

REPORT ON THE MONROE SITUATION AND THE ROBERT WILLIAMS CASE
by LeRoy McRae

I. Background Information

Attached to this report is an information sheet on the Monroe situation distributed by the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants. Their mailing address is Suite 1117 - 141 Broadway, New York 6. Comrades are urged to publish additional copies of this sheet for local distribution, so that information may be conveyed "accurately" to others.

Special note should be given to the telegram which was sent to Attorney General Robert Kennedy (also enclosed). It is essential that this telegram be understood in the light of the lynch-hunt now being pursued by law-enforcement agents in both the U.S. and Canada. Individuals and groups actively engaged in the civil rights struggle should thereby realize the necessity of mobilizing a strong defense movement, and of doing it NOW.

The comrades in New York have already begun preparations to set up an initiating Youth Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants. Such a Committee has been suggested to advance the defense movement among the youth, especially on the campuses. The work of such committees should pertain, not only to campus activities, but wherever we have contacts among the youth.

II. Importance of Y.S.A. Participation

Comrades should recall our direct leadership that was given to the "Kiss Case" which received international attention, and which first focused the public's eye upon Monroe, N.C. and Robert Williams. The Committee which we initiated, the Committee to Combat Racial Injustice, was a phenomenal success.

We must be constantly aware of the nature of the struggle in Monroe. There, it was necessary to defend ones' rights, not in the church nor in the court, but rather thru defense guards and by force of arms. Williams has not "threatened violence", but recognizes that passive resistance is ineffective as a means of struggle in Monroe, which is reputed to be the south-eastern headquarters of the KKK. He asserted the right to self-defense and the right to bear arms instead.

Thus in calling attention to the struggle in Monroe, we also call attention to a community which has rejected the pacifist and legalistic means of struggle which today dominates the civil rights arena. BUT, it is not our objective, at this point, to use the Youth Committees as a political forum for the YSA. Our important job is to raise funds for the committee and to give the maximum publicity to the fight to aid the Monroe defendants. REMEMBER, this is a defense committee where the representatives from all political tendencies must participate to "aid the Monroe Defendants", and not to provoke an ideological struggle over their differences. Efforts, similar to those made in FPCC, must be made to keep inter-factional differences at a minimum.

In this regard, the question has come up as to our relationship to the Freedom Riders, who at this point are intimately involved in the crises in Monroe. Comrades should realize the channel being opened to contact with the Freedom Riders, especially within less than three weeks, many of whom have become dissatisfied with the leadership and philosophy of CORE. The facts of the case itself compel us to give a hearing to the Freedom Riders, but the difference between tactics used by them and the people of Monroe will be obvious.

We should not proceed to simply denounce "the criminal treachery of the pacifist leadership". But rather, like Rob Williams, invite them to participate as representatives of a particular tendency in the civil rights movement. YSA forums, on the other hand, may take up the political differences with the pacifists but this is not the essential point in this defense movement.

We can also recognize a new phase being reached by the Freedom Riders, in that, like the sit-in demonstrators, many of them are defying the prescribed pacifist leadership and are responding as the struggle dictates. Experience in New York has been that many of the Riders are becoming more militant and are looking for an alternative which will include "action" as well as a "perspective". Thus the Monroe Freedom Riders formed the Monroe Non-Violent Action Committee, in spite of the objections of CORE.

Our paper will be very useful to us in this campaign. The next issue will feature the Monroe Case and integration campaign. Our units, in addition to campus and other activity, can also effectively offer our platform and give forums or our own. In the sub drive we will be meeting a lot of new people and perhaps gain friends for this committee at the sametime.

III. Strategy

The pattern used by the New York local may serve as an example for other YSA units, although local peculiarities will have to be compensated for.

Enclosed are sample copies of the "sponsor cards" which local units may duplicate and distribute in their areas. These should be sent to the N.O. as soon as a few are signed so that a national mailing list may be made. We should use the sponsors cards not only as a means to consolidate contacts into local groups, but also to build a membership organization at a later date.

In this regard, we should recall the difficulties encountered during the Woolworth picketing when we had hopes of establishing a national youth organization devoted to activity in the civil rights arena. One of the factors preventing this was the spontaneity of organization without some forethought of co-ordinating local groups into a national organization. In this case, where we want to develop a strong defense movement it is absolutely necessary that there be a "national" formation.

We must try to consolidate contacts of the Committee to Combat Racial Injustice, of the Woolworth picketing, and of the Students for Dobbs and Weiss committees, from which we should be able to develop an "Active", militant national defense apparatus.

Then too, we must utilize our own national apparatus, the YSA, to make inroads into student groups who can give support. This includes Fair Play Student Council, SLATE, NSA, etc.

Another factor previously lacking in our civil rights groups has been a contact with the South. In such a defense group as the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants we must have a base of support among the Southern students. Since our forces are already realized in Union County, perhaps we can start here. Then too, we can also look forward to re-establishing the contact made by the Weiss-Lambrecht tour during the presidential campaign. In the organization of these committees the best procedure would be to have predominately Negro executive committees.

Our final objective, of course, will be to organize a militant civil rights organization of the "LEFT". The objective situation makes this possible, our politics makes it imperative to do so.

IV. Tactics

First, and foremost, we must raise money for the legal defense, on behalf of the four youth and Robert Williams.

Second, we should start a campaign on the campuses and in areas surrounding the campuses to collect food and clothing for the citizens of Monroe who have been deprived of relief and employment due to their support of "The Crusader" program.

Third, we want to give a forum to the Monroe community, to its fight, its tactics, its militant leadership. For this we should try to utilize our list of sponsors to get speakers on campuses, and before youth groups.

Fourth, we may be able in the future to initiate a "Go See For Yourself" campaign similar to that of FPCC. The final question may become whether or not we have the "right to travel", not just to Cuba, but within our own country.

The KKK of Monroe County is trying to draw a hate curtain around Monroe. We can help towards spreading the truth and thus carrying the civil rights struggle another leap forward.