

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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Contents

	<u>Page</u>
1. On the Negro Struggle, Nationalism and Self-Determination	1
By George Breitman	
2. On the Struggle for Minority Representation	20
By Myra Tanner	

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ON THE NEGRO STRUGGLE, NATIONALISM
AND SELF-DETERMINATION

By George Breitman

Suggested reading:

"Negro Liberation through Revolutionary Socialism," resolution whose general line was adopted by the 1948 SWP convention, and which was adopted after amendment by the National Committee in February 1950. (FI, May-June 1950).

"The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution" by R.S. Fraser. (Discussion Bulletin A-19, Aug. 1954).

Additional (but less necessary) reading:

"The History of the Russian Revolution," Vol. III, Chapter 3, by Leon Trotsky (1932).

"The Negro Question in America," minutes in summary form of discussion of Feb. 28, 1933, between Trotsky and Swabek (Internal Bulletin No. 12, April 19, 1933).

"Self-Determination for the American Negroes," uncorrected text of discussion between Trotsky and others on April 4, 1939 (FI, May 1948).

"Self-Determination and the American Negro," resolution adopted by the 1939 SWP convention as the basis for a final draft to be issued by the NC, to whom proposed amendments were also referred. (Minutes and attached material, 1939 SWP convention).

"On the Negro Question" by R. Kirk. (Internal Bulletin, Vol. 14, No. 1, June 1952).

The party can only benefit from a discussion of many of the questions raised by Comrade Fraser in the article, "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution." The way he has posed these questions and the positive contributions made in his article obligate all of us who join the discussion to respond on the same serious level that he has set. It would be difficult to touch on all the questions his article raises; besides, many of them are not controversial in our party. What I want to do here, in order to facilitate a full and free discussion, is to narrow it down to the issues which I think are most important, relevant and genuinely in dispute or misunderstood -- namely, Negro nationalism and self-determination. Perhaps a framework for the discussion will be set if we pose and answer a number of questions:

Are the Negroes in the U.S. an oppressed racial minority or a race, in the sense in which that term is commonly used and understood? Yes.

Are they a nation? No.

Are they a national minority? It depends on how you define one.

Are they a national minority in the sense of aspiring to the status of a nation, like the Poles in czarist Russia? No.

Will they ever be a national minority in that sense? Nobody can tell for sure. If recent and present trends continue, they may never become a national minority in that sense. But it will depend on the course of the Negro and class struggles.

Are there national aspects to the Negro struggle? Yes.

Do the Negroes want equality within American society, or do they want to separate and form an independent state? At the present time they want equality within American society and that is what they are fighting for.

Do we advocate that the Negroes should form an independent state? No, we have never advocated that.

Will we support the Negroes in a struggle to form an independent state if that should become their wish? Yes.

I will try to show that these have been the positions of the party and that it would be wrong to modify these positions in the direction that Fraser favors.

The History of Our Discussion

Now let's take a look at the history of the question as it unfolded within our party:

In 1933 Swabeck discussed it with Trotsky. On the whole I think Fraser's account of this discussion is fair and objective. As he says, Swabeck expressed our leadership's differences with the CP's evaluation that the Negro question was a national question, and Trotsky inclined toward the CP position, not because he was familiar with the Negro question in the U.S., but out of general theoretical considerations and because he was not satisfied with the arguments of the Americans.

Yet I want to add the observation that much of this 1933 discussion seemed to be influenced by misunderstanding. Swabeck is quoted as saying, "We do not contest the right of the Negroes to self-determination. That is not the issue of our disagreement with the Stalinists." But Trotsky evidently had the impression that the American leadership did contest the Negroes' right to self-determination, and most of his remarks were directed against that impression. Furthermore, Trotsky himself did not say that the Negroes were a national minority or that they sought nationhood. What he said rather was that they might be or might become such: "The Negroes are a race and not a nation: -- Nations grow out of the racial material under definite conditions. . . We do, of course, not obligate the Negroes to become a nation; if they are, then that is a question of their consciousness, that is, what they desire and what they strive for."

Trotsky called for a thorough study of the question by the whole party, but for reasons cited by Fraser (among others) it was not made. Then came the discussion in 1939.

Here, I am afraid, Fraser is not sufficiently accurate when he writes that it "reveals Trotsky with the same general persuasion, though a little modified by the obvious crystallization of the real Negro movement around the demand for equality." At the bottom of page 2 Fraser mentions "a long discussion with Trotsky" without referring to the date, and concludes that "the overall effect of his contribution was undeniably to create an extreme inclination in favor of the idea that the revolutionary road of the Negro struggle was toward nationalism and the creation of a separate state as a necessary precondition of any assimilation." Fraser does not give the date of this "long discussion" but since he raises it after dropping the 1933 discussion and taking up the 1939 discussion, the impression created is that he is referring to the latter. This impression, though unintentional, is wrong and misleading. What Fraser is referring to by that "long discussion" is the 1933 discussion with Swabek. By 1939 Trotsky's views were much clearer and considerably (not "little") modified.

This time, in 1939, Trotsky said, "We are ready to help them (the Negroes) if they want it (the right of self-determination). As a party we can remain absolutely neutral on this. . . . We can say, 'It is for you to decide. If you wish to take a part of the country, it is all right, but we do not wish to make the decision for you.'" Although this doesn't completely contradict what Trotsky said in 1933, the idea of the party being "neutral" on the issue is a definite and considerable modification.

Continuing, Trotsky said in the 1939 discussion, "Comrade George used three verbs: 'support,' 'advocate,' and 'inject' the idea of self-determination. I do not propose for the party to advocate, I do not propose to inject, but only to proclaim our obligation to support the struggle for the right of self-determination if the Negroes themselves want it." (My emphasis.) Unlike 1933, nothing Trotsky said in 1939 could be interpreted as proposing that we "advocate" the right of self-determination.

This time, in 1939, Trotsky said quite clearly: "So far as I am informed, it seems to me that the CP's attitude of making an imperative slogan of it was false. It was a case of whites saying to the Negroes, 'You must create a ghetto for yourselves.' It is tactless and false and can only serve to repulse the Negroes. Their only interpretation can be that the whites want to be separated from them. . . ."

It was also in this 1939 discussion that Trotsky posed certain possibilities that might turn the Negro masses in the direction of separatism (a Japanese invasion, the victory of fascism -- questions to which I shall return). He did this not in order to get us to advocate the right of self-determination now, but to alert us to possible changes in the future.

The next stage in the history of the discussion is not mentioned by Fraser at all. It was the July 1939 national convention. Here not one but two resolutions were acted on at the convention: a resolution on our Negro work, and a resolution on the question of self-determination. The latter was discussed at some length by the convention. Then a motion was made to adopt the resolution "as the basis for a final draft" and to refer all the proposed amendments to the NC. The motion was carried, without a single opposing vote if I recall

correctly. (The convention was soon followed by the faction fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition and the final draft was never issued. But the resolution itself expressed the opinion of the party quite clearly.)

The resolution was far from perfect, and implied a greater possibility of the Negro masses raising a demand for a separate state in the future than we would now be willing to grant. But there was no ambiguity in it on this point:

"The question of whether the Negroes in America are a national minority to which the slogan of self-determination applies will be solved in practice. The raising or support of the slogan by the masses of Negroes will be the best and only proof required. It is inconceivable that propaganda by any American revolutionary party can instill this idea into their minds if they did not themselves consciously or unconsciously desire it."

If the Negro masses themselves raise this demand, the resolution continued, the SWP "will pledge itself to support the demand to the fullest extent of its power" but it will not "in the present stage" advocate the slogan. (A clarifying amendment by the majority of the Negro Committee, not acted on, spelled the thing out further: "The advocacy of the right of self-determination does not mean advancing the slogan of self-determination.")

That was our position from 1939 on, as decided by the highest body of the party. That was the position of the party that guided our work during the next nine years, the period of our greatest advances and successes in the Negro struggle. No one -- in the leadership or in the ranks -- raised a single question about our stand on self-determination as we approached the 1948 convention, where the Negro question was placed as one of the most important points on the agenda. And that's one of the reasons the 1948 convention resolution, finally adopted after amendment in 1950, never even mentioned the self-determination question.

The 1948-50 Resolution

This brings us to the 1948-50 resolution which Fraser in 1954 subjects to severe criticism and I want to begin by saying that I have no special vested interest in defending this resolution. In general my attitude toward past resolutions is this: If it's over six months old and you can't improve it in any way, then there must be something wrong with you -- you haven't learned a single thing from life and experience since the resolution was written. I believe it was Lenin who said that you could always tear up an old resolution and write a new one. But I don't think he meant that all old resolutions should be torn up indiscriminately, and I don't like to see a resolution attacked for faults that it doesn't really have. It is on that basis that I defend the 1948-50 resolution, which, with all its shortcomings, was the best our party has yet produced on the Negro question and in my opinion represents the best Leninist analysis of this question ever produced by anyone.

In 1954 Fraser doesn't have a single good word to say about this resolution. Only two years ago, however, he expressed himself as in

full agreement with R. Kirk's article, "On the Negro Question," which said: "The resolution gave us an integrated analysis of the basic features of the problem of Negro emancipation and how it must be solved along with the struggle for socialism." Our task, it said, is to "extend the resolution of 1948, explain it, elaborate it, concretize it, to begin to incorporate this program into the flesh and blood of the party. It has been too much only a piece of paper." If Fraser had retained this attitude to the resolution, I think his present contribution would have been much more useful to the party; he would have been able to build on our previous theoretical achievements, instead of straining to throw doubt on them. But we must grant to Fraser the same right that we grant to the Negro people on the question of self-determination -- that is, the right to change his mind. And now we turn to his criticism of the resolution:

The resolution, he says, expresses the "ambiguous and even incorrect theoretical formulations regarding the nature and direction of the Negro struggle" on which the party has been operating. While it fails to "deal directly" or "in a straightforward manner" with self-determination, nationalism and other important questions, it does "imply a definite attitude" toward them that is "theoretically and politically false." As proof of these charges he cites (page 2) a passage from the resolution. This passage is part of a larger section dealing with various complicated problems that we face and will face inside and outside the party in the struggle against race prejudice -- problems of explanation, education, integration, etc. I can't quote it all here, but the whole thing should be read (pages 95-96, FI, May-June 1950). Here I will quote only the paragraph from which Fraser took the passage he objects to, putting double parentheses around the parts of this paragraph he did not quote:

"((The pervading pressures of racial prejudice can take the most subtle forms. White workers and even union leaders in the party can find an easy escape from the hard task of combatting racial prejudice by counterposing the importance for the party of its influence on the organized labor movement, as against the Negro movement.)) On the other hand, Negro workers, ((on gaining class consciousness and)) observing the practices of equality in the revolutionary party and in certain of the industrial unions, sometimes react with hostility to the Leninist analysis of the racial and national aspects of the Negro movement ((and tend to reject it as a step backward and an unnecessary concession to Negro chauvinism)). Petty-bourgeois Negroes who find in the party not only a means of revolutionary struggle but a relief from the strains and humiliations of Negro life will sometimes oppose bringing forward Negro work to its rightful place in party life. These are not individual aberrations but reflect, each in its own way, political weakness before the bourgeois pressure ((to relegate the Negro question to a subordinate place. Only a sound policy, actively carried out, can correct and check these and similar manifestations.))"

Correct and Incorrect Interpretations

What was the object of this passage? I think it is quite plain in its context, but I will try to explain it further before taking up Fraser's astonishing interpretation. Many of the party's Negro recruits during the 40's were people who had never before been in a radical political organization, were unfamiliar with its procedures

and traditions, the way in which it works in the mass movement, why it works there, etc. (We had similar problems with white recruits during the same period -- problems of education and integration -- but they usually took different forms.) Attracted to the party because it preached and practiced equality between white and Negro, some of these new Negro members found it hard to understand that in our mass work we have to take into account the conditions, prejudices, suspicions and customs that persist in the world outside our party. Having themselves rejected Negro chauvinism, and having observed the fraternal activities of Negro and white in the party and in certain unions, some new Negro members thought it was a step backward to engage in "purely Negro work" and tended to resist work in Negro organizations:

"Why should I help to build a Negro caucus in my union -- isn't that separatism, just what we're supposed to be trying to end?" "Why should I work in the NAACP, why can't I just work in the union?" I remember that when the March-on-Washington Movement was formed in 1941 (and we played an important part in some branches of that movement) certain Negro comrades were dubious about entering it because its membership was confined to Negroes only: "But that's chauvinism; here we are trying to get Negro and white to unite, and this is an organization that won't even admit whites. How can work in such an organization help to promote our aims?" And when it was proposed that we give critical support to and work for the election of independent Negro candidates for public office, there was confusion and resistance from Negro as well as white comrades: "What -- vote for a Negro candidate merely because he's a Negro, even though he isn't a union man or a socialist! That's outright Negro nationalism, and we ought to have nothing to do with it."

These are not hypothetical situations; they are taken from the life of the party at a time when we had success in recruiting considerable numbers of Negroes. If it isn't much of a problem today, it's because our recruiting is unfortunately limited and most of our recruits, taking longer before they join the party, are better educated when they finally come in. But it will become a problem again when our recruiting reaches the scale of ten years ago. (The party will be better off, by the way, when it has more such problems to grapple with.)

And, like it or not, we've observed similar tendencies among petty-bourgeois Negro comrades, some of whom were content to be party members and engage in general party activity, but who shunned assignments in Negro mass organizations. We have known Negro comrades, even in leading positions -- there was one on our PC at one time -- who were simply not interested in doing work among the Negro masses, even though they were in a better position to do it than white members and should have volunteered for such work as a matter of course because of the smallness of our Negro cadre. (This is not a matter of "race instincts" either -- analagous problems arise with new white working class and petty bourgeois members.)

Now maybe the problem of combatting tendencies "to relegate the Negro question to a subordinate place" in the work of the party did not even belong in the 1948-50 resolution, and maybe the thoughts it sought to express were not expressed clearly enough. I myself think,

after careful re-reading, that in the context the meaning and object were plain enough, and I can't see anything "racially obnoxious" in them, although I would have no objection to improving the formulations. But even if I grant that the formulations lend themselves to ambiguous interpretations, I still deny that they properly can be interpreted the way Fraser does.

In 1953-54 Fraser's eye catches the phrase "the Leninist analysis of the racial and national aspects of the Negro movement" and he almost jumps with suspicion: What's that? "Neither Lenin nor Trotsky ever made an analysis of the Negro question," so how can anyone talk about a Leninist analysis? "However," he suddenly recalls, leaping backward in time 21 years and placing the context of the above passage in Prinkipo in 1933 and not in the U.S. in 1948-50, "there was a long discussion with Trotsky in which he stated clearly what, in his opinion, a Leninist analysis would probably reveal: that the Negroes were an oppressed race evolving toward national consciousness, and that therefore the slogan of self-determination as opposed to the slogan of immediate equality would prove to hold revolutionary content. It is true that toward the end of this discussion he modified his conviction somewhat. But still the overall effect of his contribution was undeniably to create an extreme inclination in favor of the idea that the revolutionary road of the Negro struggle was toward nationalism and the creation of a separate state as a necessary precondition of any assimilation. Taken in the context of the historical discussion this section of the resolution is a declaration by implication that we look forward to the revolutionary aspect of the Negro movement to take on a nationalist character. Furthermore, that Negro workers who react with hostility to this concept are to be regarded as expressing 'political weakness before the bourgeois pressure.'"

And on this astonishing basis Fraser has constructed his fantastic interpretation: The resolution, you see, really referred not so much to misconceptions among the members as to Trotsky's 1933 remarks as interpreted by Fraser! What it sought to do was not to guard against tendencies to subordinate Negro work but to denounce Negro members who are hostile to self-determination and independent-state slogans and who favor the party's traditional demand for full equality for the Negro people! (This is truly an object lesson in how far astray one can go by taking questions out of their proper context.)

As I told Fraser in correspondence some months ago, before he submitted the final draft of his article, what the resolution meant by "the Leninist analysis of the racial and national aspects of the Negro movement" was not something Lenin wrote in 1920 or Trotsky said in 1933, but (perhaps immodestly) the analysis made in the resolution itself in 1948-50. In the hope that he would not clutter up his article with extraneous and baseless questions, I called his attention to those earlier sections of the resolution which contain this Leninist analysis and which in my opinion demonstrate that no "self-determinationist" approach is implied in the resolution. But Fraser was not convinced. On pages 3-4 he sharply criticizes the sections I referred him to and repeats his conviction that "the resolution as a whole and in its parts, while attempting to compromise the fundamental questions, actually defends the prognosis of Negro separatism."

The Embryo "Nation within the Nation"

Let's turn now to the resolution itself and try to get to the heart of the issues in dispute. Under the section called "Negro National Consciousness" (page 92, FI, May-June 1950) the resolution in summary form describes the results of Negro urbanization, industrialization, residential and other segregation, the virtual absence of a Negro capitalist class, the impotence of the Negro middle class:

"As a result, there have developed large Negro urban communities not only in the South but in most of the great industrial cities. The Negroes especially in the North, East and West today form compact communities, overwhelmingly proletarian or semi-proletarian...

"Thus the integration of the Negroes into industry and the simultaneous rise of these Negro communities have stimulated the racial and political consciousness of the Negro people.

"With a great number of organizations of all types, with a large and varied press, a growing body of distinguished writers and spokesmen who chronicle their wrongs and protests, a fanatical pride in the history of the Negro race and the achievements of remarkable Negroes in any sphere and in any country, these Negro communities are knit together by resentment against their exploitation and humiliation by white America. In recent years the sentiment of racial solidarity and organized protest has grown by great leaps. There is now growing up an embryo 'nation within the nation.'"

Let's look at that again more closely before continuing from the resolution. Inside of the nation as a whole there have developed compact communities and these compact communities are knit together by numerous organizations and by their common resentment against the Jim Crow system. Taken together, it is correct to conceive of these compact communities as a single community -- and we do that almost unconsciously when we speak of "the Negro community." Here we must ask ourselves a question: Is this or is this not a picture of an embryo "nation within the nation"? (Please remember that in society, as in nature, not all embryos succeed in getting born.) In my opinion the resolution was absolutely correct in making this designation; it corresponds to the facts in every way. (I am not frightened when Fraser says that this is "the foundation of the Stalinist conception of the Negro question and upon which its whole structure rests." I wouldn't be impressed even if he showed that Byrnes and Talmadge had said it too. The question is not whether the Stalinists say it too, nor what false conclusions they draw from a correct premise, but whether or not it corresponds to the real development of Negro life. I challenge anyone to controvert it.)

Moreover, the significant thing about this "compact community" within the nation as a whole is that it is growing more compact, more solid, more united and more distinct, and that it has been doing this uninterruptedly for the last 18 years -- that is, since the start of the CIO. The industrialization, the urbanization, the unionization and, flowing from them, the gains won by the Negro, including his greater integration into the labor force and his bigger role in the labor movement and social and political life generally -- these have not weakened the embryonic "nation within the nation" tendency, but have strengthened it. The March-on-Washington

Movement, whose initial stages reflected the sentiments of the Negro masses better than any other movement of modern times, came into existence five years after the CIO began to accept large numbers of Negroes as members, was composed largely of Negro union members, and was willing to accept the help of the labor movement; but although it fought for the integration of the Negro into industry and the armed forces, it would accept only Negroes as members. This was a clear expression of the growing tendency of the Negro community to assume independent forms. The currently expanding movement for Negro representation in public office is another expression of the same thing. Call the consciousness of the Negro people what we will -- "racial" or "national" or both -- it is, as the resolution continues two paragraphs after the last one quoted, "rooted in the very conditions of American capitalism, has grown with them and will only disappear with them. It does not lessen but grows continuously." This general tendency, which can be documented at length if necessary, is of enormous significance for any discussion of the future of the Negro struggle.

The Uniqueness of the Negro Movement

What term best describes the manifestations of this tendency in the Negro community and its consciousness? Under ordinary circumstances, it seems to me, the term "national" or "nationalist" would be inevitable. In the forms that it assumes, in the activities it undertakes, the Negro movement closely resembles the classical nationalist movements of Europe, Asia and Africa with which we are most familiar. (Actually, of course, there are differences even among these movements.) In fact, if we confined ourselves only to the forms, it would be impossible to use any other term.

But as Marxists we study the essence as well as the forms. And when we do that, we observe that there is an important difference between the nationalist movements we think of as classical and the Negro movement. (Fraser sees one similarity and many differences between them; we see many similarities and one big difference.) The resolution sees this difference too. Immediately after noting the appearance of an embryo "nation within the nation," the resolution says:

"But contrary to similar manifestations in Europe and Asia, this feeling of racial and national solidarity among the Negro people thus far aims solely at acquiring enough force and momentum to break down the barriers that exclude Negroes from American society, showing few signs of aiming at national separatism."

We postpone discussion of the words Fraser objects to -- "thus far." The point is that the resolution clearly recognizes the major "uniqueness" of the Negro movement in this country. While manifesting traits similar to other movements that all of us agree are nationalist, the Negro movement today does not aim at national separatism or the formation of an independent state, but at breaking down the Jim Crow barriers that bar their complete integration into American society -- by fighting for full economic, political and social equality.

This difference, which is responsible for much of the confusion on the Negro question as well as for the difficulty in finding the

right terms to describe it, should make anyone pause before applying the term "nationalist." But after pausing, the question still faces us: Is this difference, which distinguishes the Negro movement from say the Polish nationalist movement, so great that the Negro movement cannot be considered "nationalist" in any respect or that it is wrong to even speak of "national aspects" of the Negro movement?

In large part, that is Fraser's opinion, and that is the basis of his position on this part of the Negro question and of his objections to the resolution. But I am afraid that it is a mistaken opinion. Why? Because he is thinking of the classical nationalist movements as they appeared in their late or even final stages -- that is, after they had reached the point where they demanded national independence. But these nationalist movements did not begin with that demand. Their original aims were more modest and less clearly defined. They had to pass through an evolution before they became representatives of the type that we associate with "nationalist."

Can we call an oppressed minority a "national minority" if it does not demand a separate state? If we accepted that as the decisive criterion, we would have to devise a new term to describe many of the groups and movements that we have characterized as "national" up to now. The truth is that most national movements go through various stages before demanding independence. In fact, as Trotsky says in his discussion of the problem of nationalities in "The History of the Russian Revolution," it took the February 1917 revolution in Russia and the great social upheaval that followed it before several of the most oppressed minorities became aroused enough to formulate self-determination aspirations, and some of them didn't do even that until after the October revolution. The Marxist practice up to now has been to refer to these as national minorities just the same. Are we now to revise that characterization for them? We would have to if the criterion of a demand for a separate state is made paramount.

The problem is complicated, however. Not every embryo gets born. Not every embryonic national movement becomes a full-blown national movement. The question, as we said in 1939, gets solved in practice. We can be sure about questionable cases only after they have passed through certain stages beyond the embryonic. Because of its "uniqueness," the Negro movement in this country must be classed among the questionable cases.

What Terms Shall We Use?

That is why the resolution did not characterize the Negro question as a national question or the Negro movement as a national movement pure and simple. At the same time it sought to indicate both the present tendencies of the Negro movement and the future possibilities of its development. It tried to accomplish this by speaking of the "racial and national" aspects of the movement and of the "maturing Negro racial and national consciousness." Were these the best possible formulations?

Fraser objects to linking the two terms as a wrong equation of "race consciousness" and "national consciousness." I must admit that

such an interpretation of the terms used in the resolution is possible, although that's not the meaning intended, and I feel a certain sympathy for his objection on this point. We're faced here with a problem of language, in part, and its inadequacies in describing unique things. We don't want the word "national" used in such a way as to suggest what Fraser calls "mechanical identification" with the Polish national movement. At the same time we want to draw attention to the important fact that the American Negro movement does assume forms that are virtually indistinguishable from those of classic national movements. Does the word "racial" by itself accomplish both these tasks? I am afraid not. It leaves out too much. It is subject to misinterpretation -- as a biological or instinctual explanation, etc. It might serve the purpose if everyone we are trying to reach and recruit could have on hand and would study Fraser's analysis of "race relations" (parts of which I consider excellent, and parts of which I am still trying to digest); in that case, perhaps the word "racial" might accomplish what we want to convey. Perhaps someone has a better term than "racial and national" aspects, used together. Perhaps it should even be "racial-national" aspects. But until someone comes along with a better term, I favor keeping the one we have now and taking the pains to see that it is used and explained properly.

"Thus far," says the resolution, the Negroes aim to break down the Jim Crow barriers to first class citizenship. Fraser objects that this is ambiguous and straddles the issue. "What is required," he says, "is not a statement of present and conjunctural trends but of the historical direction." The Kirk article two years ago said, "...for the present historic epoch the question of self-determination so far as the consciousness of the Negroes in the North, West and 'Border' states is concerned has been solved. They have definitely and explicitly determined that they want and demand immediate and unconditional social and economic equality and the right to integration as Americans. There is nothing in the Negro movement of the South which can lead us to believe that it will take a different road there. It would, therefore, be a great mistake upon our part to take a legalistic 'wait and see' attitude on this question...At a time like this, when the expressed desires of the Negro community are so clear and well known, a legalistic 'wait and see' policy amounts to skepticism of the legitimacy of the demand for immediate integration and assimilation. When asked if we are for self-determination for the Negroes, our answer should be that as far as we are concerned the Negroes have already determined what they want in American society: equality."

"For the present historic epoch" the question has been solved, said Kirk. But what he was really talking about was "thus far" and not a vague "present historic epoch" which also includes an unspecified part of the future. "As far as we are concerned," he added. But we are not the only ones concerned. Also concerned are the masses of the Negro people, who have not yet said their last word and who may develop new ideas on how to get what they want. Failure to understand this elementary fact can lead us to the same kind of ultimatic errors that we condemn the Stalinists for. "A legalistic 'wait and see' policy," he called the party position. What he meant by legalistic I can't grasp, but I protest against "wait and see" as a false and misleading description of the party policy.

There is nothing "waiting" about it. While recognizing the right of the Negroes to develop a new approach to the solution of their problems, we are not at all "waiting." On the contrary, we are now and for a long time have been giving full support to the Negroes' struggle for equality through integration at the same time that we pledge to give equally full support to future struggles for equality that may take a different form. Our pledge of support for their future struggles in no way inhibits, lessens or detracts from the full support that we give to present struggles. Consequently it is absolutely false to charge that our attitude on self-determination amounts to "skepticism" of the legitimacy of the present struggles for equality. Neither in our present or past theory nor in our present or past practice is there the slightest justification for doubting the completeness of our devotion and support to the Negro struggle. If there is one thing known about our party by large numbers of people, it is our uncompromising and unequivocal fight in wartime and peacetime on all fronts of the fight for Negro equality. There isn't the faintest particle of skepticism in our record and practice on this question. It's not odd that the critics of our policy can't point to even one instance in the decades of our activity in the Negro struggle where we exhibited any tendency to hold back or be lukewarm about engaging in and supporting the struggle; that's because no such thing EVER happened.

But aside from the tendentiousness of the charges directed against our policy, is the policy itself correct and justified? We think it is. We do not know the precise historical direction the Negro struggle will take. We do not believe anyone can give us guarantees that there will be no sharp shifts and turns as the struggle unfolds. In the present period the Negro movement is clearly fighting for equality within the framework of American society, and we support that struggle unequivocally. But the situation is too complicated, the trends are too mixed, for us to be able to say that the Negro people have determined on a final course from which there will be no changes, come hell or high water. We believe that our theory must leave open the possibility that there may be changes and that as revolutionists we will have to support the new direction of the fight against Negro oppression.

What Can Change Present Trends?

Fraser's hypothesis virtually excludes the possibility of a change. He admits (pages 36-7) that "the Negro movement might become transformed into a national struggle, or a struggle for racial independence along national lines," but only under "hypothetical historical circumstances" which he cannot take seriously and which he brushes aside much too hastily. He discusses only two, both formulated by Trotsky in 1939:

1. Trotsky said, "Under conditions that Japan invades the United States and the Negroes are called upon to fight -- they may feel themselves threatened first from one side and then from the other, and finally awakened may say 'we have nothing to do with either of you. We will have our own state.'" Fraser disposes of this thought with the statement: "But this is now an historical impossibility." Let's grant that in 1954 and for the foreseeable future a Japanese invasion or a Japanese war against the U.S. is

extremely unlikely. But let's not be so literal. If war with Japan can be excluded, war with other countries certainly can't. Trotsky chose the example of Japan because the Japanese are not whites, and that fact was likely to have a strong influence on the consciousness of the American Negroes. What about a war between the U.S. and China? That certainly isn't a historical impossibility. Leaving out the question of invasion, can't we conceive the possibility of a long drawn out war between the U.S. and China in which the Negro people, among whom there is already considerable sympathy for the Chinese people as valiant fighters against white imperialism, may feel a growing reluctance to fight and may develop separatist tendencies? To exclude this possibility is to show a rather oversimplified concept of the nature and complexities of the next war.

2. Trotsky also said in 1939, "There is another alternative to the successful revolutionary one. It is possible that fascism will come to power with its racial delirium and oppression against the Negroes. In that case it is possible that the reaction of the Negro will be toward racial independence." Of this Fraser says: "But Trotsky did not grant the defeat of the American workers by fascism, and neither do we. On the contrary, the American working class in alliance with the Negroes has the power to overthrow the rule of Wall Street and set up a workers government which will completely fulfill the needs of the Negro people for full equality." This is correct, but it doesn't exhaust the subject. We don't grant the victory of fascism, but we can't guarantee that it won't triumph either. Today, even more than in 1939, the alternative posed by Trotsky must be reckoned with in our theory. More than that: The struggle against fascism may well be extended over a period of years, rather than settled in the next two or three. Isn't it possible that during the course of this struggle the fascists may come to power in some states or even in some regions even though they will finally be defeated on a national scale? And in that case may a fascist victory not be possible in the Southern states, resulting in an intensification of racial delirium and oppression beyond anything yet known? And might not such a development give birth to or accentuate separatist tendencies that are only embryonic or latent today? In my opinion there are still many historic possibilities in connection with fascism that we have not given sufficient thought to.

Trotsky posed these two alternatives not to persuade us to advocate Negro separatism, as I have said, but to arm us theoretically against "surprises." And his list of alternatives was by no means confined to these two. Immediately after discussing the fascist alternative in the 1939 discussion, he pointed to a third alternative, which is also considered in the chapter from the "History" already alluded to -- namely, the possibility of a nationalist tendency becoming predominant in a revolutionary situation.

"The Negroes," he said in 1939, "have done everything possible to become an integral part of the United States, in a psychological as well as a political sense. We must foresee that their reaction will show its power during the revolution. They will enter with a great distrust of the whites. We must remain neutral in the matter and hold the door open for both possibilities and promise our full support if they wish to create their own independent state."

Surely this is a matter worth some attention by people who conceive of the American revolution not as a one-day affair but as a struggle that may be protracted for many months, as in Russia, or even longer. Suppose the revolution, in its early stages, remains under the leadership of reformists, and this leadership fails to satisfy the demands for equality and integration that have reached new heights among the Negroes as the result of the outbreak of the revolution (that is how, for example, the Russian reformists acted toward the oppressed minorities between February and October, 1917). Would it be fantastic to assume that in such a situation the Negro masses, say in the South (and remember that most Negroes are still in the South), might determine to hell with this setup, we want a state of our own? If anyone says this is inconceivable, I'm afraid we can't afford to take his word for it; and if we did, we'd be fools.

When we call attention to these possibilities, does that mean we think separatist tendencies will "probably" prevail among the Negroes? Not at all. Today the Negroes are fighting capitalism by demanding equality through integration. We long ago recognized the progressive character and revolutionary potential of this struggle, and support it to the hilt. We will continue to fight for equality through integration as long as the Negroes continue their fight along this line, which may be until the socialist revolution is successful. And if the Negroes should abandon this line of struggle in favor of a separatist line of struggle against oppression, even though we would support their right to do so, we would at the same time continue to fight for equality through integration (that is, against all forms of Jim Crow in American society). Consequently, there is no validity in Fraser's statement on page 3 that the resolution, by taking note of the embryo "nation within the nation" developments, "subordinates the Negro question to the national question in general." The resolution recognizes both the "racial and national" aspects of the Negro movement, because they both exist in reality, but there is not one iota of the kind of "subordination" Fraser talks about, or any other kind.

The party position has the advantage of holding "the door open for both possibilities" of development, as Trotsky put it. Fraser, on the other hand, seems to want to slam the door on one of the historic possibilities. I think he will need more persuasive arguments than he has marshaled thus far before he can demonstrate the wisdom of the policy he advocates on this question. Fraser's policy would gain nothing for us, and it might cost us dearly by leaving us unprepared for sharp shifts at crucial moments. (The claim that this policy would guard us from being misunderstood will be examined later.)

I say he seems to want to slam the door on one possibility because after arguing in effect for such a course, he turns around and says on page 37, "We declare, however, with Trotsky that in the unlikely event that history should take a different course than the victory of the revolution in this epoch, and in consequence, the Negro movement might be pushed back into isolation again, bringing forth the movement for emancipation along different lines, we will help the Negro people to achieve this emancipation by whatever road they choose without giving up our own basic program for immediate full equality."

Help the Negro people to achieve their emancipation by whatever road they choose -- that's what we say too, only we don't say it grudgingly, as if we thought it would be a catastrophe, and we say it better and without errors: (1) In our view the victory of the revolution in this epoch is perfectly compatible with the decision of the Negro masses to take a road different from the one they are traveling on now; (2) in our view the Negroes might take another road not only as a result of being pushed back into isolation again but also as a result of the beginning of the American revolution; (3) we don't think such a development is as unlikely as he does.

It is unfortunate that Fraser starts out from the assumption that a strong nationalist development would under any circumstances represent a terrible setback for the Negro, labor and socialist movements, for this assumption influences adversely his judgment on various aspects of the nationalism and self-determination issues, leading him to ambiguous formulations, misleading arguments and unsupportable associations. Before taking these up, I want to go back and clear some of the confusion off the ground we stand on:

What Is Our Meaning?

What is meant by the right of self-determination? It is a democratic right, one of the tasks that the capitalist revolution failed to execute in most places and which it falls on the working class to carry through. It is the right of an oppressed minority or nationality to decide for itself the conditions of its life, including the form of its state organization. It is the right of a minority, long recognized by the Marxist movement, to decide this question: "Do we want to live in the same state with those who have oppressed us or have not fought to end our oppression?" Let it be understood, however, that exercising the right of self-determination does not necessarily mean demanding and creating a separate state. An oppressed minority may determine that it wants its own state, and Marxists will not hesitate to grant it to them, as the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky did. Or the oppressed minority may choose to remain part of the old state, demanding only guarantees of equality and enforcement of those guarantees. Up to this point, American Negroes fall into the latter category, because what they are demanding is equality within the old state. But the right of self-determination includes the right of an oppressed minority to change its mind on this question -- to withdraw after first deciding to remain, to rejoin after first deciding to withdraw, etc. Is this clear?

What is meant by the party's obligation to support the right of the Negroes or any other oppressed minority to self-determination? It means that we recognize their democratic right to choose their own path, and that we will support their efforts to take that path. It does not mean that we advocate that they should separate and form their own state. On the contrary, we prefer that they should stay in the same state with us, and we try to convince them that this would be better for them. But at the same time we repeat that the decision is theirs to make, and that we will support them in whatever decision they reach. Here approximately is how we would put it to them: "We understand the bestiality of Jim Crow treatment that leads you to consider separating from the whites and forming a state of

your own. It is up to you to decide what you want to do on this question, and we will support you, whatever your decision is and no matter what persecution the capitalist rulers will visit upon you for your decision and upon us for our support of you. But if you want our comradely opinion, it would be better for you not to form a separate state, it would be better for you to stay with us and fight to finish off the capitalist system which is responsible for your oppression and to collaborate with your white fellow workers in building a system that will promote our common interests. We think that your interests will be best served not by separating but by continuing the fight for full equality through integration, which we shall continue to wage whether you remain in the same state with us or decide to leave it. However, if you want a separate state, we will fight for it by your side to the last ditch, and we hope that you will federate with and become a component part of our workers state when we establish it." Is there anybody who challenges that this is the meaning of our position?

What was (and in essence still is) the Stalinist position? In Moscow in the late 1920's, someone read a remark in Lenin's 1920 Comintern theses on the national and colonial questions and determined that the Negro people in the U.S. should have a state of their own. As Fraser says, the Stalinists, in complete disregard of the sentiments of the American Negroes, tried to hand them a scheme worked out to the last detail, including even the boundary lines. The fault with this scheme was that it took no account of the fact that the Negroes weren't asking for a separate state. In rejecting this scheme and this approach, we were not rejecting our obligation to support the right of Negroes to self-determination, including their right to a separate state IF they wished it, we were rejecting a bureaucratic caricature of that democratic right. Is there any dispute on this?

Returning to Fraser again: It appeared, from the last quotation of his that we cited, that though he did it grudgingly he was willing to express his support to the right of the Negroes to self-determination ("if history should take a different course than the victory of the revolution in this epoch," etc.). But in many other places in his articles he seems to contradict this view. Thus on page 3 he tells us that virtually all Negroes regard "the implication that we look forward to the revolutionary aspect of the Negro movement to take on a nationalist character" as nothing less than "a theoretical justification for the idea of segregation, separate but equal, and the whole rationalization of the racial system of social organization in the United States."

Now if this is true, and if virtually all Negroes think that our willingness to support their right of self-determination -- that is, to decide for themselves whether or not they want to separate, with us supporting them in whatever decision they make -- IF, I say, all Negroes think that that means we favor segregation and seek to justify segregation, then obviously they have a mistaken notion of the question. What do revolutionists do when one of their policies is misunderstood? Change the policy in order to end the misunderstanding or possibility of misunderstanding, which seems to be one of Fraser's motives? Or keep the policy and try to explain it better? If what Fraser says is true, then obviously we must try more clearly than before to explain what our support of the right of self-determination really means.

But I don't think Fraser could explain it satisfactorily to anyone on the basis of his article. Speaking for himself on page 2, he says that "the propagation of the idea of self-determination and Negro nationalism is a concession to the capitalist practice of Negro segregation"! According to this, ANYTHING we or anyone else say in defense of the Negroes' right to self-determination is a concession to Jim Crow segregation! If I use exclamation points here it is because I am genuinely astounded at this view. What does it leave of the Negroes' right to self-determination, grudgingly accorded on page 37? Nothing. Less than nothing. If 16 million Negroes should demand self-determination and propagate their demand, and enter into a bitter struggle against U.S. capitalism to secure it, Fraser would have to tell them that they are making concessions to capitalist segregation -- or that this signifies a change in our perspective of revolution in this epoch -- or something. A militant Negro would have the right to say to Fraser: "First you say the demand for self-determination is a concession to capitalist segregation, and then you say that you will support this demand anyhow. Wouldn't such support also be a concession to capitalist segregation on your part? Isn't this a contradiction on your part rather than an element in a 'unified conception'?"

In the paragraph just before the offer of grudging support, Fraser says we must "reject and condemn every proposal for the solution of the Negro question through racial separation, whether it be the vicious segregationism of the bosses' doctrine of 'separate but equal' or the more subtle program of the Communist Party for 'self-determination' for the Negro people. Both of these can only buttress the basic social system of Jim Crow whose main pillar of support is segregation."

Besides putting another question mark over his grudging support, this statement has other faults. We are anti-Stalinists, and we are anti-Stalinists on the Negro question, but is it necessary for us to resort to the kind of argument that will make an amalgam of capitalist Jim Crow and the Stalinist caricature of support of the right of self-determination (and by implication the right of self-determination itself)? I think it's not only unnecessary but harmful to us. We have plenty of grounds for attacking the Stalinist program for a Negro republic in the Black Belt as a bureaucratic and stupid caricature of Leninism. But why equate it with segregation by the capitalists? This is not our argument, it is the argument of the middle class Negroes and the labor leaders. Let them keep it because it belongs to them. It belongs to them because they are opposed to the right of Negroes to self-determination under any circumstances.

Moreover, I don't know for sure what Fraser means by "every proposal for the solution of the Negro question through racial separation." It may mean, and probably does mean, the same thing he says in other places -- every proposal for self-determination. But as written it might also mean he wants to reject every proposal to solve the Negro question through a program that involves independent, separate organization of the Negro people. I think immediately of the Negro March-on-Washington Movement and its "racial separation" -- its insistence that no one could belong but Negroes. Suppose a new mass movement was formed with the same rule --- no whites admitted. Would Fraser support such a movement? I honestly am not sure. For one thing (and this is the lesser reason) a literal reading of the

above passage leaves room for doubt. For another thing, his article is permeated with such a wholesale hostility to "separatism" under all forms and conditions that I really don't know what his full attitude is toward manifestations of the Negro movement that can with some justice be called "national." And it's not this passage alone that raises doubt in my mind on this score. On page 5 he says, "Although I have rejected the 'nationalist' interpretation of the nature of the Negro question I have not thereby come to regard the Negro struggle as having no legitimate independent existence." This strikes me as a strangely negative and at best passive attitude toward the most important feature of the Negro struggle -- the legitimacy and highly revolutionary potential of its independent activities (carefully expounded in our resolution). I don't want to put words into Fraser's mouth, and so I hope, because of the uneasiness he arouses in me on this most vital aspect of the Negro question, that he will express himself more clearly and fully on it when he writes again.

Anyhow, throwing everything into the same pot -- the capitalists' segregation of the Negroes against their wishes, the Stalinist attempt to line the Negroes up for a bureaucratic scheme to set up a separate state even though they don't want one, and our own position of expressing our obligation to support whatever course the Negroes choose to take in their fight against Jim Crow oppression -- is hardly conducive to clarifying the issue of self-determination.

(I think the same fault mars Fraser's otherwise useful exposition of the general historic trend of the Negro struggle toward integration. For him the two poles of the Negro struggle are "separatism and assimilation." To fit the needs of this conception he has to put both the Booker T. Washington tendency and the Garvey movement in the separatist column, although the effect of the former was to weaken and curb the struggle against Negro oppression and the effect of the latter was to stimulate it and the militancy of the Negro people. Such oversimplification would be unnecessary with another conception, here advanced tentatively: the two poles are reformist adaptation to Negro oppression and militant struggle against it. Assimilation, we must not forget, is also the avowed objective and demand of some of the worst misleaders of the Negro people, and "separatism" in the form of independent Negro organization may become the means by which the Negro people will play their part in abolishing the Jim Crow system and achieving full equality. Assimilation through separatism -- that's still a historic possibility.)

(I also forego here any extended comment on Fraser's analysis of "race relations," most of which I think is a genuine contribution to our theory and work. I agree fully with his conclusion that "Race is a relation between people based upon the needs of capitalist exploitation...Race is a social relation." (Pages 17-18) But having only a small acquaintance with anthropology and none with biology, I don't feel qualified to pass judgment on his conclusion that "The concept of race has now been overthrown in biological science." I have gone through the books cited by Fraser on this question, and I urge others to do the same. But this is a very controversial question in scientific circles, and I am not sure that the party should take a position on it for the time being. I believe we can do effective work with the concept of race as a social relation without having to pronounce ourselves on the concept that race as a biological

category has been destroyed. But Fraser has informed me that he and some other comrades contemplate writing further on this, and until we have studied further material and thought about it more I am willing to reserve final judgment on this as well as other aspects of the article.)

The Struggle Is Progressive, Whatever Form It Takes

I will finish now by returning to the possibility of an all-out nationalist development by the Negro people. Like Fraser, I don't regard this as the most likely variant (although some of my reasons are different from his, and although I regard it as more likely than he does). But unlike Fraser, I don't believe that our reaction to such a development need be fear, gloom, blind hostility, rejection or condemnation.

The Negro struggle for equality through integration is progressive in every respect, and we have been "vindicating" it all along in everything we do and say (and that includes our resolution as well as our daily activities, for there is no more contradiction between our theory and practice on this question than on any other question). This struggle serves the interests of both the Negroes and the white workers and acts as a channel through which the socialist revolution can move. Because capitalism is unwilling and unable to grant equality to the Negro people, this democratic struggle, carried to its logical conclusion, will become a part of the general movement to abolish capitalism.

But if the Negro masses, for whatever reason and despite our advice, should determine that they can't get or don't want equality through integration, and if they should determine that they want and will fight for equality through separation, that would not be any reason to despair. For the new course of the Negro struggle, which we would support at the same time that we continued to fight against all forms of Jim Crow, would also be progressive. It would not mean the end of the struggle of the Negroes against capitalism; on the contrary, capitalism would resist self-determination leading to a separate state just as strongly and just as ferociously as it now resists granting equality through integration. The conflict would remain, and might even be accentuated. The militancy of the Negro people would not be reduced. The road of equality through separation is not as straight as the road of equality through integration, and that's one reason why we don't favor or advocate it. But it would be wrong to think that a struggle along the more circuitous road will necessarily be less militant, less anti-capitalist or less revolutionary than the struggle along the straight road, or that it will necessarily take longer to win, or that it will lead to a different destination: the united action of the Negro people and the white workers against their common enemy, the abolition of Jim Crow, the achievement of socialism.

I strongly hope that the further development of this discussion will convince the entire party, including Comrade Fraser, of the essential correctness of the party's policy on the Negro question, and that we will all collaborate in integrating into the party's theory and program everything in his studies that is consistent with them.

September 13, 1954

ON THE STRUGGLE FOR MINORITY REPRESENTATION

By Myra Tanner

The Draft Resolution on the Political Situation in America proposed for adoption by our 1954 National Convention correctly characterizes the fight for minority representation in government as a "powerful component" of the struggle for a labor party. As the minorities are among the first to be victimized by the growing depression they will also be among the first who will understand the need for a break with the bourgeois parties, providing an impulsion for the forward movement of the entire class. For these reasons as well as the democratic justice of the struggle in itself I should like to contribute a more concrete consideration of the problem of minority representation in the hope that it will be helpful in the development of our work in this field in the coming year.

The majority of Negroes in America, as a result of the migrations in the Second World War and post-war period are now urbanized. The majority of white Americans were urbanized by 1920. With the movement of the Negroes from the country to the city and from the Southern states to the North and West, the standard of living of the average Negro family has improved considerably although it is still far below the standard of living of the average white family. The average income of Negro wage and salary workers was less than 40% of the average for white workers in 1939. In 1950 the average income of the Negro workers was 52% of the average for white workers. Over 50% of all Negro women over 24 years of age were in the labor force in 1951 compared to 33.6% of all white women of that age.

While Jim Crow remains a blight on the lives of all of the American people, the Negroes have been able to improve their position in the last 14 years because of the demand for labor power in the expanding war economy. The threat of losing these gains with a reversal of the condition of the labor market will rouse the Negro people to a bitter struggle. They will attempt to enlist support from the labor movement for this struggle to end the whole Jim Crow structure of America.

The NAACP's demand for complete elimination of all segregation by 1963 is a moderate formulation of the mood of the Negro people today. In the municipal election campaign of Newark in the spring of 1954, the Negroes successfully fought for minority representation. In the course of this struggle a fight between the working class forces of the Negro community and the bourgeois elements developed with the former winning the victory. In San Francisco the NAACP last spring organized a united conference of all organizations in the Negro community for selection of a Negro candidate for State Assembly. Unfortunately we were not in a position to influence the course of this movement and they placed their candidate, Kennedy, on both the Democratic and Republican tickets in the primary and he was defeated by the machines of these two parties. The Democrats and Republicans want only Negro candidates they select in office in exchange, they hope, for the Negro votes for their parties.

Another important symptom of the developing fight for minority representation is seen in the fact that all the political parties in New York City nominated Negro candidates for Manhattan Borough President. Thus the election of a Negro was assured. In this last instance the Negro community did not have the opportunity of selecting their candidate directly. But the action of all parties was an indication of the pressure that exists in the Negro community for minority representation.

As the political resolution concludes, our perspective must be to organize and lead the Negro community in the struggle for genuine minority representation in the next round of city elections as a part of the preparation for the 1956 national elections.

The Negro people constitute over 10% of the population of this country. If they were accorded proportional representation there would be about 10 Negroes in the Senate (under a more democratic system of representation of people instead of areas) and about 43 Negroes in the House of Representatives instead of two.

The biggest problem of minority representation is, of course, in the southern states. The extent to which southern Negroes are breaking through the obstacles of poll-tax laws and Jim Crow terror in their desire for political struggle can be seen in the fact that the number of registered voters increased between 1940 and 1950 by about 450%.

However, our arena for action is in the northern and western states where we have organized forces. So I shall give the problem of minority representation for those states that concern us immediately.

The first column is the state governmental body. The second gives the number of members of that body. The third gives the percentage of Negroes in the population of the state and last column gives the number of Negroes that should be elected if minority representation were granted. In parenthesis following the fourth column is the number of Negroes who were elected in 1952, which may or may not coincide with the number of Negroes holding office.

(See chart on next page)

<u>State Body</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>	<u>% of Negroes In Population</u>	<u>No. of Negroes That Should Be Elected</u>	
California Senate	40	6.3	3	
" Assembly	80		5	
Illinois Senate	51	7.6	4	
" House of Rep.	153		12	(4)
Massachusetts Senate	40	1.7	1	
" House of Rep.	240		4	(1)
Michigan Senate	32	7.1	2	(2)
" House of Rep.	110		8	(2)
Minnesota Senate	67	1.0	1	
" House of Rep.	131		1	
Missouri Senate	34	7.6	3	
" House of Rep.	157		12	(3)
New Jersey Senate	21	6.7	1	
" House of Assembly	60		4	
New York Senate	56	6.5	4	(1)
" Assembly	150		10	(4)
Ohio Senate	33	6.5	2	(1)
" House of Rep.	135		9	(2)
Pennsylvania Senate	50	6.1	3	
" House of Rep.	208		13	(6)
Washington Senate	46	2.6	1	
" House of Rep.	99		3	
Wisconsin Senate	33	1.2	1	
" Assembly	100		1	(1)

The need for minority representation is not met with the selection of Negro candidates by the bourgeois white parties. In those few cases where Negroes have managed to get elected to government bodies through the capitalist political machines we must fight for the democratic selection of independent representatives by the Negro communities.

Michigan and California had the biggest increase in Negro population. Michigan increased by 109% during the forties with an increase in white population of 17.4%. California has an increase of 116% of its Negro population with a 50% increase of the white population.

In the following cities the Negroes constitute 10% or more of the population. This chart gives the City, the number of members in the City Councils, the percent of Negroes in the city population,

and the number of Negroes that should be elected on the basis of minority representation.

<u>Cities</u>	<u>Councils</u>	<u>% of Negroes In Population</u>	<u>No. of Negroes To Be Elected</u>
*New York City	25	9.8	3
*Chicago	50	14.1	7
Philadelphia	17	18.3	3
*Detroit	9	16.4	1
*Los Angeles	15	10.7	2
St. Louis	29	18.0	5
*Cleveland	33	16.3	5
Pittsburgh	9	12.3	1
*San Francisco	11	10.5	1
*Newark	9	17.2	2
*Oakland	?	14.5	

NOTE: *indicates those cities with more than 50% increase in Negro population during the forties.

In addition the following cities have had more than 100% increase in Negro population during the forties:

Buffalo	15	6.4	1
Milwaukee	27	3.5	1

Our first task in the development of a campaign to elect Negroes to government is to study the concrete problem involved. Electoral districts are usually constructed in such a way as to prevent minority peoples from getting representation. Still, segregation in housing usually leaves a few districts where Negroes could be elected. Even where districts are gerrymandered to give the Negroes only a minority, full registration of the Negroes in addition to support from white workers through collaboration with the labor movement can make victory practical.

Once these factors are known united action can be organized to overcome the obstacles of district representation. In the first stages this action can be organized around a campaign to raise to the maximum the Negro voting strength with a registration campaign.

The movement for Negro representation has displayed enormous power. At its present stage of development it lacks a clear independent program and a militant leadership. But there are signs that indicate a considerable fluidity in the situation. The struggle itself will provide the arena for the democratic discussion of program and the selection of candidates. In such a milieu we shall find our allies among the militant union and working class forces in the Negro community.

September, 1954