

City of Detroit

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: RVM

DATE 7/15/63

FROM: EH

SUBJECT: Uhuru

Much of the leadership of Uhuru has been involved in civil rights activities for the last year or two. They have been involved to one degree or another in a wide variety of organizations, nonviolent direct action, non-nonviolent direct action, and socialist. In each case, they stood out because of their vocal dislike for and bitterness toward "the white man" and "the system". Despite this great dislike, however, they have consistently joined groups that have a significant number of whites, as though without the whites as a sounding board, there would not be as much point in their consistent complaining. Their apparent bitterness is totally destructive and is a complaint against capitalism or against the white man that has not thought for practical solutions to our problems. In many ways, they are totally confused - in their actions in demonstrations, at meetings, in almost any activity they take part in.

With the exception of one or two people who have dropped out of college, all the members are students at Wayne. Working with them they have a group of young white people, most of whom are members of the Young Socialist Alliance. The Uhuru membership is to a great degree an elite to the YSA'ers who are delighted to have found their very own "revolutionary workers" and are more than willing to do a part of the manual work that is necessary to maintain an organization. The leadership of Uhuru is very much limited by an almost total lack of organizational skills in terms of setting goals and formulating strategy and a great unwillingness on the part of the membership to lick envelopes, write letters, and the like. It is here that the YSA becomes a functional necessity to Uhuru. One member was asked if they were accepting white members into the group and he said that they had not planned to, but then they found that none of the Negroes were willing to do this "kind of dirty work", so perhaps they would have to compromise a little. White people are invited to meetings, however.

Although the orientation of much of the leadership is socialist, they are not involved with any socialist organization in any deep way. They enjoy being with the SWP because they are treated as "folk heroes" by them, and they are rather consistent attenders of SWP Friday night lectures, and have some social contact with members of the SWP but that is all. Whatever political orientation they have is a result of their admiration for contemporary revolutionaries, Castro, and the African nationalists, Kenyatta, Nkrumah, etc. They base whatever limited strategy they have on what they have read of men like this, picturing themselves as Castro in the hills, not wanting to realise that this is not Cuba, and thus not having any realistic strategy for Detroit. As long as Uhuru needs only to survive from one situation to another, i.e., the Freedom March to the demonstrations following Cynthia Scott's shooting, they have no problem. If they become involved in a campaign that demands sustained, organized and directed effort like an employment drive, they will have difficulty surviving without guidance and a little bit more elbow grease. They have a good deal of respect for Rev. Cleague and the leadership of GOAL and would take their advice if these gentlemen would take the many many hours and weeks it would take to teach discipline. The Uhuru would certainly not take much of anyone else's to any great degree, certainly not any "white socialists."