

By "self-determination," the Party maintained that the Negroes as a separate race in the Southern States constituted a majority of the population and had the right, if they so desired, to secede from the United States and form their own government and nation.

This conception was adhered to and developed by the Party throughout the years so that by 1954 communists asserted that:

"This conception of the Negro question as a national question is the most fundamental theoretical\* contribution our Party has made to the fight for Negro freedom. It is this insight, for example, which underlies the struggle for all-class unity of the Negro people, \* and for alliance of the whole Negro people and the working class\* in common struggle against imperialist oppression. . . ." 7

In early 1956, however, the Communist Party, USA, reappraised its position on "self-determination" and decided to modify its advocacy of "self-determination" for the Negroes in the "Black Belt." However, it will still consider the Negroes as constituting a national as well as a racial minority. One high-ranking Negro communist leader has taken the position that the Negro people in the United States do not constitute a nation but instead are a nationality.

Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the Communist Party, USA, in commenting upon this decision, stated:

\*Underlined portion italicized in original text.

