

## Starting Points

Walter Rodney, Ch. 6: 'The Groundings With My Brothers' from Rodney, *The Groundings With My Brothers* (Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1969)

<https://files.libcom.org/files/walter-rodney-the-groundings-with-my-brothers-1.pdf>

Cynthia Washington, 'We Started From Different Ends of the Spectrum', originally in the winter 1977 edition of *Southern Exposure*, this version scanned from the Appendix to Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of the Women's Liberation Movement in the Civil Rights Movement & The New Left* (Oxford, 1979)

<http://www.redstockings.org/~rs/images/stories/redstockings/ClassOneReadings/9%20-%20we%20started%20on%20different%20ends%20of%20the%20spectrum%20cynthia%20washington.pdf>

Situationist International, 'On the Poverty of Student Life'

[https://cooltexts.github.io/sources/poverty\\_student\\_life.pdf](https://cooltexts.github.io/sources/poverty_student_life.pdf)

Walleligne Mekonnen, 'On The Question of Nationalities in Ethiopia'

<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ethiopia/nationalities.pdf>

## Quotes

### Walter Rodney, 'The Groundings With My Brothers'

"Now, what is my position? What is the position of all of us because we fall in the category of the black West Indian intellectual, a privilege in our society? What do we do with that privilege? The traditional pattern is that we join the Establishment, the black educated man in the West Indies is as much a part of the system of oppression as the bank managers and the plantation overseers...they will say, 'Sell your black soul'. That is the condition upon which you exist as a so-called intellectual in the society." (62)

"*The black intellectual, the black academic must attach himself to the activity of the black masses...you can learn from them what Black Power really means. You do not have to teach them anything. You just have to say it and they add something to what you are saying*" (63, Rodney's emphasis)

"We went outside the University and we talked to Black Brothers and Black Sisters and this the society, this the system could not tolerate...I lectured at the University, outside of the classroom that is...I went from the campus. I was prepared to go anywhere that any group of Black people were prepared to sit down to talk and listen. Because, that is Black Power, that is one of the elements, a sitting down together to reason, to 'ground' as the Brothers say. We have to 'ground together'" (63-64)

"We spoke, we spoke about a lot of things and it was just the talking that was important, the meeting of black people. I was trying to contribute something. I was trying to contribute my experience in travelling, in reading, my analysis, and I was also gaining" (64)

"All white people are enemies until proved otherwise, and this applies to black intellectuals, all of us are enemies to the people until we prove otherwise. It is not just a question of student riots. The students have demonstrated, which is good...they moved, and that in itself is a good thing, but there was more to it than that" (65)

"The Black Brothers in Kingston, Jamaica moved against the Government of Jamaica. That is the point that must come home. Let us stop calling it student riots. What has happened in Jamaica is that the black people of the city of Kingston have seized upon this opportunity to begin their indictment against the Government of Jamaica" (66)

"You have to go to Jamaica to see long cars, you know. That little middle-class there, they love to show off. The bigger the car the better. A little petty city and they fill it up with American cars, and they jump around and they feel so pleased with themselves. And the black man is there and he has not got 4d for the bus fare. So when those 50 buses were burnt, it was that type of issue that was involved." (66)

### **Cynthia Washington, 'We Started From Different Ends of the Spectrum'**

"It seemed to many of us...that white women were demanding a chance to be independent while we needed help and assistance which was not always forthcoming. We definitely started from opposite ends of the spectrum" (238)

"I remember discussions with various women about our treatment as one of the boys and its impact on us as women. We did the same work as men - organizing around voter registration and community issues in rural areas - usually with men...our skills and abilities were recognized and respected, but that seemed to place us in some category other than female." (239)

"I heard Stokely's comment that the only position of women in SNCC was prone- with the exception of women who either dressed or looked like men...our relative autonomy as project directors seemed to deny or over-ride his statement. We were proof that what he said wasn't true - or so we thought" (239)

"The white people I talked with often assumed the basic necessities. That gave them the luxury of debating ideology and many things I felt would not change the position of black women...we found ourselves in different circumstances with no program or tactic to begin building sisterhood" (240)

### **Walleigne Mekonnen, 'On the Question of Nationalities in Ethiopia'**

"The Socialist forces in the student movement till now have found it very risky and inconvenient to bring into the open certain fundamental questions because of their fear of being misunderstood. One of the delicate issues which has not yet been resolved up to now is the Question of Nationalities...Of course there was indeed the fear that it may alienate certain segments of the student population and as well the fear that the government may take advantage of an honest discussion to discredit the revolutionary movement...I think students are mature enough to face reality even if they are very sensitive...the only solution to this degeneration...is open discussion"

"What are the Ethiopian people composed of? I stress on the word peoples because sociologically speaking at this stage Ethiopia is not really one nation. It is made up of a dozen nationalities with their own languages, ways of dressing, history, social organization and territorial entity. And what else is a nation?"

"We must build a genuine national- state. And what is this genuine national-state? It is a state in which all nationalities participate equally in state affairs, it is a state where every nationality is given equal opportunity to preserve and develop its language, its music and its history...it is a state where no nation dominates another nation be it economically or culturally"

"[the Eritrean Liberation Front and the Bale armed struggle] are not led by peasants and workers. Therefore, they are not Socialists; it would only be a change of masters for the masses. But for the Socialists the welfare of the masses comes first."

"The revolution can start anywhere...as long as it is led by the progressive forces - the peasants and the workers...It is the duty of every revolutionary to question whether a movement is Socialist or reactionary, not whether a movement is secessionist or not. In the long run Socialism is internationalism and a Socialist movement will never remain secessionist for good."