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WHY WHITE RADICALS ARE INCAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING

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Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to probe into a specific area of relations between radicals and Negroes which has been given little serious attention: that of why Negroes who are more or less oriented in a nationalist direction cannot understand or agree with what white radicals are saying, and those aspects of the experiences and ways of thinking of most white radicals which block their way to any understanding of how nationalist-oriented Negroes think and feel. White radicals almost invariably have no idea of what they sound like to Negroes, and never hear the nationalist point of view in its full context. This contribution cannot come near presenting the full picture, and there may be points of importance which escape the author, and which will have to be supplemented. But white radicals are at present in a far worse position. They have virtually no comprehensive contact with the whole range of thinking of Negroes today, and are hampered by their background as American whites in using to best advantage the meager contacts they do have.

It is not the purpose of this article to present a political program, or rounded-out solutions on the Negro struggle or on the class struggle. Because of the manner and tone of presentation, it is necessary to insist here that this article is not intended to be an espousal of ~~separation~~, or attack on integration, or repudiation of white radicals and white workers. It is rather something of a guided tour of the panorama of black nationalist thinking and experiences, for the benefit of white radicals who never get to see any appreciable fragment of the whole picture and are bound to misinterpret that fragment they do get to see.

No pretense is made of presenting a balanced and rounded picture of nationalist vs. integrationist orientations. White radicals generally have little trouble sympathizing with and understanding in some depth any efforts in the direction of integration and the individuals and organizations engaged in such efforts. This article attempts to present another (not the other) facet of the total picture. No distinction is made between the various tendencies of white radicals, since all of them sound pretty much alike to most Negroes at the present time.

Radical organizations and publications have been making efforts in the direction of a confrontation of their views with those of nationalist-oriented Negroes, reflecting the increased importance and rapid growth of black nationalism in recent years. In most such encounters, however, we witness more hostility and misunderstanding than any meeting of the minds. White radicals are eager to understand, but don't know where to grope for the understanding; Negroes will "tell off" the white radicals and try to knock them off their high

horse of Marxist knowledgeability. Moreover, most nationalist-oriented Negroes are flatly uninterested in communication with any whites, radicals or otherwise. It is no subjective concern of theirs if white radicals don't understand them, they are only interested in enlightening and organizing other Negroes. This article may serve as an elementary introduction to some special features of black nationalism, with due attention paid to the peculiar background of North American white radicals.

The First Questions

You know, my cousin really digs this freedom ride and sit-in stuff. For a whole year he runnin' around tryin' to get this luncheonette integrated, gettin' arrested and beat on the head. Finally this cat get the place integrated and, you know what? Man, they didn't have nothin' he wanted!

--adapted from Dick Gregory

Should nationalism among Negroes, whether in organized or latent form, be regarded by Marxist-oriented radicals as a dangerous rival, a misleading and confusionist force objectively serving the class enemy, an obstacle and roadblock standing in the way of Negro-white unity in the fight against the bosses? Or is it an unavoidable though repulsive phase of growing pains through which some or most Negroes may unfortunately have to pass on their road to the straight and true path of the Marxist revolutionary party of white and black Americans?

Does black nationalism perhaps have anything at all valuable in its own right to contribute which Marxists can appreciate and try to channelize into the "real" struggle? Or can it serve to any appreciable extent as a dynamo of potential revolutionary energy and a battering ram against the status quo, a valuable adjunct to a revolutionary upsurge directed explicitly against the capitalist system, in fruitful collaboration with a Marxist-led revolutionary movement?

At this stage it is a step forward to even pose the questions lucidly and start to probe for some answers. Yes and no answers are meaningless; what we need to examine is to what extent and under what sets of conditions would the affirmatives to these questions become valid? And revolutionists want to know not only what the score is, but what avenues of action are open, what can be done to change things. These are the real questions, of far greater importance at the present stage than the more "basic" programmatic speculation about a far-off eventual hypothetical choice between extremes of complete separation vs. complete integration and assimilation.

The more negative reactions to black nationalism have been almost universal among white radicals of all 57 varieties (not to mention the rest of the white population, which doesn't go for integration either) for a number of reasons. Let us survey some prominent reasons.

For three decades now, white radicals have been dedicated to the struggle for integration in the United States, for getting U.S. Negroes full citizenship rights on paper and reality. Most of their contact with Negroes, and all of the contacts they consider fruitful and meaningful, have been with Negroes struggling for integration. Radicals don't understand and are not politically or sociologically equipped to understand the intense need for nationalist identification on the part of Negroes. White radicals cannot advocate nationalist policies even if they see merit in them, because of their delicate position in the American race picture. Black nationalism, once it is in full swing in its influence on individuals or groups of Negroes, eliminates any possibility of whites doing fruitful "work" in the Negro community.

Nationalism competes with alarming success for the very working class Negroes that radicals are desperate to recruit. The feeling that "they are taking away from us (and misleading) people who rightfully belong in our party" is readily entertained. Nationalists are too quickly dismissed as a bourgeois movement by radicals, not only in the general sense that any movement not dedicated explicitly to the abolition of capitalism is bourgeois, but specifically because the nationalists (and with them the working class Negroes they attract) advance such ideas as BUY BLACK! i.e., replacing the white businessmen in the black ghettos by black businessmen, attempting to set up cockroach-level black business enterprises in the ghettos. To top it off, black nationalists are not averse to displaying explicit and specific hostility to white radicals they come into contact with.

We shall attempt to discuss all these points.

The Appeal of Nationalism

Radicals, like everyone else, may fall into a rut of becoming hypnotized with familiar words and familiar concepts which have explained things before and should open all doors to be encountered. They must be wary of falling into the habit of only considering the fundamentals, as they are used to seeing them, in an area where they have no "feel," viewing everything broadly in terms of long-range concepts of a generalized nature, and complacently assuming that, by having examined the "fundamentals," they are in a position to grapple with what is really important. The white problem in the United States, and the Negroes' response to it, cannot be exhaustively studied by a ritualized treatment of such concepts as capitalism vs. socialism, revolution, peace, integration vs. separation, as such. Habits and outlooks formed thus far in the history of the radical movement, in studying Marx and Lenin, in the discussion and analysis of past revolutions, the U.S. labor movement, the history of radical tendencies in the United States, the colonial revolution, are all valuable and useful, but fail to clarify the obscure subtleties of peculiar complex problems such as this one.

The ultimate program or the definitive decision by any group of black nationalists or organization of black nationalists on the standard familiar problems of statehood, attainment of nationhood by a people, complete separatism as a program for action, how to implement

such a program, whether or not the program as a whole or this or that aspect of the program is practical, practicable, or consistent, is not of major importance at this time, and should not take up the entire attention of radicals, who are faced with problems of a different nature in their present relations with Negroes. The definitive disposal of these "basic" questions in some distant future is in fact largely irrelevant to the existence of profound, persistent, and widespread moods of nationalist feeling, total rejection of all aspects of white society that can be recognized as white, including the white radicals, and less intense or explicit expressions of these moods on the part of large and steadily increasing numbers of Negroes who are not necessarily members or followers of any organized nationalist tendency.

White radicals tend to approach the problem of the spectrum of black nationalistic thinking, feeling, and groupings in somewhat the same manner as they would approach the spectrum of white radical political groupings, i.e., as organizations with worked out programs based on some variety of European-tradition analyses of all great political problems facing the world of today, with stringent attempts to appear consistent in the light of the logic of the particular tendency and its traditions of rigid argumentation. But black nationalism is today a turbulent spectrum of moods, currents, and sects, generally with a low political level compared to traditional Marxism, but high compared to the rest of the U.S. population. Most black nationalist organizations and individuals experience no compulsion to work out, at this time, such thought-out and hair-splitting "answers" to all the great questions facing mankind, as radicals do; their memberships are frankly not interested in all the world's problems, but only in the problems of black people and, by extension, colored peoples in general. What the memberships find fascinating and exhilarating about the organizations and their spokesmen and atmosphere is that the black nationalists tell "the truth" about the white problem and the white world in which they are forced to live, that they express a clear, unambiguous, uncompromising rejection of the whole stinking mess, and, best of all, provide avenues of expression for the dignity, sense of personal and group identification, sense of national belonging which Negroes (and, for that matter, everyone anywhere) need but will find nowhere else in the United States.

Negroes will certainly not find that need fulfilled by white radicals or their organizations. For reasons which we shall examine later, white radicals are totally oblivious to the socio-psychological value of nationalist identification, and its revolutionary potential in the case of Negroes living in the United States. While some radicals may eloquently point out that the nationalist organizations have not answered all the great questions of the day, have not explained how they realistically expect to carry out their eventual program of a separate state or repatriation "back" to Africa, and that something they said once is not consistent with what they are saying now, all this is of little or no interest to the nationalists' black audience, especially as the criticism comes from the mouths and pens of whites. Aside from general race suspicion, this audience quite correctly feels that the white critics are out of touch with them.

When white radicals encounter nationalist feeling and proceed to argue against it, they almost invariably turn their Marxist swords on the various impractical and unrealistic aspects of the ultimate nationalist "program," to whatever extent such programs are delineated. There is no difficulty in logically demolishing the crackpot schemas of back to Africa and separate states for the black man on this continent. Yet this "Marxist" argumentation is sure to have no effect on the black listener. For no matter how unrealistic and impracticable the millenary program of his nationalist organization is (assuming he even belongs to one), there is no getting around the fact that the black man knows that right now he is here in America and this is certainly NOT his country, he does not feel at home here, the white people all around him in the bus and subway, on the job, are certainly not his people, their values are not his values, their outlook on the world is not his outlook, the mutual relations are cold, strained, and alienated if not downright hostile.

These facts, negative as they are, provide more than enough justification for the existence of nationalist moods and nationalist organizations at the present time. Negroes who join, support, or listen sympathetically to such organizations are not necessarily seriously interested in the ultimate "programs" espoused by these groups, but respond with sure and certain intuitive political judgment to the fact that these organizations, groups, and individuals are really "saying something," they are telling "the truth" about the here and the right now, whatever one may think of their ultimate pie in the sky. They satisfy deepfelt psychological and sociological needs common to people who do not have their own country and need to elaborate their own image to live up to, not somebody else's.

But these needs are remote from the understanding of the white radical, who does have a country. The negative aspects are of little or no interest to the white radical, who lacks any nationalist feeling. In fact, since white nationalism can only be arch-reactionary in the U.S., the white radical is much better off without it, and lack of it casts no aspersion on him. But by the same token the white radical is at a loss to understand what contribution these undeniable, ever-present negative facts, which bear down on Negroes every moment of the day (in addition to everything else obnoxious in the racist U.S. which likewise bears down on Negroes every day and which radicals do understand and fight), can make to the complex of nationalist feelings in Negroes. At the present level of political development and nationalist consciousness of Negroes in the U.S., this negative attraction to nationalism is more than adequate to sustain these moods and organizations. More political clarity, not so much about the ultimate program, but about action to be carried out right now, will be demanded from nationalist leadership as this consciousness develops further under the impact of events.

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It is common to dismiss black nationalists (particularly organized black nationalist tendencies) as people engaging in escapism, people withdrawing from the real struggle, who have much less in common with radicals than do integrationists and assimilationists.

They are commonly considered nowhere near as practical and realistic in their outlook as are integrationists and assimilationists.

This evaluation is not well grounded. Integrationists, nationalists and white radicals are all unrealistic, each in their own ways. There is some aspect of reality which they fail to see or don't want to see. In some important ways, black nationalists have far more in common with white radicals than most integrationists have. Sometimes the distinction is not clear. Negroes evincing marked nationalist attitudes are engaged in integration struggles, but are not yet interested in joining any nationalist organization or sect.

White radicals certainly do not sound realistic to blacks at this time: they have nothing substantial to offer, the white revolutionary workers they talk about do not exist in any perceptible number, the white-ally working class they speak of does not resemble the white working class all Negroes know from their daily job experience. Integrationists are impractical in the long run, leaving aside any impractical ideas or tactics they have or follow in the present integration struggles, in that their goal is to achieve complete integration into a society which cannot be completely integrated and which is not worth integrating into. Nationalist-oriented people do not object to the integration of public toilets, bus stops, etc., but quite realistically remain unmoved by the idea of being integrated, absorbed, and assimilated into the great insipid white morass of these wonderful United States of America.

The possible theoretical contributions white radicals might conceivably make to the struggle are limited severely by their total lack of feeling for, total alienation from any understanding of, the subjective need for identity on the part of Negroes as a people separate and distinct from the surrounding majority of melting-pot whites. White radicals tend to focus too much either on total integration or on total separation as end results of some long-range denouement, training their powerful Marxist telescopes on the distant mountains while wandering off the trail.

What do black nationalists have in common with white radicals? Unlike assimilationists, nationalists take no responsibility for being true-blue Americans and accepting the wonderful American Way of Life. Assimilationist Negroes want desperately to be real true solid Americans "like everyone else, just give me a chance to prove it." The self-identification with True American is something assimilationists certainly share with white radicals, who are, in the "good sense," True Americans par excellence. However, white radicals reject the foreign policy and the state apparatus, and align themselves with forces outside the United States that the U.S. is out to crush or control. In this they share much common ground with the black nationalists, who also reject the foreign policy, aspirations, and alignments of the U.S. along with everything else they reject. Black nationalists are acutely sensitive to nationalist anti-imperialist currents in Africa, to some extent in Asia and Latin America, and take great joy in every piece of evidence of the downfall of

"the white man's power" throughout the world, i.e., any defeat of U.S. imperialism or its allies anywhere in the world.

Nationalist Negroes are outspoken and adamant in their repudiation of the Gandhian turn-the-other-cheek and love-your-enemy philosophies preached by Rev. Martin Luther King and white liberals. This they share with some radicals (the revolutionary ones) and with some integrationists. Much of the popularity of the nationalists rests on just this fact, and this is already understood by most radicals.

Much more basic common ground between white radicals and black nationalists is the social composition of the black nationalists, largely working class (in contrast to the lower middle class orientation and self-image of the integrationist students). The mass following of the black nationalists, particularly of the Black Muslims, is exactly the mass of downtrodden, unskilled proletarians completely alienated from U.S. society that the white radicals need to recruit, in order to build integrated parties solidly rooted on the American scene and containing the human material with which to deal blows to the capitalist system. No matter how radicals interpret the "program" of a nationalist movement in formal class terms, the class composition of the nationalists' following should never be left out of focus.

But it is hardly the case that the nationalists are taking away from the radicals people whom the radicals would have otherwise won over. Even during the thirties, when radicals did have something meaningful to say to the black masses (namely: here are some white workers en masse and on the move, your allies in the living flesh raring to go and pitch in to help you win), nationalist feelings and nationalist movements were by no means dead and dormant. At the present time, radicals have virtually nothing to say to the black masses that communicates much meaning to them. The radicals "ain't sayin' nothin'." The people the nationalists (and particularly the Black Muslims) have been reaching have been outside the range of influence and contact of white radicals since the thirties, and many of them were inaccessible even then. While the nationalistic message rings up a resonant response, generates energy and enthusiasm unmatched by any other appeals in many denizens of the ghettos, the white radical message, even if heard, leaves the same people relatively cold. This general phenomenon, corroborated in dozens of Negro communities by the sweeping spread of the Muslim movement, is a sure indication that the nationalist rejection of white society strikes a deep response among Negroes irrespective of what their attitudes and opinions might be as to the ultimate "program," if any, implied or stated in the nationalist appeal.

Radicals will more frequently face the problem of dealing with radicalized Negroes having strong nationalist leanings, rather than Negroes actually belonging to or committed to a membership organization, in the immediate future. It is understandably irritating to white radicals, whose organizations must have a sizable Negro membership if they are to thrive and survive and grow roots in the

real working class, to see ferment and bitter anti-status quo feeling sprouting up among Negroes all over, and yet to see themselves getting nowhere with recruiting. These nonaffiliated nationalist-minded Negroes seem to be the natural recruiting material for white radical organizations, given their hard-knocks radicalism, total rejection of U.S. society, and combative potential and spirit. The main problem facing radicals is to find a bridge to these people, not to take theoretical potshots at the deficiencies in the separatist "programs."

Down South and Up South

The heroic struggle of Negro students in the South is viewed by radicals as the brightest spot in the national picture. This is a struggle which white radicals and white liberals, too, can understand, sympathize with, join in. Concomitantly, the white radicals often draw the conclusion that the nationalists are phonies compared to the freedom riders and sit-in fighters, that the nationalists are withdrawing from the real fight to escape in a never-never land. The integration struggle down South is seen as the model for all Negroes. The Southern front is seen as the central and dominant feature of the entire Negro struggle.

The only thing right about that picture is that the students and other Negroes fighting for integration under severe odds and at great personal risk in the South are indeed heroic and inspiring, and their struggle is certainly the front line in the South today. The comparisons are all wrong. Up North (or Up South, as some Negroes say) is not the same as Down South. The problems of Northern Negroes are not identical to those of Southern Negroes, however much they may have in common.

The "real" Negro struggle consists of several struggles on different fronts, all interrelated. Southern Negroes have to struggle for the most elementary rights: the right to sit anywhere on a bus, to walk on the sidewalk, to not suffer humiliation in ten thousand segregated ways, to cast a ballot in a meaningless election, to sit at a greasy-spoon lunch counter to get served tasteless food -- the list is endless. All this in addition to the problems that Negroes in the North and West of this great land have to cope with. But the focus of attention is different.

The struggles in the South are waged primarily to win aspects of integration which Negroes elsewhere already "enjoy." Negroes outside of the South are more immediately interested in higher wages, better living and working conditions, job and educational opportunities, and -- a lot more. A lot more that is not so readily formulated: a society in which they can feel at home as a people, as humans, identification in their own eyes as part of humanity. Southern Negroes want these things, too, but are immediately occupied with more elementary struggles for which they have fashioned suitable weapons for the moment.

Northern Negroes have always been lukewarm to the awkward efforts of white radicals to transplant Southern issues and methods to the North, where other problems take the forefront. There is no lack of

sympathy for the Southern front, but what the radicals have in mind in these efforts is not clear and doesn't register. Urbanized Negroes in the teeming hellholes of Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit don't have to freedom-ride on the bus or subway, they can go to the public beach in most cases, nobody stops them from voting. They can eat in any greasy spoon by legal right. Their kids can go to a token-integrated school where they will be taught decadent white American ideology and effete white American values. A Harlem Negro can take a suite in the Waldorf Astoria if he has the money and wants to splurge it that way (and if he calls in his reservation from some non-Harlem address). It's the Law.

Then why aren't Northern Negroes happy, with those beachheads of integration? Negroes in the North should seem about due for the melting pot. They have formal and legal status, even more or less the economic status, of previous ghetto immigrants (Irish, Italians, Jews) who have long since been assimilated. So why don't they melt? They have problems, true, but so did the other ethnic groups mentioned. Why this paradox of growing nationalism stronger in the urbanized and integrated North rather than in the totalitarian, segregated South? (Black Muslims are growing pretty fast in the South, too, though.)

The bulk of Northern Negroes are economically restricted to rat- and vermin-infested slum tenements and the dirtiest low-paying jobs. But this was true of immigrant groups in the past. As long as they knew some of their brethren had made it to "success" and had hope for their children rising up in the American world, they didn't lose faith in the American Way. A few became radicals, but lost any interest in "that nonsense" as the society managed to absorb them. At no time was there a mass rejection of America comparable to what we see among Negroes today.

If Negroes in the North and West were headed straight into the American melting pot, with the unquestioned goal of becoming assimilated as have the various waves of immigrants from Europe, and even Oriental immigrants, then integration, and gradual integration at that, would be on the order of the day, with no serious challenge from any quarter. True, one ethnic group may have a harder time getting into the melting pot than another, but it's all a matter of degree. It would only be a matter of time and grit before significant numbers of Negroes had made it. Nationalism would be at best something to amuse a few old cronies born in the South who never adjusted to Big City life.

Would radicals then be happier, seeing the urban Negro population all solidly in favor of integration and assimilation? Negroes in the North all "enjoy" to one extent or another the very elemental rights which Negroes in the South are presently struggling for. Yet it is precisely in the urban Negro proletariat that black nationalism finds its most fertile soil. Why should this be a source of distress, annoyance, and chagrin to white radicals who are for fundamental changes and not just assimilation of Negroes into the status quo? The radicals would never have been able to influence these people, and don't know what to say to them anyway.

A radicalization of these masses through a mechanism operating independently, infusing self-confidence, self-expression, powered by the tremendous appeal imparted by nationalist fervor, providing an avenue for the organization into a mass movement of previously politically unorganized and voiceless masses seething with hatred for the status quo -- all this should be good reason for optimism among revolutionists. It might not be exactly what they expected, it is certainly not entirely to their liking or understanding, being out of their control; it is far from being an ideal political vehicle for revolutionary change. But it is a thousand times better than the alternative picture of the same tens of thousands of Negroes sitting it out patiently in the illusion of getting their chance to cash in on the American Dream.

The implications of this massive swing toward nationalism are deadly for the prospects of the survival of the American Way. Of course, nationalist sentiment among Negroes, raised to whatever fever pitch, is not going to automatically alter the status quo. But it should be obvious that this is only the beginning of a process, not the end stages. And even at this early stage, the promise of integration into the American Way of Life is empty and insipid to hosts of Negroes.

James Baldwin quotes a friend, who he says is not a nationalist: "I might consider being integrated into something else, an American society more real and more honest -- but this? No, thank you, man, who needs it?" (Nobody Knows My Name)

It is no tragedy, then, that so many Negroes are not wild about more integration and still more. The problem ahead is that nationalist organizations are geared more toward expression of sentiment than toward action. Radicals should put their minds to work to probe out suitable courses of action -- for nationalists, left nationalists, as well as integrationists, in collaboration with radicals.

There is a tragi-comic aspect in the spectacle of white radicals moaning that Negroes reject the society that the radicals themselves say history has condemned.

Thinking Black

In the eyes of most Negroes, white radicals appear to be far more attached to U.S. society than black nationalists are. This should come as a surprise to radicals. In the white-radical framework of reasoning, the radical has the truly fundamental approach in explicitly stating a decision for socialism and against capitalism, thus definitively rejecting U.S. class society in a manner matched by no other trend in society in the profundity and sweep of the break with the status quo. Emotionally, however, white radicals are more or less in harmony and even in love with America and with American atmosphere (with American culture, if such a thing can be said to exist) and feel very much at home in the United States -- their country. Of course, they are intensely interested in reforming this society through some revolutionary change. Their break is with bourgeois society, not with U.S. society, in the sense of the American people and its "culture."

Black nationalists, on the other hand, do not feel at all at home in the United States or among their allegedly fellow Americans. No Negroes do, to tell the truth. Just as the society rejects them, black nationalists reject every aspect of that white society which they identify as white. Remember that it is not just the bourgeois class society which rejects Negroes, but the whole of the U.S. society, which is referred to here as "white society." Negroes have the choice of trying to turn themselves inside out to live up to this white society and its values or rejecting this society and seeking values of their own.

A dominant culture decides for itself and for "everybody" what is normal, sane, in good taste; it sets the standards for maturity, intelligence, morality, and human nature. Those aspects of human behavior which the dominant culture represses or assigns a low value to are looked upon with revulsion and ridicule, and considered a badge of inferiority. The dominant group projects its repressions onto the groups it dominates and despises the latter for not kowtowing to the master group's values. The victimized group may chafe under the "stereotypes" or may attempt to assert its own values. Assimilationist James Baldwin states the case: "One had the choice of either 'acting just like a nigger' or of not 'acting just like a nigger' -- and only those who have tried it know how impossible it is to tell the difference." (Nobody Knows My Name)

A Negro is nationalist in direct proportion to the extent of his rejection of this white society and his self-identification with Negroes as a distinct people. Black nationalists entertain no hope or interest in improving any aspect of U.S. society, not even through a white people's revolution to come about in some far-off millenium. Black nationalists can find nothing good about the United States and its white people that might interest them: the materialistic TV-crazy chrome-plated-commodity-happy H-bomb-wielding paradise of the white man has nothing to offer Negroes even if the greasy spoons, public toilets, movie houses and public schools were integrated.

The white U.S. has no music worthy of the name, no indigenous culture, no soul, no life, no poetry, no national purpose, no meaningful goals, no desirable friends abroad, no understanding of the world and its people, no genuine fraternal links with other peoples struggling to build a better world, no appreciably large mass of poor white people who appear to offer a reasonable prospect of being allies of the Negroes in the foreseeable future. Even the white-led labor movement and the white U.S. Communist Party are shoddy specimens compared to their counterparts in other countries.

Unlike youth in the newly developing African countries, Negro students have no prospect of studying and making their living in the service of their people, say as engineers, technicians, organizers of industry, statesmen. Liberals and radicals are generally aware of the crushing of incentive in Negro children faced with few prospects of getting decent jobs and opportunities. But the fact of not having a society to grow up into is at least as devastating. A few individual Negroes can achieve American-style "success," they can have their

pictures in EBONY as the First Member of the Negro Race to achieve such and such a position pulling down so many thousand dollars a year salary. But this "success" will be in the service of an alien society and alien people, and measured by the yardsticks of an alien culture.

Unlike Negroes of any persuasion, white radicals along with all other melting-pot whites in the U.S. genuinely feel that this is their country not just in words but deep down in their bones. White radicals seek to identify with the country's alleged revolutionary traditions from way back 200 years ago, and feel they are the realest and truest Americans. For Negroes, nationalist or not, this is self-deception and escapism. Negroes may be physically in America, and their ancestors may have been here longer than some white families, but Negroes are not Americans if that word properly describes the white population. Negroes have never been Americans, perhaps never will be Americans, and do not want to be or become such Americans (i.e., share the empty, cold, materialistic, selfish Madison-Avenue-touted Way of Life).

White radicals have nothing in their experience that equips them to understand this complex of feeling in a real human sense. White radicals know from a distance, and in the abstract, of the powerful attraction of nationalist feeling in other countries, other revolutions. They can glibly quote from great Marxist thinkers on the subject of nationalism and self-determination. In dealing with black nationalism in the U.S., white radicals attempt to apply their Marxist understanding in a groping, clumsy way, usually contrasting the extreme abstraction of complete all-out assimilationist integrationism into America-as-it-is to the extreme of separatism and "back" to Africa. White radicals are capable of writing erudite documents replete with excellent quotes from Marx and Lenin pertinent to these two extreme variants, spend much time discussing the history of their faction fights on the subject, note with satisfaction how far their white-radical rivals stray from the correct Marxist approach on the subject, but remain deaf and blind to what Negroes are really concerned about in that area.

Buying Black

Capitalism vs. socialism is not a crucial subjective issue to Negroes at this time. While any trained radical can point to some conceivable danger resulting in some conceivable situation from this ambiguity, radicals are out of their sense of proportion in attaching undue importance to the lack of explicit stands against capitalism per se on the part of Negroes not already recruited to radical parties.

Why should Negroes in the U.S. get worked up against the concept of capitalism as such? What in their experience would favor or hinder such an attitude? And why should their lack of interest in this great Fundamental Question be misinterpreted into some sort of acquiescence in capitalism as such? The answer to the latter question is found in the formalistic and dogmatic approach common in the thinking of many white radicals (and in most people, of course; radicals have no monopoly on rigid and mechanical thinking). Since capitalism vs. socialism is the basic question to the white radical, he is ready to

judge and catalog other individuals and tendencies on how they respond to that question. As long as the cataloguing encompasses social entities in the white world which he understands, the white radical categorizes well. Whites could be radically opposed to the status quo only insofar as they take an explicitly anti-capitalist stand.

But Negroes are already a solid phalanx of non-capitalist mass, at the bottom of the social heap and in a state of continual economic depression. There is very little of anything that deserves the name Negro middle class, and no representation in the ruling class whatsoever. There are individual assimilated and ultra-assimilated Negroes in higher echelons of government service, and two (2) Negroes now on the Stock Exchange. But this constitutes no independent social force sharing even a tiny fraction of power with the white ruling class. Black capitalism in the U.S. is nonexistent as a social force, to the point of the concept being ludicrous.

While U.S. Negroes are anything but explicitly pro-capitalist, the confrontation of socialism vs. capitalism as a concept leaves them cold for the most part. This is natural, since what U.S. Negroes face is a hostile white world, with all sections and income levels of the surrounding white world, from the Rockefellers and Kennedys on down to the poor white worker and farmer, arrayed against them in hostility, frigidity, and contempt. In this hostile bloc of all classes, the white capitalist class does not stand out any more sharply than the other whites in its hostility, and may escape being on the mind of non-Marxist-oriented Negroes because of the lack of direct personal contact. No matter what Negroes say or don't say, or think or don't think about U.S. capitalism as such, U.S. capitalism is not and never has been any friend of the Negroes, and the Negroes are no natural friends of U.S. capitalism. White capitalism (the only capitalism in the U.S.) is simply rejected along with the rest of white society.

Now why should black workers be interested in having black-owned businesses prosper? Once the existence of nationalist feeling is known, one should naturally expect some such attitude. But the attitude is irritating to white radicals, rubbing them the wrong way on a fundamental point of doctrine, so that white radicals immediately feel impelled into a stubborn argument with any Negro who argues BUY BLACK! to the detriment of other points on which the white radical and Negro might find substantial common ground. As the white radical pontificates on how capitalism is wrong no matter what the color of the capitalist is, and why separatism is no solution, and the unity of Negro and white workers is what..... the Negro (not necessarily nationalist) may be thinking: "This is a damn shame. This ofay is just against black people having money. He raises hell against capitalism and Wall Street at the top of his lungs right now, but in a couple of years he might forget all that jive and settle down and make him more loot than I will ever see. But it bugs him to see any black man have money and power."

Negroes can have no experience with black exploiters; even if there are a handful somewhere in the country they are too sparse to constitute a recognizable social phenomenon. The possibility of a

black bourgeoisie (in the real sense, not E.F. Frazier's) taking shape in the country is utterly fantastic, no less so than the possibility of Negroes all going back to Africa or taking over a separate territory within the confines of the U.S., or being integrated completely into capitalist society.

The BUY BLACK! argument aims at making the black ghetto black, i.e. owned and managed and run by blacks.

Running white businesses off the main drag in the ghetto is a popular notion, not at all limited to competing Negro businessmen. In fact, the latter would be horrified if the people among whom the notion is popular ever got going in direct (physical) action to carry out such a Yankee Go Home! program. There would be no businesses at all left, only martial law on the streets. (A 1962 picketing campaign on Harlem's 125th Street against white merchants, many of whom are Jewish, took on anti-Semitic overtones. Supporters of the United African Nationalists chanted "Black Man Stay, Jew Go Away." Negro businessmen and community leaders repudiated both this and the picketing tactics.)

The popularity of BUY BLACK! is natural. The workers in the ghetto have to take crap from white bosses on the job (and from white workers on the job), see white cops patrolling the streets busy shaking down numbers men and beating heads. They rub elbows with alienated and distant poker-faced whites on the integrated subway or busses. But they don't want to see whites raking in all the money in the ghetto, too, running even the local drug store, bar, soda fountain, clothing shop. This is a constant and grinding irritation. What is important is that the feeling is there, not just that there is no long-range practical program for removing the irritation within the capitalist framework. It is the more acute form of irritation at having to look at white movies, white TV stars, white faces on the advertisements, the sourpusses of white presidents on the dollar bills.

What would an unskilled worker resident of the black ghetto have to lose by resonating enthusiastically to the Muslim rejection of white society coupled with a program of complete separation with dignity (not specified how to carry it out)? The ghetto inhabitant living in the integrated Northern city is already about as integrated as can be achieved by the methods used in the South. Aside from that he is already effectively separated in his residence, social ties, outlook on life, relation to society, job opportunities, freedom and opportunity of expression. The nationalist appeal doesn't threaten to take anything away, and offers something not found anywhere else.

Now would that same unskilled worker stand to lose anything if the nationalist program was, or could be, carried out at this time? Frankly this question is academic. The possibility of carrying out that type of separation program would mean that almost all Negroes were involved in a violently anti-status quo movement, upsetting the stability of the whole country. Long before the situation reached that point, other factors outside the Negro population and even outside the United States would have been brought into play through the

interaction with the black revolt and the instability of the powerhouse of the capitalist world right on its home grounds.

On the other hand, any counter-reform attempt to intensify discrimination or enforce segregation where it does not now exist would encounter ferocious resistance from all Negroes, whatever their orientation. Nationalists are for some kind of separation on terms agreeable to Negroes, not for accepting humiliating and dehumanizing segregation conditions dictated by whites. These are not just words. No membership or following they could attract would tolerate it otherwise.

Take The A-Train

It is obvious from talking to white radicals that most of them have never actually spoken with a black nationalist or listened to them harangue on the street corners in Negro neighborhoods, to their natural audiences. We, therefore, insert here a few brief excerpts of nationalist utterances, limited to New York.

No Black Muslims are quoted since their newspaper is readily available and widely circulated. The book by C. Eric Lincoln also provides interesting quotes.

What is important below is not just what the nationalists are saying, but the fact that in each case the speaker is in rapport with his black audience, which responds wholeheartedly to his remarks.

* * * * *

NY TIMES March 2, 1961, in an unusual article on Harlem nationalists in the wake of the protest at the UN against the murder of Lumumba:

"Our ties have to be linked with Africa." [said] Edward Davis, an unemployed laborer and president of the African Freedom Movement.

"I'm no Communist... but when I go to a demonstration and find Communists there, too, I'm glad to see them. That's more reinforcements for us. I'm not for the Communists and I'm not for the capitalists. I'm for black."

....at one point, someone interrupted and mumbled what was apparently a defense of America's position on the Congo crisis. Mr. Davis exploded with such fury that everyone in the room was shocked into silence.

"DAMN THE UNITED STATES," he shouted. Then, in the next breath, he added: "Excuse me, ladies." He cast an apologetic glance toward the two women in the crowd....

* * * * *

A United African Nationalist speaker in Harlem, at Seventh Avenue and 125th Street (summer of 1960):

"...you know, things are really looking up when you see even these white folks' Neeegroes starting to get some sense in their heads, starting to take pride in Africa. Twenty years ago, if you talked to one of these Neeegroes, you know, one of these colored folks trying to integrate himself into the white man's world, always trying to get into the white man's face, win his "love," move into his neighborhood, marry the white man's daughter, go to his school, instead of building up his own neighborhood and looking out for black, if you talked to him about Africa, he'd say: now you get out of my face with that Africa talk, you ain't sending me back to no bush country, with those monkeys jumping all over and a bunch of naked savages running around. But now, even Mr. Neeegro is starting to shake off the white man's teachings, starting to take pride in the land of his ancestors. Africa is a rich country, Africa has everything. Iron, copper, gold, diamonds, oil, everything you need to build a great country. But the white man never told us that. He only told us Africa was nothing, nothing but jungle and savages...."

"...Some colored folks, they still act like you're crazy if you talk about Africa. Now why shouldn't black folks want to go back to Africa? Africa's our country. Africa can't be such a bad place if those white folks fight so hard to stay there and hang on to the riches they found there!...."

"...wouldn't you all rather live in a black man's country, see a president with a black face, the chief of police with a black face and all the policemen black, go into the bank and see a black face sitting behind the desk? Wouldn't you rather be in a country where you could look at the money and see a smiling black face looking back at you, instead of old George Washington's sour puss?..."

The week of Fidel Castro's stay at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem in September 1960 was an occasion for pronounced manifestations of nationalist sentiment on Harlem streets in the vicinity of the hotel. On September 28, when A. Nunez Jimenez and Juan Almeida took an unannounced stroll through about fourteen or so blocks in the neighborhood, the crowd swirling and snowballing around them ran to some thousands, all of them enthusiastically hailing the Cubans. There is no question that this demonstration was spontaneous. People in windows opening up all along the impromptu route reacted with the same effusiveness. When the two barbudos got back to the Theresa twenty minutes later, the marching crowd had grown to such proportions that the cops became panicky and made desperate efforts on foot and horseback to break it up and disperse it. Some cops were hit by flying objects and a major riot was narrowly averted.

A symptomatic incident shortly before this involved a Negro across the street from the hotel, who had to be physically restrained by by-standers from socking another Negro who had made disparaging remarks against Castro. (The by-standers sympathized with the

attacker, but wanted to prevent trouble.) The gist of the angry nationalist's remarks, cleaned up for propriety, was:

".... so you're an American, you can't stand Castro talking out against America? Then what the hell you doing here in Harlem, you so damn American? How come you got a black skin like me? Don't come to me with that 'American' stuff, I'll go right upside your head! If you're so American, you don't have to live here in Harlem, why don't you go downtown and live with your fellow Americans?..."

* * * * *

Now listen to the incisive and lyrical language of one Garveyite speaker on a street corner in Brooklyn's ghetto (early 1961):

"...this Martin Luther King say you got to love the white man. He say if the white man go upside your head, why you just supposed to turn the other cheek and love him, make him love you. That's the Christian way. Now why you folks want the white man to love you? You know the white man don't love nobody. White man don't even love his own kind. The Jew don't get along with the Eye-talian. The Eye-talian don't like Irish. The Irish, they don't like Pollacks. Pollacks don't like Germans. Germans don't like nobody. But all of 'em get together against you and me! That's no lie! Only thing the white man respect is power. You get you some power, he respect you. He don't have to love you..."

"...You ask yourself, why all of a sudden these liberal white folks so eager to have you integrate with them? All this time we is just dirt, they don't want to have nothin' to do with us. Now they say please come in, integrate with us nice white folks, you our black brothers. Why they saying that now? Because they is catching hell, that's why. All over the world, Asia, Africa, Cuba, Japan, everywhere you look, the white man is starting to catch natural hell. Now his house burning clear down to the ground, he want us to help him put out the fire..."

"...Lemme ask you folks this. Who loves Russia? You answer me that one now. W-H-O loves Russia? Yeah! Don't NONE of these white folks love Russia! They always talking against the Russians, want to kill them. They hate Russia almost as much as they hate us, and that take a whole LOT of hating! But they RESPECT Russia. Because Russia got power. White folks don't be messin' 'roun' with Russia. They fly that U-2 plane over Russia, old Khrushchev start bangin' that shoe, wavin' a H-bomb right in the white man's face. Uncle Sam back down. Uncle Sam know he done went too far this time. He even a-po-lo-gize!! Ain't that somethin'? But he don't have to apologize to no black man. Black man waitin' for the goddam white man to love him. Black man ain't got nothin' behind him, 'cept what he sits on..."

"...you know the folks in Africa are fighting against the same damn integration you brainwashed colored folks over here so crazy about. The Frenchman say to the Algerian: What you want independence for. You integrate with us. You is a Frenchman. Algerian, he say: that's a DAMN lie!..."

Blind Spots of White Radicals

An understanding of the gap now separating black nationalists and white radicals must be sought not only in the life of the Negro in a white United States, but also in the history, struggles, attitudes, and life of the white radicals in the peculiar setting of the rich and powerful United States. Particular attention is due to the problem of singling out the factors which contribute to making white radicals insensitive to the dynamics of black nationalism, thus crippling the radical approach and rendering the frantic efforts of white radicals to build a bridge to Negroes largely ineffective.

Estrangement between the white radical vanguard and the Negro masses is, of course, nothing new, and various aspects of it are already clear to radicals who have studied the matter. The white labor movement and the Negro emancipation movement shared very little in common, in the way of conscious collaboration and identification as allies, from the pre-Civil War period until the Thirties. Prior to the decade of the CIO and the moderately successful penetration by the Communist Party of the Negro ghettos at that time, Negroes had been attached to the Republican Party, had never seen a friend in the white labor movement, in fact usually met a bitter enemy there intent either on driving Negroes out of jobs and keeping them out, or at best callously indifferent. This story is familiar to many radicals, is well documented, and has been discussed. We need only note here that the total picture has obviously never been changed definitively, and that consequently the roots of Negro nationalism run deep and far back in history, regardless of when specific nationalist organizations may have been founded or became attractive to large numbers.

The CP black belt theory and the abstract recognition of the right of the Negro people to demand separation if they so choose have very little if anything to do with the development of black nationalism, and have not constituted any attempt to reach to nationalists on the part of the white radicals. The CP theory is due to the Russian experience on nationalities and self-determination, transplanted blindly onto the American white radical movement. It would not interest nationalists one way or the other, and it is doubtful that the influx of disappointed Negro radicals into the nationalist movement following the Second World War and their disenchantment with the CP had any qualitative effect on the character of black nationalism.

Black nationalism is rooted in the Negro masses, in their conditions of life, in the filth and choking squalor of the slums, in Jim Crow, and in the impossibility of their identifying fully with the surrounding white America. Its physiognomy and character contain features, discussed elsewhere in this paper, totally alien to any variety of Americanized radicalism. In any case, white radicals have always been hostile to black nationalism, the new look toward that phenomenon is very recent, and none of their previous activity was ever aimed at reaching to the nationalists.

The word AMERICANIZATION sums up much of the fog separating white radicals and blacks. Americanization has been a very positive achieve-

ment of the white radical movement. At the same time it is a major hindrance to their understanding Negroes, or vice versa. Aside from the IWW, many of the early radical movements developed among Russian, German, Jewish, Italian immigrants imbued with socialist sentiments when they arrived at Ellis Island. It was necessary to grow past that stage and transform to a movement which looked American to home-grown American workers, as American as apple pie and Pepsi-Cola. This was definitively achieved by the time the CIO upsurge had started to level off. At the present time all the white radical groups, whether CP, SWP, SP or derivatives thereof, are thoroughly Americanized in their mannerisms, outlook, self-image, and cultural traits.

The membership of the white radical groups consists of real Americans in all respects except for their political views, which do not conform to the reactionary strident chauvinism of the American Century. (In the case of social democrats, who are really liberals rather than radicals, that exception may be disregarded.) Being so American, their ability to criticize some aspects of the American personality is blunted. Such cultural features as anti-intellectualism, lack of recognizable indigenous culture, the self-delusions that Americans are the only "regular folks," free and easy-going, not stuffed shirts, full of pioneer spirit and good-natured sense of humor, fair-minded, to hear the Americans tell it; the almost universal narrowmindedness, rugged-individualist selfishness, coldness toward fellow human beings throughout all classes of the white American population, the total absence of any inspiring national goals, the poverty and emptiness of American emotional and cultural life, the alienation from all other peoples of the world (except some imperialist and racist countries) -- all this is either accepted, escapes critical notice, or is blamed on capitalism per se.

Radicals are fully aware of the politically reactionary aspects of American policies and condemn those aspects of American life which they can pinpoint as direct products of capitalism per se, but are basically in harmony with what passes for American culture, and identify with the American (i.e. white) people. They had better. Their job and goal is to get closer to and fuse with the American workers and people, and this requires being American.

Fortunately, Negroes in the U.S. have never become so Americanized, and fortunately never will be, the way things look. Only the Negroes have any indigenous music, have positive goals to strive for as a people, feel anything resembling warm kinship for other peoples struggling for a better life. Negro masses do not have a higher cultural level or tastes, and may "enjoy" some of the worst trash in U.S. mass culture, but even so they still miss "the truth" relating to their own lives which they do not find in that "culture." Negroes are also readily receptive to any criticism of that "culture." They are not eager to rise to the defense of "our" American Dream. Such American cultural traits as selfishness, commodity acquisition fever, emotional coldness, more pronounced than in other capitalist countries, make some headway among many Negroes who are trying hard to assimilate to the point of actually becoming Americans, but this

Americanism will have a tough time displacing the vitality Negroes have preserved through centuries in the white wilderness.

In November 1960, addressing a meeting in Harlem after returning from Cuba, Robert F. Williams related: "...this white reporter asked me in Habana: How do you feel, Mr. Williams, as an American, when these Cubans yell Cuba Si, Yanquis No? I told him, well, the first thing you have to understand is, I'm not an American!..." At this point the entire Harlem audience broke out into unrestrained applause, stamping, and shouting of approval which did not die down for several minutes, and clearly demonstrated that Williams had made another one of those statements, typical of his, which strike deep down, all the way down, in the consciousness of black listeners, the kind of statement that says what the black man has always thought, maybe said in some form on some other occasion.

White radicals presently take on the acrobatic job of being American to American (white) workers while at the same time trying to win over Negro (anti-American) masses, blissfully assuming that the two peoples are basically identical except for a little skin pigmentation, and seem oddly disappointed on finding out that empty American society, which the radicals reject in their own way, is not something all Negroes are just dying to become integrated and immersed into.

This brings us to the overemphasis on integration as an end in itself, the next great stumbling block to the understanding between white radicals and Negroes. The white radical feels most at home with more or less militantly integrationist Negroes, for reasons generally understood. He has great difficulty in understanding or even suspecting the depth of alienation of Negroes from -- not just capitalist society in the U.S., but from American society period. The white radical is not equipped to understand either the black nationalism he sees in organized form or the dynamics and origins of that phenomenon rooted deep in Negro life, and until recently was not even really interested.

At best, white radicals now tend to take a closer look at nationalism as an annoying obstacle and roadblock which has to be studied in order to facilitate the task of eliminating it, so we can all get down to the pleasant job of integrating into the world's one and only unique society known as America, becoming all of us American workers, hand in hand, black and white together seeing eye to eye, to fight the bosses and make our America the great country it was destined to be. If the worst happens, and Negroes actually begin to demand geographical separation or repatriation to Africa as a majority, white radicals will then reluctantly support their right to undertake such an unfortunate and foolish step. That is essentially about all the white radical has had to say on the matter. No serious attempts have been made to probe the possibility of channelizing nationalist sentiment into the battle.

The need to overcome the white chauvinism rampant in the American radical movement prior to the Russian Revolution, the need to fight the proliferation of white chauvinism in the labor movement in general

and to eliminate it in new recruits to radicalism, the almost exclusive contact with militant assimilationist Negroes, and the natural lack of affinity for black nationalist thought and feeling all combine to reinforce the fixation on integration as an end in itself.

The fight against white chauvinism has been an indispensable part of the development of the radical movement, and a positive achievement. At the same time, this necessary and valuable fight to eliminate all traces of white chauvinism acted to dull even further any sensitivity white radicals might conceivably have or acquire to the limitations of integration and assimilation as a goal.

Any suggestion that Negroes were "different" from other Americans had to be stamped out vigorously. Militantly assimilationist Negroes are extremely sensitive to the least implication that they are not exactly the same as "everyone else." Jim Crow, blatant American-style racism, and all of its derivatives and sugar-coated liberalized versions adhere strongly to the principle that Negroes are both different and inferior (the corollary to the notion that anyone who is different from an American cannot help but be inferior).

Where Negroes lacked a clear feeling of identification as a people, it is understandable that the circumstances of complete immersion in a white wilderness, with their horizon limited to the United States indefinitely, with no acceptable image to live up to except the white man's, with no independent and developing African States, no Cuban Revolution to be contrasted to the American Dream from which Negroes were being excluded, would lead to a temporary desire to actually be Americans, rather than a striving to achieve some sort of modus vivendi on a basis of equality or peaceful co-existence with this alien people among whom Negroes are interspersed.

A revealing reaction of white liberals and radicals to black nationalists is, very often, the stupidly smug view that nationalists must be Uncle Toms or some variety or modification of Uncle Toms, or that they feel beaten and inferior, simply because they do not aspire to that glorious, sublime state of being an integral part of the great American people.

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The U.S. Communist Party is especially sensitive to petty bourgeois assimilationist pressure, and its tightrope act is most fascinating. On the one hand, the CP is as American as any radicals can get to be, even to the point of waving the Stars and Stripes and singing the Star Spangled Banner. At the same time, they were dragging along, in their ideological baggage, a stillborn black-belt self-determination theory which had nothing whatever to do with any current or section of the Negro community, nationalist or otherwise, accepted solely by those individuals recruited to the CP for other reasons. This Russian-fathered abortion did not sit well with half-Americanized integrationists, inside the CP and outside, and became the butt of much criticism with nothing much positive to show for itself. Red-baiting assimilationists demagogically and maliciously took the CP to task for, of all things, wanting to have Negroes

segregated in a separate nation after communism takes over (the die-hard suspicion of Negroes toward all whites, any whites, no matter how friendly they talk, contributed mightily to the pressure). No matter how much the CP tried to softpedal the idea, and mollify it down to the quite correct position that while they were not actually advocating such an idea, they would support it if the demand was raised by a majority of Negroes, the CP still had to cringe from attacks by the NAACP (Henry Lee Moon in Crisis magazine, for instance) and other assimilationists for even mentioning the terrible and nasty thing. Eventually, in 1959, the CP buried it definitively, washing the stains off its hands, in order to ingratiate themselves still further with assimilationist liberalism -- but at the very moment when assimilationists are losing touch with the Negro people!

Even in the SWP, nervous voices sometimes express anxiety at the very mention of the right of separation as an abstract parenthetical secondary and hypothetical point buried in the SWP resolutions. Since the question of geographic separation is far from being the central issue separating nationalist-oriented Negroes from white radicals, the traces of hysteria on this minor issue give a measure of the magnitude of the lack of communication this article addresses itself to.

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Another important parting of the ways between Negro mind and white radical mind is on the question of the American Worker. Despite whatever evidence to the contrary, the white radical must, in order to survive in this bleak period of political apathy in the labor movement, absolutely must magnify every trace of militancy, trade-union consciousness, strike action, and remind himself over and over again of the glorious history of some active past period of the labor movement, to reassure himself that the American Worker is second to none in militancy and revolutionary potential. It is not enough to dryly state that, through our Marxist knowledge, we know objectively that no matter how quiescent the American (white) worker appears now, conditions will mature which will reactivate the class struggle and bring out the great potential inherent in the American proletariat, that then the great American worker will take the lead in the revolution (or fight for peace) and so forth. In the face of the sneers by liberals, reactionaries, and even the workers themselves, radicals must reinforce this view. The rank-and-file members must also be pepped up emotionally by promoting this image of the American worker second to none, and any grain of truth which can be mustered to sustain the image must be amplified out of all proportion. If the white workers get along with the status quo and are indifferent or hostile to their Negro "brothers," this must be blamed on other radical tendencies, or on the union leadership, but in no case must the image be questioned.

The net result is that white radicals begin to take on an air of unreality, as if they were in Dreamland or someplace, but certainly not in the United States of America in 1963. A hothouse atmosphere of left-wing optimism has to be generated and sustained if the beleaguered radical groups are to survive, and the temporary divorce from reality is no doubt worth the price.

This glorified image of the white worker strikes almost all Negroes of whatever persuasion, except those already members of the radical groups and, therefore, partaking to some extent of the greenhouse environment, as out of tune with reality, even an insult to their intelligence. The adverse effect of this kind of talk, offering Negroes the prospect of joining hand in hand with this imaginary revolutionary white proletariat which does not at all resemble the white proletariat the Negro lives in daily contact with, is even more sharply exacerbated, in the case of nationalistic Negroes, in response to the self-satisfied assurance of the radical who has studied Marxism and knows the basic answers.

White political geniuses who claim to have nothing less than a scientific knowledge of society are ready at the drop of a hat to argue why the nationalists are all wrong and impractical in their aims and methods, and give the impression that they have the basically correct program and orientation and only have to improve the way they are carrying out their program, don't even get to first base because they sound so utterly way out on this point, as well as on quite a few others discussed earlier.

It has to be emphasized at this point that Negroes are not reacting with skepticism just because the white workers they know seem politically dead, quiescent, or conservative in their outlook, but often because the white workers are, along with the rest of society, hostile and disgusting chauvinists. The attempts to glorify the white workers' revolutionary future and alleged revolutionary implications of his historic past struggles will in that case spark hostility on the part of the Negro listener who has this salt rubbed into his wounds.

The problem can be minimized when a radical who is not too hung up on Marxist shorthand slogans disemboweled from the rounded-out thought that the slogans summarize, and who tries to make clear he knows what the American scene is now, but is pointing out objective conditions in the making which will change the scene, is trying to communicate with a Negro who is willing to listen. But even then the mere mention of the idea that white workers will someday play revolutionary roles may sound so absurd to the Negro listener that the radical's entire argument will be discredited. If the adept white radical puts the case sensibly enough, forcefully enough, in a properly developed context, and seems to be more lucid and in contact with reality than most white well-wishers Negroes usually come into contact with, there remains the question of the relevance to the black man's problems now of this great upsurge of progressive whites to occur sometime in the indefinite future.

Anyone who succeeds in putting the spotlight on other subtle disparities between the viewpoint of white radicals and Negroes will be doing a great service to the present and future struggle.

Reasons For Hostility Toward White Radicals

More attention must be given to the specific reasons for the hostility frequently flaunted at white radicals by nationalist-minded Negroes. The most obvious reason is the excellent motivation provided by white society to hate all whites, none excluded. Disappointment in the CP for its home-front policies during the second world war is only too obviously a major contributing factor. SWPers are likely to focus on this as the major reason overshadowing all others, however, so that care should be taken to keep an eye peeled for other causes.

Another important reason is the fact that white radicals represent virtually nothing, having no white workers under their influence whom they might realistically present as effective allies in the struggle. This does not make for hostility against radicals specifically, but it deprives radicals of an important argument against that hostility and divests the radicals' preaching the importance of Negro-white unity of any realistic air. Radicals will blame the labor bureaucracy in this case, while Negro workers, on the basis of their lifelong and daily experience, will not have too high an opinion of either the rank-and-file white workers or the white labor bureaucracy.

A certain amount of red-baiting may be encountered: it is possible for people to be nationalistically against everything in U.S. society and at the same time incorporate from that same society such garbage as anti-Semitism and red-baiting into their hostility toward specific subgroups of whites. But this is not a major problem quantitatively, still less qualitatively among those nationalist-minded Negroes radical parties will be most interested in.

It is important not to overlook the hostility generated by the direct confrontation and competition between white radical parties and nationalist groupings. Both types of political entities are in competition to recruit the same embittered black workers. Both have the common and competitive characteristics of proselytizing, offering solutions for the problems of all or part of humanity, aggressive argumentativeness, self-righteousness, hostility toward the existing status quo in similar and distinct ways, fiery preaching of the true gospel, the zeal to build memberships committed to some form of ideological dedication and program of action, and readiness to fight it out with closely related competitors. While integrationist groups and individuals are often more accommodating and "sensible" from the radicals' vantage point, they are more likely to be afraid of radicals, afraid of being seduced into some long-range commitment, afraid of being taken over. The nationalists are growing in confidence and expect to do some taking over themselves, wherever Negroes are involved, but brook little competition and meddling from white radicals.

The inability of white radicals to understand what Negroes are thinking and feeling (and vice versa) coupled with the arrogance with which all the varieties of "Marxists" feel the certainty of their being "correct," and having the solution all worked out (occasionally modified by a patronizing willingness to "hear what the Negro has on

his mind" without knowing what to listen for), and their trigger-readiness to argue away at what they, the white radicals, know to be the really important points that have to be settled in politics (...but where do you stand on peace, that is the important question... what practical plans do you have for realizing this separate state, do you realize that... you're not going to solve anything until you have socialism... without peaceful coexistence, neither Negroes nor whites will be around to enjoy integration... Lenin's position was...) add fuel to the fire.

Elsewhere, we discussed the natural hostility, prevalent until recently, of white radicals toward nationalists, which was, of course, reciprocated. This hostility may intensify as nationalists recruit Negroes directly out of the white radical organizations.

Since all the "Marxist" groupings are keenly aware of their deficiencies and their inability to recruit Negroes (i.e. aware of the fact of their inability, not the reasons for it), they may desperately seek out any avenues by which to ingratiate themselves with whatever Negroes they can reach who show some promise of political "development" along the lines which white radicals can understand. This frantic need to get "in" with Negroes, to "understand" at all costs, can be severely irritating to Negroes they come in contact with. This problem is likely to arise in the interaction between white radicals and any new semi-nationalistic grouping in process of formation. Such a group has its own need for a gestative period during which it can establish its own identity and round out its membership and outlook, without interference and meddling by a bunch of white radicals who have greater political-organizational and factional experience, have read lots of books, have little to learn, and are starved for political contact with Negroes. This is again a highly contradictory problem, since such semi-nationalist currents may feel the need for and ask for collaboration with white radicals.

There are no doubt other significant sources and mechanisms of hostility and irritation, some of them quite elusive. More will crop up with every new tactic and every new situation. On the other hand, if nationalism continues its present tempo of growth, the nationalists (and particularly the Black Muslims, to the extent that they continue to dominate the field) may gain in confidence to the point where they no longer seriously fear rivalry by white radicals and even try to make use of the latter as white allies or white satellites.

Afro-American Vs. Negro

The heated rejection of the word "Negro" by many nationalist-minded Negroes, in favor of such expressions as "black," "Afro," "African," and "Afro-American," gained momentum in 1960, seems to have reached a peak in 1961, and to have temporarily abated since. It is of obvious importance as a symptom, but is naturally misread by both white liberals and white radicals. The least understanding approach is to interpret it as some kind of naive word-magic occupying the attention of childish minds (the reaction to be expected

from liberals). But sympathetic whites generally dismiss the controversy as a senseless diversion from Really Important Issues: after all, what's in a name? Added to this is the well-founded and deep-ingrained reluctance of white liberals and radicals to use any term other than "Negro," for fear of being considered white chauvinist, especially since most of their contacts are with Negroes not strong on nationalist feeling who would look askance at being referred to by whites in any other (and therefore suspicious) term.

"I am German-American (or Italian-American, or What-have-you-American)," some naive sympathetic liberal or radical voices respond, "and not ashamed of it; of course, I used to have some trouble, but now I'm just an American like everyone else and you Negroes will someday have the chance to really become one, too, just like me," or else, "Well, you call yourself Afro-American; now I'm Jewish, should I call myself Judaeo-American or Hebrew-American or what?" These are some typical individual white responses which are completely irrelevant to the question.

The hyphenated-American designations are the product of the impact of the American melting-pot society on the new immigrant. The native white American sneers at the newly arrived immigrant with his foreign language, foreign habits, his foreign culture (any culture strikes the native American as foreign). The immigrant defends himself insisting that now he is no longer an Assyrian, say, but really an Assyrian-American with naturalization papers, and emphasis and double emphasis on that American. And he means it. His children will not even be Assyrian-Americans. They will just be Americans, part of the gray morass along with all other white Americans, indistinguishable and colorless, with no ties whatever to the culture of their ancestors.

The Afro-American is making exactly the opposite emphasis, on the word before the hyphen. Says he: "You white folks try to deny me all trace of identity, and just consider me a second-class species of second-hand American. Let me tell you something. I'm an African and everything about me is African. Just because I happen to be physically present in this stinking country through no fault of mine doesn't make me a lousy American like the rest of you." His answer to the above naive question would be (and is): "What do I care what you white people call yourselves? That's your problem. Whatever you call yourselves, you're still Americans. I'm telling you what I choose to call myself. And don't go calling me by that name 'Negro.' 'Negro' is no nationality, it's just a mongrel name assigned to us by you whites back in slavery days."

For radicals, the important thing is to read the signs and political symptoms evident in this type of thinking correctly. Granted American Negroes are not really exactly like Africans. What is far more important is that so many Negroes do not feel exactly like Americans, and have good reason not to feel so. It would be easy to find some flaw in the reasoning and to exercise some reductio ad absurdum approach to it, and easy (but ridiculous) to tell Negroes that they are really just the same as other Americans, except for

skin pigmentation. But let the liberals do this. That's about their speed.

If the term "Afro-anti-American" had been decided upon, the situation would be a lot clearer, at the sacrifice of euphony. For all the anti-Americanism rampant on the world scene, there is no people more specifically and bitterly anti-American than the 20 million Negroes here. The Chinese, Viet Nameese, and Cubans direct their anti-Americanism at the U.S. government, and profess their friendship for Americans as people. In contrast, Negroes are led by their own experience to view the American people as just as rotten and vicious as their government.

Cuba and Black Nationalism

Radicals are highly gratified by the example of Cuba in rapidly eliminating race prejudice and discrimination, to a large extent introduced as an alien custom by the Americans during their sixty years of controlling and perverting Cuban public life. Naturally radicals count highly on this example as a powerful argument founded in palpable reality in favor of integration and against nationalism among American Negroes. It would be interesting to examine the effects the Cuban revolution has had on the nationalist mentality, through mechanisms to which white radicals are again insensitive.

Nationalist-oriented Negroes respond to the Cuban revolution far more enthusiastically than do assimilationist-minded Negroes, and there is probably a direct proportionality between the degree of anti-American black nationalism and the positive response to the Cuban revolution only 90 miles from.... Florida. Assimilationists are more likely to accept the shibboleths of U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. view of the world, by way of being "intelligent" and "responsible" citizens of the great country to whose first-class citizenship they aspire. They will deplore the "ammunition being given to communists like Castro" by the racists, but, being Negroes in any case, they can never be even remotely as jingoistic and chauvinist in the support of American might and power as are most whites.

The working-class Negroes more strongly oriented in the nationalistic direction need not even have heard one word of the steps taken by the Cuban revolution to root out racism. Their response is similar to their response to every other revolution against Western imperialism. Radicals generally understand that the colonial revolution in Africa spurs both militant integration struggles and nationalism in the U.S. The Cuban revolution has the same effect, with the added spice that it is directed against the worst enemies of the Negroes, and has those enemies wrapped up in a frenzied and impotent obsession.

Nationalist-oriented Negroes automatically react positively to the Cuban revolution simply because, in their view, it is another revolt of dark people against "the white man," another blow to the worldwide power of the white man, i.e. the power of U.S. and West European colonialism. The revolution strengthens nationalism even without direct contact in that the revolutionary Cubans are strongly nationalis-

tic and their revolution is steeped in powerful and inebriating nationalist fervor which communicates itself at a distance to all oppressed peoples capable of responding sympathetically as a people (Latin Americans, Africans, Indonesians, the Indian aborigines throughout the Americas). To ears and eyes which have heard and seen Whites Yes, Niggers No! all their lives, the mambo-beat Cuba Si, Yanquis NO! is beautiful music. Especially with all this going on only ninety miles from the white man's paradise at Miami, with white America foaming at the mouth and unable to slap the uppity Cubans back down into their place!

It would not occur to nationalist Negroes to regard the Cubans as white people in the first place, so that nationalists are not so much impressed by the white-radical argument that the Cuban experience proves integration to be practicable, desirable, and just the thing for the United States. There is, of course, no reason why black nationalists would have any objection to radicals blasting the U.S. for its shoddy role and pointing out how the hypocritical U.S. looks compared to Cuba. Nor would nationalists feel that there is anything wrong with Cuba's smashing and obliterating Jim Crow practices and attitudes, and integrating the whole works. That's great, what the Cubans did, the Cubans are not like these white people here -- is the response, spoken or implicit.

Negroes are hardly likely to regard white Cubans as white in the same sense as white North Americans are white. By U.S. standards, most of Cuba's population is colored (black, mulato, and moreno). In Cuban terms, about 25% are Negro, 60% white, the remainder mulato. But a large number of the 60% white majority would be regarded as Negro in the North American conception. Even those statistically classified as white are "Spanish" and, therefore, not really white in North American eyes. It is more than evident to hypersensitive eyes and ears of U.S. Negroes, trained by lifetimes of observation of the American Herrenvolk, that the Americans do not regard any Cubans as their equals, whatever their shade and even whatever their politics. Fidel did not have to take lodgings in the Hotel Theresa in Harlem for that point to get across. The whole tone and substance of the attitude and behavior of white officialdom, the white press, the white public, and the white police made it clear that the Cubans are second-class people who, just like black people, are not entitled to any rights or respect, are by definition Brand X, and are to be accused of leaving places dirty, cutting up and carrying on, plucking chickens in hotel rooms, stealing U.S.-owned property, etc.

The question of the degree of whiteness is not just an exercise in semantics. It involves significant cultural differences. It is in fact incorrect and misleading to consider the problem of integration in the United States as a task of anything like the same magnitude as the problem of integration in Cuba, revolution or no revolution. In Cuba, race discrimination was a disease which never deeply affected the popular masses, but was something of an upper-class adaptation to North American ways, and to a large extent a direct implantation of North American customs alien even to the upper-class elements.

A revolution was required to wipe it out, but out it went without any additional social convulsions.

In the United States, on the other hand, race hatred and race discrimination seem made to order for Anglo-Saxon culture and eminently fitted to the North American social temperament, being in fact one of its principal and inseparable features, a major contribution of North American "culture" to the world scene. The effort that would be required to root this monstrosity out of the North American picture would compare to the Cuban experience like Niagara Falls to a fire hose. The North American psychosis of race hatred and race oppression is not only not restricted primarily to the upper classes, but is on the contrary most virulent among lower-class whites, both North and South (naturally, especially South).

The receptivity to racism on the part of the lower classes of American whites is one of the most stubborn barriers to acceptance of the class struggle concept (over that of race conflict pure and simple) on the part of American Negroes, whatever their attitude toward nationalism and whatever their political development and orientation.

It is undeniable that there are powerful ruling-class reasons for fostering and perpetuating this race psychosis. But this strategy has been attempted elsewhere, with varying success. The mechanism is most efficient in South Africa, among the French colons in Algeria, in Nazi Germany, and in the United States. American radicals must grapple seriously with the question of why the racist poison works so much more efficiently on North Americans than on Latin Americans.

More direct contact by Negroes with the Cuban Revolution, through visits to Cuba, talking with people who have been in Cuba, reading truthful accounts of the achievements of the Cuban Revolution, encourages nationalism far more vigorously than the American white (liberal or radical or reactionary) can imagine.

Contact with Cuba will stir up any spark of nationalist feeling that exists (and almost all Negroes harbor such a spark, however latent). The direct presence of American Negroes in the midst of the Cuban Revolution not only means a gratifying experience of relief from constant racial tension and discrimination, but also release from the rigor mortis North American environment, complete shattering of any lingering fear that all the world is like the United States in its emotional deadness and coldness, discovery that the smiling, ebullient, and pulsating Cuban atmosphere with its thriving Afro-Cuban culture is much closer to the kind of life Negroes respond to than anything that could be possibly found in the frigid Anglo-Saxon United States, "integrated" or not. The direct eye-witness comparison of the Cuban workers and peasants to the North American white lower classes may undermine any confidence that the latter will ever amount to anything in the way of being revolutionary or on the move.

In fact, the Cuban Revolution is not necessary for such a comparison. American Negroes would react the same way if exposed to massive contact with any African people, with poor peoples in any colonial

nation looking forward toward a new life, whether involved in social revolution or not. The strongest impulse would come from visits to Cuba, so that the travel ban can be considered objectively also as a barrier to the contagion of nationalist rebellion in the U.S., and not just a way to hide the Cuban example of integration from view (reactionaries are also probably more sensitive to the integration aspect, and uncontrolled integration militancy is what really disturbs them subjectively; but they don't like the implications of rebellious black nationalism either).

The turbulent development of the Latin American Revolution, sweeping through a gigantic continent with torrents of nationalism and directed against the worst enemy of the American Negroes in frontal conflict, will feed both black nationalism and Marxism in the United States (the two currents need not be in opposition to each other indefinitely). At the same time, the white population of the United States (the bulk of it, not just the ruling class) may react with panic and insane horror to the development, a reaction which would widen the gulf and reinforce black nationalism specifically, especially if radicals remained relatively isolated and uninfluential.

More Questions To Probe

What aspects of black nationalism offer any leverage for white radicals and Negro radicals in association with white radical organizations? Which aspects of black nationalism, in its endemic form throughout the Negro population and in its organized forms, lend themselves most readily to being channelized into effective action against the status quo, i.e. against U.S. capitalist power and against U.S. imperialism on a world scale, with assistance of white radicals to the extent that the latter are aware of such possibilities and are capable of meshing their actions and theory with the tremendous appeal and dynamism which nationalism is capable of generating?

There is a wide unknown territory here open for probing thought and experimental action. It is no surprise if few or no answers are available, since no one has posed the question seriously.

The questions are worth formulating only with respect to revolutionists. Since both revolutionists and militant Negroes (integrationist or nationalist) are objectively and/or subjectively against the status quo, one can speak of a misunderstanding where the two groups do not communicate. For liberals and those mainly interested in modifying U.S. foreign policy to produce improved relations with the Soviet Union (without otherwise disturbing the status quo), their lack of communication with Negroes is based on a deeper divergence of interests.

One undeniably attractive point about integrationists is that, if they are not too given to red-baiting or fear of radicals, they allow opportunity for radicals to "do work," to engage in some form of common action with Negroes. By its very nature, black nationalism shuts out almost all avenues of common activity, discussion, or other opportunities for radicals to "do work." To date, there has not been

much probing by radical organizations, if any probing at all, in the direction of sending Negro members into nationalist organizations or milieus to "do work." This might be due to the alienation of the radicals from the nationalists, more likely to the distaste white radicals (and assimilationist Negroes likely to be recruited into white radical parties) feel for the black nationalist orientation, but it is also due to the political intractability of the nationalist groups (singleness of purpose, no room for dissident minorities, religious structure in the case of the Muslims.)

The most serious obstacle to such colonization work, however, should any white radical organization be foolish enough to try it, would be the fact that the nationalists would exert a far stronger attraction on the radical Negroes sent in than the latter's parent organization, and the "colonizers" would be the ones influenced and recruited. Consider the example of Dr. Lonnie Cross, who as Dr. Lonnie X was a key speaker at the 1963 Chicago convention of the Black Muslims.

Integration struggles not encumbered by an insistence on making Negroes over into white Americans of dark skin, and not steeped in the repulsive Gandhian turn-the-other-cheek philosophy, will not interfere with building a bridge to those elements of the Negro population North or South who feel about as integrated legally and formally as they are going to get or care to be, short of some fundamental change in society. Integration in the sense of smashing specific Jim Crow apartheid institutions and broadening educational and job opportunities for Negroes does not constitute an irreconcilable opposite to the nationalist feeling of self-identification as a people not identical to American whites.

Negro radicals may attempt, in some areas, to experiment with riding the nationalist bronco themselves, to see if they can tap some of these resources directly, rather than by liaison with an already established nationalist group.

One obvious arena for work to be anticipated, sought out, or encouraged is any emergence of left nationalist currents, whether independent of existing nationalist organizations or gestating within the confines of such organizations.

Radicals who are good at spotting the shortcomings and illusions besetting nationalist groups might profitably communicate these criticisms, free of the traditional white clumsiness on the question, to such groups, encouraging their leftward development and contributing to their political development on general matters.

If the Black Muslims enter firmly onto the road of political action by and for the black man, with participation in local and national elections, the impact would be close to what revolutionists have always hoped for in a labor party (with the difference that the white-dominated unions have for the present nothing to contribute, except fifth-column activity for the benefit of the Democratic Party and the status quo).

Massive participation in politics by black nationalists would shift the picture in a direction much more amenable to participation by radicals, in its total impact on the national scene, in its reciprocal effect on the nationalists themselves as they grapple with new and vital problems, and in the sense that radicals are more at home with such situations, generally speaking (although there will certainly be some surprises).

The notion of separatism could undergo some interesting modifications as nationalism gains nationwide strength. The black belts are forming, as politically viable black strongholds, not in hinterlands of the deep South, but right in the hearts of the industrial and urban centers. Washington, D.C. now has a Negro majority with no real home rule, in fact with rule by Dixiecrat congressmen. Philadelphia has a huge Negro minority, and could conceivably come under the local control of a well-organized and power-conscious Negro electorate. A continued process of whites diffusing out into the suburbs and Negroes crowding into ghettos in the center of town, with the ghettos spreading out through the city, is a phenomenon common throughout the country. These situations are made to order for black nationalist political campaigns, and it is only a matter of time before efforts turn in that direction. The political battle between a Negro-controlled metropolis and a hostile white state capital plus suburbs will be a humdinger.

Legal defense and physical defense against racist violence and frame-up conspiracies are areas of action in which radicals have experience. Some new twists will be introduced if and when the Muslims carry out their promise (threat) to clean up the ghettos and get rid of white racketeers, criminal elements and lumpen, and any other activities where they begin to encroach on the prerogatives of the white state power (not to mention some of its juiciest revenues).

Nationalist influence spreading in existing labor unions will give radicals a whole new crop of theoretical and tactical problems to play with. The appeal of nationalism to Negro youth down to the teen-age level has not been assessed, and no doubt varies widely across the country. The appeal of nationalism, particularly of the Black Muslims, to Negro women, the role of women in nationalist organizations, which women are attracted to it and which are not, are another set of unprobed questions.

It would be helpful to make a survey of the appeal and strength of nationalist currents across the nation. (This article is based on direct experience limited to New York.) It would be worthwhile to know the various groups that exist, their strength and attractiveness relative to the Black Muslims and relative to assimilationist groups, what activities they engage in or seem to be inclined towards, who they appeal to, what areas seem to be open for common action and discussion. The extent of urban concentration of Negroes and outdiffusion of whites to the suburbs, and the chances of Negroes electing militant local candidates, backed by a political powerhouse like the Muslims could potentially be, are important things to know.

Closer contacts between Negroes and other peoples with whom Negroes have more in common than they have with American whites will be of enormous benefit in developing any aspect of the Negro struggle in the United States. At present, the attention of even the nationalists is too much boxed into a narrow U.S. framework, which limits the goals and the perception of the possibilities. Radicals could be of immense value in this context, promoting, stimulating, and facilitating significant contacts between proletarian Negroes (who would otherwise never get the opportunity) and nonwhite peoples more or less in the same boat and engaged in struggles against the same U.S. imperialism. Indians throughout the Western Hemisphere, Negroes in Latin American countries and in the West Indies, and Africans have a wealth of experience, ideas, violent feelings, and mutual stimulation to share with American Negroes. Such contacts on a reasonably broad scale might have explosive effects, here and elsewhere.

It would be helpful to begin right now in some serious discussion of ways in which U.S. reactionaries might seek to manipulate, head off, or channelize into less harmful (to them) directions any upsurge of nationalism which begins to take on threatening proportions.

It is not even necessary to consider the question of the separate state or states. Anyone who knows U.S. imperialism and its capitalist class knows that Uncle Sam is not going to part with any of this territory for ANY reasons under ANY circumstances. But there are some cheaper bones they might be willing to throw to the nationalists. In this they would be aided by the fact that, as of their present ideological level, the nationalists would interpret any flattering "recognition" by U.S. government authorities as proof of their power and proof that they are on the right track. Nationalists are presently susceptible to the illusion that the U.S. government will accord them the same deference it now gives to newly independent African states.

Now, why should the U.S. even offer the nationalists a whole state? Why not some prospect of a nationalist-run business complex, which would flatter the nationalists, keep them busy with a hopeless venture, and eventually lead them to demoralization as the venture peters out into nothing in competition with the powerful U.S. economy? Or offer them a sparsely populated county or, less yet, a township or two, all to call their own, out in Wyoming, next to Death Valley, in the Bayou swamps or in the Everglades (oops! too close to Cuba!) with treaty loopholes for regaining control should any petroleum or uranium be discovered on the premises?

Or perhaps it would be sufficient to invite one of the nationalist leaders to the White House for lunch, even have him shake hands with Jackie? That seems to work with some African dignitaries lining up for Wall Street's handouts -- it brings good headlines in the African press. Unfortunately for the U.S., they can't invite ALL of the twenty million Negroes to the White House,

and a tour of the White House does not rank very high on the list of Negro demands anyway.

If the U.S. manages to get a string of African nations in line and feeding out of Washington's trough, this might work towards a favorable image of the U.S. in the population of those African countries, until the day of rude awakening comes from some other source. But again, the 20 million Negroes still have to live in the United States, and their opinion of the Land of the Free is formed by their life here, not by what is said or not said about it by Sekou Toure, Nkrumah, Tom Mboya, or Jaja Wachuku. Moreover, black nationalists have demonstrated in life their preference for the more leftward-leaning and anti-imperialist trends in African politics. Too close association with the U.S. and praise in the U.S. press as a "responsible African statesman" is more likely a kiss of death to the reputation of African leaders among Negro nationalist in the U.S.

The U.S. may score some good propaganda points abroad, as it does by default with the situation in Bulgaria, inhospitable to African students. But here, too, the U.S. may look better, or at least not so bad, only to some Africans. For black people here, Bulgaria is 10,000 miles away, and they have to live right here, in the same stinking slums. Besides, the Bulgarians are white, whereas the Chinese and Cubans are both communist and non-white, and **more radical** at that, is a likely nationalist reaction.

Integration "gains" will be spurred indirectly as concessions thrown out by the ruling class to counteract the disturbing and revolutionary aspects of intensified nationalist organization and influence.

Repatriation of any large number of U.S. Negroes "back" to Africa is completely out of the question, regardless of any circumstances that may develop. The prime obstacle is the fact that the African nations would never tolerate the setting up of another U.S.-controlled Liberia on the African continent, and that is exactly what such a colonizing venture would threaten to degenerate into, irrespective of the intentions of those U.S. Negroes first embarking on the venture. Nationalists here are not aware of this point, but no "logical" arguments will make a dent in the minds of people talking "back to Africa" as long as they don't feel at home in the United States. On the other hand, "repatriation" of individuals or small groups of Negroes who can be absorbed by a given African country, especially if these individuals have valuable skills, if possible.

It is extremely dubious that U.S. reaction could ever succeed in direct manipulation of nationalists to divert them in an anti-Semitic direction, to turn them toward physical violence against radicals, or to channel them into support of Jim Crow institutions as the embodiment of separation. The evidence now in is that the Black Muslims, as they grow in numbers and influence, are meshing their efforts and views with those of other aspects of the Negro struggle, and are shaping up in an increasingly more radical (as we understand it) direction. Such efforts by reactionaries would probably start off on

a clumsy and ludicrous footing, through the agency of the most degenerate ultra-assimilated Negro flunkies in the service of the ruling class, and would only be repulsive if not hilariously stupid.

The above is no complete picture, and does not rule out the possibility that U.S. reaction may find some aspect of black nationalism which it could manipulate. More thought should be given to this question, bearing in mind that U.S. reaction has a fairly easy job manipulating to its needs the assimilationist aspirations of Negroes.

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Difficult as it is to predict the forms which the struggle will take, some long-range predictions about what will definitely not happen can be made. In the long run, integration into the status quo and separation from the status quo are both impractical, impracticable, and even undesirable. At the same time, the status quo is intolerable to Negroes, who are and will continue to be in open rebellion against it along both lines. And the concept of socialism carries no weight as a realistic alternative for the time being. These are the actual boundary conditions within which we shall have to work. The actual struggles which will take place will constitute syntheses of these apparent extremes, until such time as domestic and international events act to channel the struggle explicitly against capitalism per se, and pry the white workers loose from their TV sets. In the meantime, the Negro people in the U.S. are not going to be sitting still, and the relative weight of integrationist and nationalist aims and methods in the struggle will be decided in the heat of battle.

The distance between the black nationalist rejection of what they see as white America and the white radical rejection of what socialists see as bourgeois America is not as great as it used to look.

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