties of the movement as it already exists in this country and in the South. The Young Socialist Alliance is in a little better position, for they have had more intimate contact with this movement. In the reports and discussions at the youth convention at the end of last year the youth cadre were able to develop some ideas further because of their closer contact with part of the movement. I am not prepared now to say which is the most likely variant in the development of the Negro struggle in this country. Whether they will link up through a labor party development or through some other form with the working class or whether a development will take place which will be socialist.

I want to mention just a few facts we've gained recently by discussion with people who have been involved in the struggles in the South, particularly the organization that has been mentioned here before, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. They had a recent convention which I think was held April 30th. We were able to get reports from that convention which begin to give a little insight into the kind of movement that is developing and the people involved. First of all, it is a cadre organization and the people by and large involved in it are Southern Negroes who tend to be revolutionary minded in their approach. They come about as close to being revolutionists without being fully formed socialists that I think you will run into in this country. They are cadre types and they are preponderantly Negro. The executive committee, I believe, is composed of 19 Negroes out of 20. And the head of it was the leader of the Monroe Freedom Riders. At the convention, we were told, the discussions from the floor and the resolutions did not indicate that they had begun shifting their line. But everyone there knew that they had changed from the line of simply saying that they are for defending those who favor self-defense to that of advocating, when they go into areas, that the population in that area begin undertaking means of self-defense.

That's quite a shift. They no longer argue about the concept of non-violence as against self-defense. I asked one of the people that attended the conference whether it was well understood by everyone that they were accepting the thesis of Robert Williams. He said they understand it but

they have tactical disagreement with Williams. They think that Williams was unwise in his open formulations regarding self-defense. They think it is analagous to a union having defense guards. You don't go around bragging about it all over and you may call them educational organizations. And I thought he had a point in his criticism. But all this indicates a new shift on their part in the struggle.

I remember at the time of the youth convention in discussions with some of the youth leaders, the question came up whether the division was between those who advocated self-defense and those that advocated non-violent action. It was decided, at that point, that the division was between those that regarded non-violence as a tactic and those that regarded it as a principle. And that we could block with and support those who were engaged in forms of non-violent action because it was a form of defensive tactics which have been used by revolutionists many times. But I think it is important to take note that this movement has now shifted over, at least the key sector of it, so that they now advocate self-defense when they go into communities in the South. These are revolutionary minded young people. And they are cadre types.

Let me give you one instance of how they are beginning to think. In a recent ~~incident~~ in Baltimore where one of these young Negro leaders was arrested our comrades observed this scene in jail. This Negro militant was told to empty his pockets. He had a number of buttons that said "We shall overcome." The cops asked him what "We shall overcome" means. He replied, it means that we want to overcome white people and cops.

There were a lot of YPSL's around the place -- they are all over the South. That is the tendency down there that we have to contend with. They have a lot of members among the Negro youth but these members are more militant than YPSL and that's the good side of it. If anyone else is there they will begin gravitating to the more militant tendency. Nevertheless, after this little incident in the jail they went back to a conference and a YPSL attacked this young Negro for saying what he had to the cops. "Why did you say that?" he was asked. He replied, "I should have told the truth. We are going to overthrow the system." He didn't say capitalism, but the use of the terminology of overthrowing the system has become more common. For example, the Monroe Freedom Riders who are in New York have coined a new phrase. Instead of "We shall overcome," they say,

We shall overthrow." And I think that this is a beginning of a transition in thinking that is very important.

The substance of the implicit decision that came out of the SNCC convention of April, that no longer would they merely defend those who advocated self-defense but that they thought that this was the correct way to struggle and that they would advocate it themselves when they go into communities to organize people is also very important. What we are dealing with is a cadre that has developed independent of the party. Revolutionary minded people who we have begun to make contact with. I think it is very valuable to have this discussion dealing with the variants that may develop in the Negro struggle but we should get a closer and a more intimate feel of the actual movement by getting in closer contact with it. That is one of the reasons for Dee going down to Birmingham. The youth are exploring ways and means to get work in the deep South over the summer and also the possibilities in Monroe. I think that if we begin doing that instead of dealing with the abstract forms by themselves and the possible variants by themselves we will be able to find our way.

I think we have the first contacts, the basis for the first recruits. We are now able to have more intimate relationships with the people who are now in the leadership of these organizations. We have to deepen our contact to know what they are thinking and to begin working with them and begin forming a bridge for them to our organization. Another variant is not that there will develop an independent socialist Negro organization in this country, but, if we are quick enough and able enough, that we can begin recruiting some of these fundamental elements directly to the party and perhaps shortcut the possible variant of an independent Negro socialist organization in this country which would then have to find its link with our movement and the working class as a whole.

Summary by R. Kirk

This has been an instructive and wealthy discussion. I can't possible comment on all the very valuable contributions that all of the comrades have made to it. I want to make one or two points.

On the question of Comrade Breitman and myself and self-determination. We are self-determined to misunderstand each other on this matter and I don't know how easy it will be to remove the misunderstanding.

I do not deny that we must include somewhere in our program the assurance that when the revolutionary struggle reaches its apex, when we have overcome the class enemy, the Negro people will do as they please as far as we are concerned and we will fight for their right to do it. I have included that in all of the fundamental things that I have written on the question, but I hesitate on the phrase "self-determination" and the way it is put, for two reasons (aside from theoretical considerations).

There were several generations of militant Negro workers and intellectuals before this generation. To the original assimilationist militants the phrase "self-determination" is a red-flag issue. They say, "Stop, no more of that," because they interpret it, no matter how you qualify it, to mean that socialism will mean the continuation of segregation. That is what they think and you can't talk them out of it. These are valuable revolutionary militants and there are thousands of them and they have deep roots in the Negro struggle.

So I want a formulation that is acceptable not only to the nationalists who want self-determination but also to those who have gone through the experience of Stalinism and have come out of it with a negative reaction to the idea. To them, the phrase is loaded. It repels them and sets them upon an anti-socialist track of thinking and it make it impossible for you to communicate with them.

Secondly, there is another problem. The idea of self-determination for Negroes, in the minds of white workers, has in many cases the effect of confirming them in backward prejudices. And that is another thing we have to take into consideration when we are formulating the proposition.

Now, nationalism and its reactionary and progressive features. There is a simple formula as far as I am concerned. In so far as nationalism cuts across and dissipates the struggle for integration, I think it is reactionary and I think we must say so. That's all, that is the criteria. How does it affect the living struggle, principally and most importantly in the South? Because that is the place where the question is going to be solved; that is the source of the problem.

Comrade LeRoy, this is a crisis of leadership, not a crisis of the mass. The mass of Negroes are ready to move and have demonstrated this time and time again. We should base ourselves upon objective reality and objective necessity and try to win the leadership, win leading elements to this program of revolution in the South. The masses will develop a struggle along realistic lines.

My central proposition is: there is a police state in the South. It's got to be overthrown. You've got to have a political instrument for it. It is a democratic struggle and it would be wrong to impose the label of socialist upon it at this stage of its development; this would unnecessarily alienate people. What label are you going to put upon the political instrument which you advocate be used in their struggle for the right to vote? Negroes have only a choice of trying to maneuver with the Democratic Party for support for their right to vote or forming a party of their own, which I designate as a labor party. You find a better label for it, that's all.

Summary by George Breitman

When I saw the proposed agenda and noticed that time had been set aside for a summary, I didn't say anything because I thought I would give you a surprise, a welcome surprise, by not taking advantage of it. But during lunch, I mentioned this to some people and they expressed more than surprise, they were startled as though this was sort of an uncomradely act, certainly something we are unaccustomed to, not to grab the floor when you can. I really didn't expect to make a summary because I wasn't making a report and we don't have anything here before us to vote on, so I'll just consider this a continuation of the discussion.

First the remarks of Comrade Bill Winnick. I admire Bill very much and appreciate his remarks at this plenum. I very much enjoyed my association with him at the last convention; at that time I was rather critical about our youth movement and it seemed to me that the most youthful spirit at the convention was Bill. Perhaps it is that youthful spirit that leads him to make decisions so quickly. He quoted to us what a new comrade in his branch, a rubber worker, had said about the Black Muslims -- that it's just another Daddy Grace movement. If that was all we needed to arrive at an attitude toward a movement of such complexity, that would be fine. But it is much more complicated than that and we should be careful not to arrive at conclusions on such evidence.

In the first place, maybe this new comrade doesn't know much about the Black Muslims. And if he does know about it, maybe he doesn't yet want to tell you all that he thinks about it. This is one of the problems of communication. I urge the comrades not to jump to conclusions on this question not only because it is very complex but because I think the comrades should study the development of the discussion in our movement around it as well as make the widest and deepest kind of investigation of what is actually going on today.

This discussion goes back a long time -- to the discussion between Trotsky and Swaback almost 30 years ago, to the pre-convention discussion convention decisions in 1939, through the convention resolution of 1948, our discussions on self-determination in 1954, the 1957 convention discussion and resolution. I urge the comrades to study these things and I hope perhaps some way will be found

soon to make this valuable material more readily available to all.

I think that Comrade Kirk's description of the Black Muslim movement here today was very misleading and that we never will be able to influence people they influence or anyone else if we make that kind of analysis. The Black Muslims are not lumpen proletarians. They are workers for the most part, young workers. The Muslims recruit their people from the poorest of the poor, the most exploited sections of the Negro community, the lowest paid, the most oppressed, workers not lumpen proletarians. And there is a very wide sympathy for them and their activities among all sections of the Negro people except the petty-bourgeois elements. Even among students, both in the North and in the South there is considerable sympathy for them. I think Williams is correct in that interview when he says one of the reasons they aren't bigger is because they are a religious cult. But even so, it is a movement whose composition is working class, and until you understand that elementary fact, you're not qualified to discuss them at all.

I tried today to make some distinctions and I see that in some cases, at least, I didn't succeed at all. I tried to explain why it is imperative for us to make a distinction between separationism and nationalism. Yet I heard comrades using those terms interchangeably during the discussion. I think that's a bad mistake. When Williams says he thinks that Negroes should form "a black left of our own," what is that, what is that called? By most people that would be called nationalism. That is what people refer to when they talk about nationalism generally. Are we in favor of the formation of a black left? I think we are and should be. Well, in that case we are in favor of what is generally referred to as nationalism. So let's not use that term to mean the same thing as separationism, because Williams is not in favor of separation, and neither is that whole tendency that is now developing. They are in favor of separate independent organizations to fight for integration; at least, that's what they want so far. And that's usually what people mean when they talk about nationalism today.

I think we have to make a distinction not just so that we can have a nice clean definition but because it will enable us to develop correct attitudes toward different segments of the movement. When we come in contact

with some person or group which describes itself as nationalist, we must guard against an almost instinctive reaction against them -- that this is an enemy. On the contrary, I believe in most cases that this is a potential ally and we must re-educate the whole party to have that reaction. Because this feeling is going to grow. It is going to spread. I said before it is mainly a mood now. But I am sure it is going to assume organizational form and it is going to spread. It is going to spread because of the difficulty that the integrationists have in making any kind of serious gains under capitalism. That is why it is going to grow. And it is going to grow as more and more people become impatient with other methods, the NAACP and the non-violent methods and as they create their own organizations and then make decisions about this question of separationism, depending on the outcome of all the many factors, the labor movement, the international situation and the other things I mentioned before.

Let me try to make one thing clear -- I am not advocating separation. To do so would be to contradict my ideas on the right of self-determination. What I advocate, what the party advocates, is integration -- that is, the complete abolition of every trace of racial inequality and oppression in American society. That is what we advocate. We advocate this regardless of whether or not the Negro people advocate separation. We advocate this regardless of whether or not the Negro people actually separate into a nation of their own. We advocate this even if there was only one Negro left in the whole United States. That is our program -- we want to wipe out every trace of Jim Crow in the country regardless of what the Negro people decide about having a separate nation or remaining in this one.

We also advocate the right of self-determination. That is, we are not going to make a decision for the Negro people, as to whether they want to continue living in a society that oppresses them or whether they want to fight for a separate country where they feel they can finally have equality. I strongly disagree with Comrade Kirk on when we support this right. This is a basic democratic right. I don't think we can support it only after the revolution or at the revolutionary apex, exactly whatever that may be. I think we have to support it all the time, now and in the future. If someone can find a better way of formulating it, good, I have no objection to that. What I am talking about is the right itself, which we must recognize unconditionally now, which we must express now because what

we talk about as the right of self-determination is something that more and more Negroes are talking about as nationalism. That is, their right to decide what they are going to do, what kind of organizations they build and what they are going to do with those organizations, political or non-political.

I think we must prepare ourselves for all kinds of unusual developments. We can't know what they will be, otherwise they wouldn't seem unusual. Comrade Philips' remarks I thought were pertinent to the question of separationism. He said the auto workers in Detroit realize they can't take their jobs with them and this is an obstacle to their developing separationist tendencies. Well, first I would say that the majority of the Negro people in Detroit are not so privileged as the Negro auto workers. There are 100,000 unemployed there, most of them Negro. Most of them are never going to get back into the auto plants. There are other hundreds of thousands who have very low paying jobs, a great deal of instability and uncertainty about their lives even in Detroit. While this feeling that you can't take your job with you may block the growth of separationist tendencies, it is not necessarily going to block the growth of very strong nationalist tendencies, even among the auto workers; and nationalist tendencies contain within themselves the possibility of becoming separationist tendencies.

During the lunch period, a comrade told me about the situation developing in the National Maritime Union, which surprised me. According to him, a Black Muslim faction in the NMU enjoys the support of one-third of the whole membership of the union. I couldn't believe this at first, and kept questioning him, because I thought it must be some other kind of nationalist group, not the Black Muslims, but he was quite firm on the point. Now whatever this particular group is, it functions in this important industrial union, and it is relatively strong, and it presents many complicated problems to our comrades in the union, to which I for one don't have answers. I mention this only to indicate that problems resulting from these developments can become quite complicated and not at all easy for us to work out. Therefore we should be cautious about fixed formulas about what is possible and what is not possible in the way of development along these lines.

I feel we have made a beginning of a discussion here and I think that is very valuable for the future of the

party. I hope we will be able to continue it in written form during the next year and clarify these questions so that by the next convention it may be possible to have resolutions prepared for submission to the party and for settlement of some of these questions.