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TESTIMONY OF GERALD WAYNE KIRK

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HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY
ACT AND OTHER INTERNAL SECURITY LAWS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-FIRST CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

PART 2

MARCH 10, 1970

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a couple of other people there with us, but I can't remember exactly who.

Mr. NORPEL. What was the outcome of that discussion?

Mr. KIRK. We realized our position was very good. Our position for influencing the convention was very, very good because we had people who, even if they were not members of the Communist Party, U.S.A. were very much in agreement with our position, even though those people who were not members of the Communist Party, U.S.A. would use rhetoric that may be a little different from that of the Communist Party, U.S.A. One person that influenced people was Rennie Davis, for example.

Mr. NORPEL. His name came up in the discussion?

Mr. KIRK. Right.

Mr. NORPEL. He did not participate in the discussion?

Mr. KIRK. No; he did not. He had other things to do in other parts of the conference, but he was mentioned as a person who was very, very close to the position of the Communist Party, U.S.A., on almost every matter that would come up.

As I mentioned before, Rennie Davis was involved, very deeply, with Earl Durham, of the Center for Radical Research, and at Durham's request, Davis asked me to work for him, Davis.

So, you can see that Davis, even though his rhetoric may be a bit different, it is still very close to his basic position. He is also very close, not only in his positions but in his tactics, because no matter what anyone may say, I know for a fact that he, Davis, could not have traveled to North Vietnam and other places in the Red-bloc countries without having very, very close contacts with the Communist Party, U.S.A. It is not possible to do that unless you do have close contacts.

Mr. NORPEL. Was this meeting in Black's room to which you referred construed as a party meeting, a party caucus?

Mr. KIRK. Yes.

Mr. NORPEL. In other words, what developed there was an assessment of the party's position and particularly within the black caucus relating to the National Conference for New Politics?

Mr. KIRK. Yes.

Mr. NORPEL. All right, would you continue, please?

Mr. KIRK. Well, I can't remember whether it was that day or the next one, we were on the floor of the convention making various notes and suggestions and the caucus had coalesced by that time. It was, in our opinion, in very good shape. We had people who had been involved in SNCC, people who had been involved in RAM, people who had been involved in various things around the country, a few people who eventually, I think, became members of the Black Panther Party, because there was always a movement of personnel through these various organizations. So we started to take these various votes and realized that the black caucus' position was even better than we had believed at first, and we did eventually in that convention move it to quite a few of the party's positions wanted on the war and on the party's definition of racism, and things of that sort. We got just about everything we wanted, and that is borne out by the fact that the publications and the statements that came from NCNP, especially on the decision to have the ticket of Spock and King which were basic party

positions. There were quite a few people who believed they were real revolutionaries who didn't believe it was necessary to have a ticket or a presidential campaign of Spock and King, but the party believed it was absolutely necessary because it grew out of the dialectical position they had.

Mr. NORRIS. Are you saying that Benjamin Spock and Martin Luther King were chosen for a presidential ticket by the Communist Party, U.S.A. in fact?

Mr. KIRK. Well, the Communist Party, U.S.A. decided that those were the two of the best people that the party position could move for, the party personnel.

Mr. NORRIS. You are not implying then that either Spock or King were or are members of the Communist Party?

Mr. KIRK. No.

Mr. NORRIS. You are not implying that?

Mr. KIRK. I doubt they would have to be.

Mr. NORRIS. Now, to go back to this black caucus, wasn't it true that the blacks were numerically inferior when it came to the voting?

Mr. KIRK. That is true.

Mr. NORRIS. That the whites predominated or held the majority of voting participants?

Mr. KIRK. That's true.

Mr. NORRIS. Was anything done about that? Can you elaborate on the way the minority question representing the blacks was settled as far as the votes went, within the convention?

Mr. KIRK. Well, all through the conference or convention there was a theme that was promoted by the Communist Party, U.S.A. years ago, that because of the institutional racism in America and all those terms they threw out, a convention like the NCNP had to do something that would negate the fact that blacks didn't have as many votes as whites, and so one of the positions of the Communist Party members was to support anyone in the black caucus and anywhere else in the convention who wanted to change that numerical system. I, myself, did not get to go to the final meeting at which the black caucus voted, you know, on the specifics, but I was there when they came back to the convention, because they had left, and there was some arrangements made, I am not sure of the specifics or the numbers but there was some arrangement made where the votes of the black caucus were more than they would have been simply on the basis of numbers, per se.

Mr. NORRIS. Would you continue on then with what happened at the convention, as you recall it?

Mr. KIRK. Well, there were several speeches amply covered by all the press. The one speech that struck me was by James Forman, who had been an informant—off the record, please.

Senator THURMOND. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Senator THURMOND. Back on the record.

Mr. NORRIS. Are you speaking of James Forman?

Mr. KIRK. Right. As you know he had been involved in SNCC and a few other organizations in the South and gave a very interesting talk. As you probably well know, but I don't think many of the people who read this would know, speeches in conventions, especially in this