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person, ~~that is, the person~~ who carries his whiteness and who in addition to that may be trying to move into this area, that person then becomes an object for amusement, ~~or something like that.~~ But ~~there are some white people who do move that way and who do it successfully, in the sense that the distinction that the students make that they don't carry their whiteness - you know - it's kind of - it's hard to get at.~~

W. W. P. R. V.
M. MOSES
W. W. P. R. V.
M. MOSES

RPW: Do you find some resentment of your ^{own} superior attainments and education - do you sense it?

RM: No - I don't - One thing was when I first came down - it was something that I just very consciously played down.

RPW: Well, naturally.

RM: Yes - so that if you establish your relationship with people on another level, and then - and they identify with you - then after they find out something like that, that becomes something that they are not resentful of but they can - they become, you know, proud or something like that. It can be transformed into a positive thing.

RPW: This is something of the ambivalence that was said to exist and I suppose exists in all societies - to exist in the Negro society. On the one hand a kind of jealousy or amusement of that achievement, and on the other hand a kind of identification with the achiever, the Negro achiever. At least, many Negroes have written about this and have talked about it.

RM: Well, of course when it's a Negro achiever then - I mean,

there's an additional problem of his achieving in the white world, and particularly down here in Mississippi, because that - I mean, or that it just means that he's an Uncle Tom. In fact, ~~although~~ he has to compromise with the white world at some point - or that he isn't free - he can't fall - he's gotten - he can't now say participate with us or even do the things that he wants to do, and he becomes a conservative and a person who's trying to hold back the change, trying to hold on to what he has, trying to protect that.

R PW. The sneers one can hear directed at Ralph Bunch or Clarence Mitchell or various other people - certain writers - Ralph Ellison and people like that - these - on account of these sneers, not - because you encounter sneers against anybody sooner or later, you know - there's no - opinion, but - those examples are the thing I am talking about.

RM: I always think that most of that is due to lack of ability to understand on a more complex level and, you know, to understand all the different facets of society and how people - you know - with the acceptance of certain positions, goals - there are certain goals which are defined, and they're very - the question always is - really, the question which you can't answer unless you know the person up close, and it's the kind of evaluation which people want to make from a distance, and it really then becomes an abstraction, that is, that they can't really make that kind of evaluation without getting in close and knowing that - watching some day by day transactions and seeing where - you know, what

kind of tension that person lives under, and - in making his decisions and -

RPW: Not to take personalities - just take Mr. X, you see, who is very able and enjoys a fine reputation, is distinguished in some profession or occupation - well, naturally, he has some ^{white} ~~high~~ friends. Now, if he has white friends, could the same line of work or an associated world - or does that much build against him?

RM: I think more than anything else that what the kind of thing that you can say now is that it's called upon - it isn't as if Negroes were not successful, have the right to live a completely private life, that is, that the time is such that they have - I mean, it seems to me that you can ask them - that you have a duty to ask them, and even that - what the questions about what are they doing in this big change - what public life are they - you know - are they pursuing. It doesn't have to be directly in a revolution, but if they 're doctors and the time has come for them to prepare themselves so that Negro people get the best medical care, and that they get it no longer does the ~~same~~ ^{- because they're -} the Negroes are shoved off to one side, and do they now get the same kind of treatment if they're teachers, then the time has come for them to prepare themselves to know what's going on in the educational revolution that the country is going through, and to see that the Negro students that they're teaching now are getting real - you know - education and ~~preparing~~ preparing themselves. There's so much that needs to be done that even - O.K., if he's in, he's got a berth profession and everything that

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- and this is what, after all - I mean, he has a right to this, and they all - everybody does, and the people - that's what the people want - they want to be able themselves to do that, but that's now - the fight is of such proportions that he also it seems to me, can ask legitimately what commitment he has been making to it. And not just in terms of funding or supporting, but in terms of his own profession, his own skills - how is that being used in the - to help the Negro along and help the whole society.

RPW: How much of a split remained between the - oh, the black bourgeoisie and the masses - is that being narrowed - that breach?

RM: It doesn't seem so

RPW: It's not being narrowed, you think?

RM: The new Negroes coming out of school now - more of them I think are aware of identification with the masses, but I think they're just most of the people who are the old line of bourgeoisie - I don't think that that identification is

RPW: You can find, actually, resistances to the impulse toward integration. I have read several articles by Negroes - one by the president of the Business League of St. Louis - a Negro business organization - saying integration would set Negro business back twenty-five years, and things like that- that kind of argument - defending the vested interest any cause to -

RM: Well, that's the kind of thing that I'm - was trying to get at before, that the - he's got a business, maybe, so he's got to

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compete now with the general market, and he's got to produce enough services and goods and so forth so that the Negroes themselves don't have to get the second hand in terms of getting that kind of service, and if he lives up to that then it seems to me that he - you know, he won't have this kind of worry. Usually where you find the Negro businessman who is worried about that - what integration is going to do to his business - then he's usually giving the Negro a second hand deal anyway - higher prices, or worse products or something.

RPW: What about that split that is talked about often - I encountered it first in DuBoise many years ago - between the impulse toward loyalty to Negro-ness - the negative ~~kind~~ idea - the mystique ~~mm~~ noir - the sense of identification in an exclusive way, the notion of an African tradition or at least of a shared American tradition - but an exclusive one - this precious identification is - now, this is me - this is my identity - this is outside of all other definitions. This is a form on one side - it has many forms, of course - against another impulse to move out ~~mmmm~~ into the tradition of Western European culture - American culture - penetrate that and perhaps integrate with it and perhaps in the end even have identity almost in it - physiologically and culturally. This split. Now, for some people it's a very important problem - it's a deep problem - for others it's not. How do you feel about it?

Garbled

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RM: For myself personally, the problem has been to - you know - to find out this kind of identity - is to find a broader perspective, that is, I don't feel that I'm looking - you know, that it's a problem of ~~identifying~~ identifying Negroness, ~~but~~ or this mystique or anything like that, and that - you know - it's just historical. If you look back through the family as far as I can trace it you get all sorts of elements, and there's no way of saying that - you know - this is - belonged to Negro culture and it's just - it seems to me that it evaporates, and I can - everything - Harlem - you know - my family - there are all sorts of things mixed in there. Neither, however, do you want to integrate into the middle class white culture, since that seems to be at this point in vital need of some kind of renewal. But the - I don't know - I think that in the struggle that we're going through here that what's happened is that - you know, you find a broader identification, that is, that it leads to identification of the same kind of thing that other people - individuals are going through, that the struggle doesn't become just a question of racial struggle, it ventures into other planes - political - the question of humanitarian struggle, and the question of justice, and in - within those - if you cut it differently like that, then you can get a picture of yourself as a person, and caught up historically in these circumstances and now your job is to try and work something out. And in working that out, you finally begin

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to get a concept of yourself as a person, and that whole question of needing to identify yourself as - in this kind of Negro culture or needing to become integrated into the whole ~~black~~^{white} society, and that disappears.

RPW: Have you encountered ^{Edem-Udem} Asam Uden's book on black nationalism?

RM: No, I haven't.

RPW: It's an interesting book. He says that on the one hand the exclusiveness of the Black Muslim to withdraw from the white devils and the ferocious pride in being Negro and even the dream of - you know - of imperial grandeur - which seems to be a withdrawal from white Western culture and middle class values, works out as an appeal to the concealed aspirations toward those same middle class values.

RM: I think that's true. I mean, the - what they want is - or what they've worked for - that same kind of set-up, but just separate.

RPW: Just separate.

RM: And others within the student movement - some people challenge that whole set-up, and they're not working at all towards that kind of set-up. They - but then you get into the real question of -

RPW: Excuse me - you mean they're not working toward the acceptance of middle class American values?

RM: Right. They - you know, they'd be very uncomfortable in that. But then you get the impression of hope - where the society is going

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to go - the economy - the question of the job, you know - the alienation, as it were. The people who are working on little bits of large things and don't know what it's about -

RPW: Alienation from active - from work - creative effort.

RM: Creative effort. That's - they just -

RPW: In that sense it is sometimes said that the Negro is the final victim of their modern alienation of a technological industrial society - he's laid the biggest victim - he is cut off most from the possibility of significant work. What about the relation, if any, between the student movement and beat-ism?

Now this was brought up to me first by some people associated with the student movement - so this is part of the same atmosphere that created the beats. I was shocked by this, I'll tell you, because it seemed to me it was a new way of looking at it, to me. I thought the beats represented something quite different. Of course they're not a church or a cult so I don't know what they mean except by analysis. What do you think of it?

RM: I'm not - I don't know - I'm not sure what that person meant.

same atmosphere

RPW: I tried to probe it and I didn't get very far, except that there seemed to be some protest on the part of this speaker in this conversation - it was attributed to the beats similar to the protest that the students against middle class diners. But he wanted to go farther.

RM: I don't think so. You see, one thing, the beats were left

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without a people - without anybody that they were identifying with.

RPW: Anti-social?

RM: Yes. So they were reacting against everything and closing in on themselves, and - for their own values and things like that. What happens with the students is that ^{they are reacting} ~~their-reaction~~/against this level and identifying with these people - and - I mean, the students are constantly renewed just by - you know - the people who come off the land - the farmers - they're unsophisticated, and - but who simply voice time and time again the simple truths that people - you can't ignore because they speak from their own lives and their own personal experience and - so that it's in this that - you know - the students are rooted in, it seems to me, that - this is what keeps them from going off on some kind of real tangent, that they always say as long as they keep working with people, they - the people are really the force in many senses of its - of values which they can't refute themselves. I mean - and it's this that is put in opposition to life now. We at this meeting, for instance, that we had on Sunday -

RPW: Yes - I was here for a while, and then I was very much struck by the quality of some of the people speaking from outlying counties - these older people particularly, you know - these old men, who -

RM: But still, see, there were some in leadership who would say - who were against this kind of meeting.

RPW: Now, why is that?

RM: They're for the kind of meeting where you get - well, dressed, cleaned-up Negroes who have maybe some semblance of an education and who is now a leader, and he represents these people. They want these people to be represented.

RPW: Not present.

RM: Not present.

RPW: A really democratic town meeting.

RM: Right. They don't want them. They're embarrassed by their getting up, and of course maybe they don't speak English well. Maybe they grope for the words.

RPW: To ~~register, for instance.~~ "Rede-ish" - for ~~register~~, *register, for*

RM: Right. They can't say that -

~~RPW: It's a wonderful word - register.~~

RM: But - and they were complaining about, you know, the fact that - look at all these people, they look - every one of them thinks they can get up - just anybody can get up and talk. Now, it's that kind of thing that the students are really battling against, that is, the fact that somehow people have to be cleaned up and presented before they're ready for the larger society, and this - serves the expression of that these people themselves needn't be present and presented to white people, just as they are, and the white people - the society needs to hear them, needs to listen to them, and as long as the students are - you know - are tied in with these, then I don't think that they're - I mean, I ~~don't~~ think that their revolt is well based, and doesn't - in

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that sense it's not like the beatnik revolt, which didn't have - you know - it seemed to me that just turned in on itself, and -
RPW: To take another tack which involves some of the same elements - why did ~~Sam~~ Cumminson never make any headway with the American Negro? That was a fruitful situation, I would think, both in the North and in the South.

RM: I don't really know that - the people that I know who - say who are older now and who were in that move, back in the '30's and early '40's, apparently - I mean, they say that they just became disillusioned and that at one point the Communists were really not interested so much in the Negro - it's - I think mainly after that it's found somewhat in the sort of more left wing people now who are present and current now, who have really worked out political programs of sort of and ideas about what needs to happen. When they ~~confront~~ confront - say, when they get down in this kind of situation, the people are not really concerned with the abstract level of politics, they're concerned more with concrete levels of what happens to the individuals and progress is made in winning their allegiance in terms of, if as you struggle you are doomed to become concerned with the individuals, which means in a lot of cases working on compromises, so you can't say no - you know, you've got to cut all of this off because if you get bogged down with this - working with these individuals and this kind of problem of trying to bring this guy along and - you know - you'll never get up to this level that you're working for

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- there's a tendency to sacrifice people for platforms. I think that as far as I can see that that would be one big reason.

RPW: Apparently it happened in any case that the - how much of this thing are the white man's organization - does that come into it? I've heard that said many times.

RM: Maybe - maybe - I don't know about that.

RPW: I don't know either, but I've heard it said. It's not a Southern Negro - this was a white man's thing.

RM: The problem of course is that you really can't find out because the Communist scare is such that the issue -

RPW: Now, you mean.

RM: Now - that you can't - you don't really feel - for instance, I wouldn't feel good talking to people that I know may have been involved, because then there might come some day when I have to get up on the witness stand on the issue at the time, and I'd say, now that I don't know anything about it and -

RPW: Keep it clean.

RM: Keep it clean, and then they're reluctant to talk because they can be brought up against

RPW: Tell me this - why did this movement, and not merely SNIC but the whole complex of movement, and even the activities of people outside of movements - the rise of the new Negro, as they say, the Negro revolt - why did it come when it did instead of not thirty years before in the '30's, or twenty-five years ago, or - make it thirty years.

RM: Of course, now, my father and some of the people of his generation - they made the point that they had to come along first

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and prepare ~~young people~~ young people in order so that we could do the work that we're doing now, and we have in essence their support where they wouldn't have had their parents' support, and that - so that one reason they say was - that couldn't happen now - at that time they wouldn't have had any support, that is, they would have just been cut out from under.

RPW: There was no popular support.

RM: No popular support - but also that as young people at that time there was no support from the older generation, that is, that - anyway, this is one kind of ~~thing~~ point that makes - now, other people, you know, point out the whole question of the move from Africa and the rise of an image in Africa of white people being able to control their own destiny.

RPW: You mean that the American Negro changed his self-image as a reflex of the African situation?

RM: I think that there's no question that that has some -

RPW: Some merit.

RM: And certainly it's under key leadership, that is, that they were struck and greatly influenced by this move.

RPW: Would there have been enough educated Negroes thirty years ago to mount this vast organizational effort and to spearhead it, to use the cutting edge it has now?

RM: I don't know - maybe not. I don't know.

RPW: I was just trying to get you to assess what have been the educational and cultural gains in one generation. The field gains, you know.

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RM: Of course the - I think the - right - and I think it seems to me that all of these sprung up out of World War II. Of course, we were picked up and moved into that rapid advancement class - I've been thinking back, you know, of why we - of what happened and it seems to me that in the late '40's when I was in junior high school and they started that rapid advance, and that was part of the move around the country to ~~begin~~ begin to provide educational opportunities for Negroes in the North - for a conscious move for able students to begin to open up doors which had previously been closed to them, and going to Hamilton was simply a part of that - that aspect. Special money was available and they were looking for Negro students and it was part of the move to begin to provide some education. And all of these things, the gains of World War II, I think, in terms of the Negro in the North where he was - they needed people to work and they had them, so then they were subsumed into a higher standard of living. So that that laid the basis for it, too. There's no question about that. The Supreme Court decision was another kind of basis for -

RPW: I have heard it said, too, by Negroes that the war experience itself and being -

RM: There's no question about it.

RPW: - integrated first - of not being integrated units and then being integrated units - these kinds of contrasts were very significant.

RM: And also there's no question about the fact that the turning

back to the South after being in the war and fighting and so forth, and having to come back to the same situation that they had left, I think that left a real residue of bitterness - I mean many of them soldiers, and they weren't ready to be merely

RPW: What about the change in climate of general opinion - say, including white opinion, not just a change in Negro attitudes, the Negro situation, but a change in climate - the spiritual climate, the emotional climate, the intellectual climate - over that period of twenty-five to thirty years? How much is that to be taken into account? I don't mean the explanation - I mean as part of a - this complex of factors.

RM: Well, it's hard - it seems to me that the change in climate that put the white - I don't mean, you know, but they're trying to assess the people, say, who have position in the over-all society for really effecting change, it seems to me what they said was, well, we've got to be able to give them a chance to do something on their own, that is -

RPW: Say it again, will you please. They being whites.

RM: Whites - now, that is that it ~~in~~ has opened up the extent - this is really what the Supreme Court decision did - it didn't integrate the schools or anything - it gave the Negro the legal basis and the moral basis for ~~fighting~~ fighting in the over-all society to integrate the schools, and so they're carrying on the fight. I mean, and - this happened I think in terms of the education end of it, that is, that the feelings was, well, it has to be

the climate that happened in the _____ was that, well, if they're going to participate in this society again, certainly they must have leadership _____ realized the white people were not going to do it - they weren't going to lead them - so that therefore a move toward at least trying to prepare people or get people - open up opportunities and so forth. I don't know that there was any feeling of preparing people for what is now happening. I am sure there wasn't.

RPW: I asked this same question of a very able Negro lawyer who has been very active in civil rights - and he burst out, there's been no change. It's always been the same. He added that he has more than once _____ Black Muslim movement. He's the last man you'd expect, you see, given the objectives - aspects of his life. There's been no change. It's always the same. He didn't use the word white devil, but he said - he used the word Black Muslim - I'm more and more interested in their point of view.

RM: I mean, for instance, at Hamilton - it seemed to me that the attitude - the difference - the change in attitude was that, well, we have to do our part in - the society has the over-all problem, which was realized and brought to the fore during World War II, our part in an educational institution is to try and open up a door or two for _____ Negro, and let's see what happens. And the difference was before was that they weren't really interested in even trying to open up a door to see what would happen. They were apprehensive about what might happen about getting the wrong person up there and having it fail and that kind of thing, and while I was up there - you know - I was glad to have that

opportunity, but still deeply bitter about some of the ~~reality~~ realities of the campus and some of the realities of the white attitude, that is, they were willing to go so far but not any further. But I think in itself was a kind of change that took place in many places around the country, that is, that we've got at least to open up one or two doors and try it. Now you're getting - you know, you're getting a different kind of change now, that is, people are furiously looking to see - I think everything happens with pressure - I mean - that is, that it's always the pressure from underneath which forces people to realize that they have to do some kind of changing -

RPW: Yes, if nothing changes, nothing changes. The conception of the Negro from 1865 to the present - the white man's picture of the Negro has changed - through pressures of all sorts?

RM: I'm sure it has. Even down here, even in Mississippi where you get it - referring to the sheriff in Canton - told some of our fellows - they're planning Freedom there too - they're coming at the end of this month - and he told them, well, you all are fighting for what you believe is right, and you're going to fight. And we are fighting for what we believe is right, and we're going to fight also. " Now, that seems to me a tremendous change.

RPW: It surprises me, to tell you the truth.

RM: That's the recognition that the equal status - that is, you're a person with now all of a sudden they can realize that

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these are people and these are - now, these guys that are up there, they're not particularly well educated ~~and~~ or anything like that. They're just from the South - Negroes born and raised down here - and here they're saying that - O.K. - you have something that you believe in and you recognize it finally, and - but we have something we want. So we have both sides - either side of the fence - and we're going to just fight this thing out. Now, that it seems to me is tremendous kind of change.

RPW: The sheriff is not a man of - I suppose - much education or much experience outside this county as a matter of fact. If he says this, it must reflect something that's happened in the county itself.

RM: Exactly. It's a tremendous movement among the Negro people - you know, in organizing and it's gotten to the point there I understand they just raised all the electric bills in just across the board - they said if anybody it's a tremendous struggle that's taking place, but part of it is the recognition by the white man that there is a struggle and that Negroes themselves are struggling.

RPW: What about the Freedom Day in Canton, say - what would it be like? What is the nature of its program objectively?

RM: That there will be some - we're trying to get the National Council of Churches ~~together~~ to get involved with another group of ministers and probably have another picket line downtown and -

RPW: Does this involve a boycott?

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RM: They're having a boycott -

RPW: Now, I mean.

RM: They're having one now, so that - that's already part of the picture.

RPW: How effective has it been?

RM: Well, that's - the boycott I guess is fairly effective, but it's just going to be very bitter and all - there's no question about it.

RPW: Bad trouble?

RM: Yes.

RPW: Do you find any irony, even a mild irony, in the fact of the March on Washington being in the Lincoln Monument? In the sense of Lincoln being a declared racist? As everybody knows.

RM: No. I guess the fact is that - just in terms of popular projection, but in -

RPW: But popular projection is useful - just an image. But the reality - in your own mind - how would you reason this out - not on tactical grounds, but on other grounds - to the Lincoln Monument?

RM: Well, in just the sense that this was a popular march, that it was a march, you know, and that - it was for people who were not so much -

RPW: Who don't know American history.

RM: Right, it's true, and who -

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RPW: But you do know American history, so you ~~must~~ have to make some terms with it, I mean - one has to make some terms with it. In what sense can one make terms with it? I don't pretend to have any answer in the back of the book, mind you, to turn to. I just recognize this - I have come to think of it as a problem, and some people have answers based on the relativism of historical value, or else as of value to history as opposed to absolute values.

RM: It didn't bother me - I mean, I was concerned, I guess - more concerned with other things about that march -

RPW: The practical side, yes. I mean -

RM: It really hadn't - crossed my mind.

RPW: These were very tepid emancipations to begin with, and then a total racist - and here the great March on Washington in the shadow of his monument - the ghost of his monument - he's a shrine. Now, by the way, Lincoln is a hero of mine - I'm not trying to set up a way to kick Lincoln in the shins, you see - there's your point.

RM: I'm afraid I draw a blank on that.

RPW: You draw a blank on that one? What I am getting at is simply repeating what a Negro I was talking to some time back said, to paraphrase him roughly, he said it very well - that history proposes issues and determines ^{what is} if possible in that moment - that the problem of racism was not proposed by him at that time. And another / historian I was talking to I was talking to said, "my God, there wasn't a man on this continent who was not a racist. The whole notion of attacking the concept of

racism is recent. It's not a relevant comparison.

RM: Well, it didn't even cross my mind.

RPW: Well, this is just a - it does raise a little fable or something. It ties in with the question of whether the white man's attitudes have changed in these hundred years - that is, where the Abolitionists were racist in form too. That is, they were not concerned with ~~abolishing~~ abolishing racism as a concept or even a practice. They were concerned with something else. ~~It was~~ I suppose it varied from case to case, but it was not an attack on the theory of racism or the other theories of racism. Your sheriff, then, at Canton - what county is that? I forget.

RM: Madison County.

RPW: Your sheriff at Madison County is a - less of a racist than Abraham Lincoln - which is a strange little quirk in history, isn't it? Tell me this - what is of Freedom Now - in the time context. We know all sorts involve time - more or less time. Horace Hancock says - a Negro historian and sociologist - there are no such things as absolute and immediate solutions to social questions. Put that concept over against Freedom Now. How do you give flesh in history to the concept Freedom Now?

RM: I don't know that that's a concept. It's an emotional expression -

RPW: And not a concept?

RM: - it's a feeling - it's an attempt to communicate.

RPW: I see.

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RM: I think it's a - we've got a post[✓] in our office, and all it says is "Now".

RPW: I saw it.

RM: That's to say to people, this is how we feel. This is the urgency. I think it's an attempt to ~~summarize~~ communicate a sense of urgency, that is, this is how urgent the problem is.

RPW: It's a poetic statement.

RM: Right.

RPW: I asked a student in a Negro university this question some time back, and he said, why, it's ridiculous to think that any changes are not in time and they're not - a process, not immediate and catastrophic events. He says, but I can't bring myself to say it. There's a right there, you see - the emotional demand and his hard sense of social process.

RM: And it's - what it's linked up to is the fear that the white person and the people who run the society are going to take as much time as you give them. That is - and that they will always stall for time and will always say it takes time.

RPW: That is, they would use the concept of social process as a protectional device for delay.

RM: For delay, yes. That's a question of it's For instance, ~~x~~/very interesting to watch Atlanta because Atlanta image now it's the newspapers in Atlanta making distinctions between what they called over the radio I believe the doves and the hawks. And the hawks are the

people out asking for instant equality - freedom now. And now they're siding with the elements in the civil rights movement who are ready to work for social change over a period of time or something like that, and they're focusing all their criticism on the people who are saying freedom now. Well, that's fine in a sense because two or three years ago they were focusing all their criticism on the people who were saying we need to work some of these things out, you see, and now - O.K., these people now are moving up and they're agreeing with them - we've got to work these things out and now people are saying that.

RPW: Well, that is associated with the question of the brinksmanship of violence, isn't it - that the threat of potential violence can be used for social - for peaceful change. I borrowed a phrase from some of the speakers at Howard University, - to advocate this, you see. Play with the possibility. Keep it just at the boiling point but don't let it boil over the pot if you can avoid that.

RM: Well, there's two distinctions. One is that, first is Lester Dunbar of Southern Regional Council - he has an image which he uses - he calls it the annealing of the South. He says that what he describes as a process whereby towns or communities are heated up and in the process of this heating up they can be re-molded and then in the ~~subit~~ cooling off period this re-molding takes place and they go back to a different level or different form. And then they're heated up again to get over another stage

and things like that, and that this is what takes place. Now, this in fact takes place. It's another thing to say that, you know, - to talk about brinksmanship in the sense of consciously, you know -

RPW: One is descriptive and one is prescriptive.

RM: Right, and I personally don't - I mean I don't believe in ^{rather} - that this should be prescribed - that is, that - we are involved right in this now because we're planning a huge summer effort - maybe involving up to a thousand students and people to work in this this summer in Mississippi summer.

RPW: On the registration program?

RM: The registration program - they'll have freedom schools and community centers and there will be some political activity - the people are writing for Congress and carrying out this freedom registration and getting ready to challenge the Mississippi Democratic Party.

RPW: You mean really running for Congress or gubernatorial rights -

RM: No, they're really running. We plan some people who will enter in the primaries - the Democratic primaries - and also run again as an independent in the general elections. And there are two ways of looking at this. That is, one way is that this is brinksmanship and you - and it's purely psychological - you know, you play with this to bring a community or a state or whatever up to this point, and under this threat you get a change.

RPW: But the threat is not one of violence - you're offering violence?

RM: No.

RPW: You may get some, but you're not offering it.

RM: Right. The threat is that the community will - there will be a breakdown, and rather than face such a possibility, that the people will capitulate and give in.

The other feeling is that it's inevitable, that is, that if a change doesn't come about unless you really face this risk. And again, this comes back I guess to that we feel, you know, that we ourselves personally are facing the same risk - that is, that we're not asking anybody to face a risk that we do not face

RPW: But you're not proposing the brinkmanship of violence - you are running the risks of violence by way of reprisal or repression.

RM: That's just a part of the risk that you take and that - at every point what you balance out is the risk against the possibility of change and you realize that and you tell the people that this is what's open to them, is that the need for this kind of sacrifice and that they have to run the risks of this if they want real change. What I'd like to get away from is the idea of a few people ~~sitting down~~ sitting down and manipulating and planning a campaign which involves a whole mass of people and - without - and bringing them somehow to this point.

RPW: We'll cut this at this moment. We need a new tape.

(end of tape)