

the
**JEWISH
PEOPLE**

and the
**FIGHT
FOR
NEGRO
RIGHTS**

SANFORD GOLDNER

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by

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INTRODUCTION

It is the year 1953, eight years since the end-point of the war which, in its death-toll of many peoples, took six million of our fellow-Jews.

In America five million of us walk and breathe, with only lingering and fading memories of the holocaust over there. Objective and subjective factors combine to dim our memories. There are many who would like us to forget our old anger; for we cannot keep this anger warm and still open the prison-gates for Krupp and Koch and von Kesselring. Moreover, the very enormity of the suffering has had its limiting effect; we saw the heaped-up corpses in the death-camps, we shuddered, we wanted to see it no more.

So today we are prone to speak, in a bloodless generality, of "six million dead," and to spare ourselves the horrible specifics that make up the individual dead.

Yet, in the year 1953 something has also happened to stir us from our lethargy. The menace of McCarthyism has crystallized the fears that have increasingly beset us.

Whether this new awareness will win out over the countervailing forces and pressures; whether we shall cast off our complacency, and honestly face our problems; these are things within our power to determine in the days ahead.

In the recent years we have not been unaware that the problems of the Negro people have some relation to our own. Yet our general lack of alarm has certainly shown itself in this area also.

When we ask the question, "What is the stake of the Jewish people in the fight for Negro rights?" it is easy enough to recite some of the ready answers:

"We Jews have had a history full of suffering. This should sensitize us to the sufferings of others."

"We Jews have had an ages-long tradition of freedom and equality. The 'spirit of Judaism,' as a Civil War rabbi stated, demands Negro freedom."

Aye, but as things now stand our record scarcely measures up to our history and traditions. In organized Jewish life we have barely begun to stir from the dead-center of inaction. In our personal lives the vast majority of us have not opened our eyes to suffering, nor have we opened our minds to the larger consequences of the fight for Negro rights.

How shall we account for this? That we ourselves, as part of the white majority, share the sickness of white supremacy? That our past sufferings and traditions affect us less than our present interests and influences?

Indeed, why expect uniformity of action by Jews as Jews? Today, as in the very days when the prophets strode the earth, there have been privileged classes who cared more for their personal welfare than for their people's survival.

Yes, these things, we shall see, are in large measure true. Yet they cannot be the whole of the truth. To them must be added one fact which reveals Jews in their status as Jews, the fact of anti-Semitism. The anti-Semite is unimpressed by our resemblances to the white majority or by our differences among ourselves. The anti-Semite sees all Jews through the single focus of his hatred.

It is from the vantage-point of our own security that we discuss the subject in hand. In so doing we must see how large the problems of the Negro people loom in the shaping of our destiny. The Negro people, whose rights and privileges are exceedingly fewer than our own, and whose sufferings are infinitely greater, play a crucial role in the unfolding of democracy's future. This must concern us, not only because our history should have made us sensitive to the sufferings of others. It must concern us

because we ourselves are imperiled. It must concern us because the oppression of the Negro people, economically and politically, is a main prop for the anti-Semitic forces in our land. It must concern us because the gospel of racism and the brutality against the Negro people brutalizes in turn those who allow such things in their midst.

It must concern us because the Negro people themselves are on the move. Fifteen million strong in our land, they find themselves facing all the barriers to democracy. While these barriers remain, there is no road ahead that any of us can see clearly. But in the forward movement of the Negro people all of us will move forward, with giant energies unleashed, with vistas and goals now scarcely glimpsed or imagined.

CHAPTER ONE

OPPRESSION OF A PEOPLE

OUR stake in the struggle for Negro rights can be set forth in large political and economic terms. But how set forth the fact of suffering in its own terms? How state that pain and terror and indignity are evil of themselves?

There are some things that are seen with the light of self-evidence — or else not seen at all. Frederick Douglass, in a memorable passage, answered those who said to him, "Would you argue more, and denounce less; would you persuade more, and rebuke less; your cause would be much more likely to succeed."

Douglass replied, "But I submit, where all is plain there is nothing to be argued . . . Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? . . . The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or write. When you can point to any such laws in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. When the dogs in your streets, when the fowls of the air, when the cattle on your hills, when the fish of the sea, and the reptiles that crawl, shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, then will I argue with you that the slave is a man! . . .

"What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them to auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into

obedience to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is wrong? No! I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.”¹

Certainly, for the Jewish people, suffering ought to speak with its own voice. Throughout a great part of our past, and especially within our own memories, we have had a full measure of pain and terror.

Yet, who can doubt that the prevailing white supremacy has sealed our feelings and shut our eyes to the facts of Negro suffering? Our own lives, as Jews, has been lived relatively in the full glare of history's light. In our own day we have had the “Brown Book” of “The Hitler Terror,” and the “Black Book” of the “Nazi Crimes Against the Jewish People” in which our sufferings are dated and documented.²

Yet, the Negro people, as the further price of their exploitation, have had their history and their sufferings buried in silence.

Can we open people's eyes or unseal their hearts by revelation of facts, by bringing people into the actual presence of terror? Will it move Jewish people to know that a lynching in which mobs surged around a jail-house, tore forth the victim and hung him, ground their heels into his face and distributed bits of his clothing and lynch-rope as souvenirs — that this was not the lynching of a Negro, but of Leo Frank, a Jew?

The story of Leo Frank could here be a moral in itself. Charged with the murder of a young girl; tried and convicted in an atmosphere inflamed with hate; proven to be guiltless but only after the mob had its way with him — this lynching of a Jew in 1915 is what the Negro has known and suffered all the days and years of his life in our land. Yet not only in form, as a lynching, is this story related to our theme. For the Frank incident was used by

(1) *All footnotes are in the rear of the pamphlet.*

the demagogue Tom Watson to fuse anti-Jewish and anti-Negro hate, and to launch a Ku Klux Klan which, at its height, brought four million hooded men marching in the cities and highways of our land.

We have spoken above of the Negro's history and sufferings as "buried in silence." Pioneer scholars have, of course, begun to break this silence; the great Negro scholars, Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. DuBois; the young American-Jewish scholar, Herbert Aptheker. Now we must bring this scholarship out into the light of day. We must break through the barriers which now keep these facts from most school-books. We must insure the observance of Negro History Week by our schools and our town councils and libraries.

We know now that terror and exploitation were the base upon which our modern industrial system was built. We know that on the backs of the Negro people were built the new cotton kingdom and the factory system. We know that slaves as commodities, and the gold, ivory and diamonds of Africa, and the metals and crops brought forth by slaves in the New World, provided the fortunes on which the emerging commercial and industrial system was built.

In the course of this perhaps 15 million Negroes were brought to the Americas and five times that number killed in Africa or allowed to die on the high seas.³

It was thus that Africa was despoiled of a third to a fourth of its population,⁴ and submitted to four centuries of terror and chaos.

A note on the plunder of ivory lights up the scene of massacre involved in the theft of Africa's riches.

"Picture, if you can, a territory nearly as large as the whole of our United States east of the Mississippi River and Illinois, terrorized and overrun in all directions with hundreds of roving bands of plundering murderers armed with invincible weapons of oppression, a land of blood and might, the nights filled with flame and destruction,

the days weary with the marching of the coffles and the blood of the despairing, hopeless slaves. And this for years, for decades." ⁵

"Every tusk, piece and scrap in the possession of an Arab trader has been steeped and dyed in blood . . . Every pound weight has cost the life of a man, woman or child, for every five pounds a hut has been burned, for every two tusks a village has been destroyed, every twenty tusks have been obtained at the price of a district with all its peoples, villages and plantations. It is simply incredible that, because ivory is required . . . populations, tribes and nations should be utterly destroyed." ⁶

It was, thus, also, that the whole history and culture of the African people, their influence on Europe and Asia in ancient and medieval times, their rich cultural, human and technological contributions, were blotted out from history. The ruling groups, bent on making the Negro less than human in order to fit him into his new role, could not permit him a human history.

En route to America, "The Negroes were chained to each other hand and foot and stowed so close they were not allowed above a foot and a half for each in breadth. They crammed together like herrings in a barrel, they contracted putrid and fatal disorders; so that they who come to inspect them in a morning had occasionally to pick dead slaves out of their rows, and to unchain their carcasses from the bodies of their wretched fellow-sufferers to whom they had been chained." ⁷

And in the United States again the Negro peoples' history, their struggles and resistance, their contributions to industry, to the arts and sciences, their proud and able participation in democratic government in the Reconstruction days, were wiped out in blood by a revived slavocracy.

Is this merely past history? The stirring Petition to the United Nations by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1947, and the Petition "We Charge Genocide," submitted to the United

Nations by the Civil Rights Congress in 1951, these petitions and the experiences embodied in them, show that the history of degradation and oppression is very much alive indeed.

Genocide! Out of the travail of the Jewish people in Germany has arisen a new concept in international law. And today the Negro people cry out for justice under this law.

What is genocide?

Genocide, stated the United Nations on December 9, 1948, "means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

On January 14, 1951, this provision was ratified by the requisite twenty nations, and thus became part of the organic law of the United Nations. Can we fail to note that the United States is not yet one of the signatories to this provision?^a What can the Negro people see in this but fear of opening our land to the scrutiny of the world? Can the Jewish people look with calm on this default, and on the entrenched power of racism that it implies?

To single out a people for killing, to cause them serious bodily or mental harm, to inflict upon them conditions of life calculated to destroy them, these are the marks of

^a *The proposed Bricker Amendment has, as one of its aims, the prevention of United States' adoption of such "Human Rights" provisions of the United Nations.*

genocide. Can we deny that these marks are written large over the face of American life?

The frontal attacks against life, the lynchings, are the clearest sign, and yet even they are not known in the full quantity of their occurrence, or in the full quality of their horror. Statistics, such as those gathered by the Tuskegee Institute, tell only part of the story. To the record of 3,833 lynchings (four-fifths of them Negroes) between 1889 and 1940,⁸ must be added the ominous fact set forth in a Congressional report in 1940; that ". . . countless Negroes are lynched yearly, but their disappearance is shrouded in mystery for they are dispatched quietly and without general knowledge."⁹

Nor has this lynching been confined to the South. Within our own generation there have been lynchings in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Colorado and Kansas.¹⁰

"Once the classic method of lynching was the rope. Now it is the policemen's bullet." So states the petition, "We Charge Genocide." To which we must add the whole paraphernalia of police brutality. When, in 1947, the President's Committee on Civil Rights published its report, one whole section was devoted to this subject. Testimony revealed that "it was seldom that a Negro man or woman was incarcerated who was not given a severe beating which started off with a pistol whipping and ended with a rubber hose."¹¹

Beyond the attack on life is the attack on livelihood. Negroes are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. Segregation, whether in law or in fact, cuts at the roots of the Negro's livelihood; for this eliminates jobs in transportation, recreation, education, and in many personal services.

For the Southern Negro, who comprises the bulk of our agricultural work-force in the South, life is a state of poverty and peonage. This is in part due to causes which affect Negro and poor white alike; high interest rates, exorbitant prices on seed and provisions, fraudulent mar-

keting devices. It is also due to the enforcement of vagrancy laws. "Unemployed workers having no 'visible means of support' are apprehended as vagrants. They are then given the dubious choice between accepting the employment offered by the planter or employer, or being sentenced to forced labor on the chain gang."¹²

The apparatus of law is, of course, on the side of the whites. Negroes who insist upon their rights are likely to meet the fate of Wesley Thomas, a woodchopper, who, on June 30, 1947, was hunted by a posse and shot down because he argued with his employer over back pay.¹³

Assignment of Negroes to the most dangerous and exhausting jobs is part of the picture of genocide. Consider the reports based on interviews with foundry workers by the authors of "Black Workers and the New Unions."¹⁴

"Our lives are short," says one worker. "The reason I say so is because the last few persons that worked here was not out but a short time before they died. You get hot on the job, your heart beats way too fast, your voice changes, you suffer from cramps. The water conditions have been bad. They made some changes but that wasn't much. Most of the time the water is warm, and the whole thing summed up, the job is no good."

And another:

"A colored fellow in my department got sick and was taken to the hospital and was unconscious two days. On each end of the battery they have a shower, and when a man's clothes catch fire, they run to that shower. The same way it burns your clothes it cooks your blood. The superintendent stands there and tells a man to get into that fire and if they don't like it to get the hell out of there as they have men on Broadway who are ready to take their jobs. The men have to buy clothes about every payday. The men who work in the acid have their clothes eaten up daily by the acid. And when the acid touches them, it leaves a scar."

Inhuman working condition reduce the life span. But

this is not all. "Sub-standard housing, dark, damp and cold, is a notorious breeder of disease and death, and an instrument of genocide when court decisions as well as consciously fostered economic policies, make it impossible for a people to leave such housing. 'Most Negroes have been unable to rent or own decent, safe and sanitary houses in which to live and bring up their children,' observed the government publication 'Public Housing and the Negro,' in 1946."¹⁵

Inadequate medical care plays its part. There are fewer available doctors and hospitals. There is discrimination in existing facilities that comes to light only occasionally, as ". . . for instance, in March, 1937, the wife of W. C. Handy, composer of 'St. Louis Blues,' lay critically ill in an ambulance before the doors of Knickerbocker Hospital, while the officials debated for more than an hour whether or not a Negro should be admitted. She died the next day."¹⁶

In summary of these facts, it is little wonder that the life-expectancy of the average American Negro male, as reported by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, is eight years less than that of the white male, and that the life expectancy of the Negro female is ten years less than that of the white female.¹⁷

Surrounding these threats to life and limb, are the countless dreads and degradations that mark all the days and years of a Negro's life. To be in constant fear of what he may or may not do; to suffer silently a thousand daily humiliations; these are the final indignity to a people whose whole life is a gamble with death.

In the words of Frederick Douglass, "where all is plain" is there anything more to be argued? Does not terror speak with its own voice, like the blood of Abel crying out from the ground?

On June 29, 1863, Isidor Bush, a prominent citizen and Jewish leader, rose in the Missouri State Convention and said: "I pray you have pity for yourselves, not for

the Negro. Slavery demoralizes, slavery fanaticism blinds you; it has arrayed brother against brother, son against father; it has destroyed God's noblest work, — a free and happy people." ¹⁸

Must we not, in our own time, repeat this warning? Can we live with so much brutality in our midst and not ourselves be brutalized? Does not violence dull the sensibilities, and prepare the mind for more violence, against other minorities, against Jews, against all who affront the possessors of power.

CHAPTER 2

THE ECONOMICS OF RACISM

IS it the concern only of Negroes that great areas of trades and professions are closed to them, that they are assigned to the dirtiest and most disagreeable jobs, that their wage-scales in many areas are lower than those of the white?

No, this is of concern to all American workers, and to all of us interested in the nation's economic health.

This is so for a number of reasons. Low wages of Negro workers drag down the wage-level of all workers. Underprivileged and unemployed workers of minority groups are used by employers to destroy trade union organization. And the whole colonial status of the South makes it what the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt once termed, "the Nation's number one economic problem."

Let us, in elaboration of the above points, look at a few facts.

In 1949, the average annual wage or salary income of Negro workers was \$1,064, compared to \$2,350 for white workers.¹

The study which reveals this, written by former government economist Victor Perlo, in *Science and Society*, Spring, 1952, shows also the following: that the slight gains made by Negro workers in getting skilled jobs during World War II have been substantially reduced since then.

Victor Perlo has also told us that American industry derives an additional four billion dollars annually in "super-profit" based on Negro-White wage differentials.²

Does this affect white workers? Well, look at the wage scales of white workers in the North and South. A study entitled "*Economics of Prejudice*," issued by the

Union Research and Information Service of San Francisco, in January 1952, showed the following facts:

"Sugar refinery workers in the South average 97 cents an hour; in other states \$1.34.

Workers in the flour and cereal mills of North Carolina average 75 cents an hour; in Minnesota \$1.37.

Wood furniture workers in Martinsville, Virginia, average 95 cents an hour; in Los Angeles, California, \$1.42.

Woolen weavers in Virginia and North Carolina average \$1.12 an hour; in Lawrence, Massachusetts, \$1.56.

The average production worker in manufacturing industry in Georgia received \$1.08 an hour, in Michigan, \$1.71."

This low wage scale affects workers everywhere, in two ways. The southern manufacturer can under-price other areas. Volume of production and thus jobs are reduced in the North and West. Second, the South offers an attractive allure for industries to escape the Northern wage-scales by transferring their operations to the South.

The effect of this is evident in the recent wage-cutting of the Northern textile workers, and in the removal of textile plants to the South.

In the needle trades industry, in which Jewish workers have played a large part, owners are now exploiting other minority groups in an attempt to lower wage-standards and working conditions. On the Pacific Coast, for instance, many Japanese workers are brought onto the job at low wages. Many employers have taken advantage of the irregularity of production, and have gone out of business and re-opened later under new names and with a new work-force.

How about the use of minority groups to thwart labor organization? It is seldom that we find facts about this confessed out of the mouths of owners themselves. Yet John R. Commons, noted labor historian, relates such a confession in words that go to the heart of the matter. In visiting the offices of Swift and Company, meat pack-

ing corporation, he noticed that all of the waiting applicants for jobs seemed to be Swedish. Upon inquiry the employment agent told him:

"Well, you see, it is only for this week. Last week we employed Slovaks. We change about among different nationalities and languages. It prevents them from getting together."³

Again, in an interview with one of the authors of "*Black Workers and the New Unions*," an official of the Carnegie Steel Company said:

"As far as I am concerned I believe that the Negro has been a life-saver to the Steel Company. When we had labor disputes, or when we have needed more men for expansion, we have gone into the South and brought thousands of them. I don't know what this company would have done without Negroes."⁴

This, as we shall indicate later, does not detract from the proud role of the Negro in the trade union movement. It is for the *white worker* to understand the oppression which subjected Negro workers to employers' exploitation. To that extent that white workers have understood this, organized labor has achieved its great gains of the last fifteen years. To the extent that white workers fail to understand this, employers still have their way in the South, in the agricultural regions of the Southwest where Mexican labor is exploited, and to some degree in all sections of the United States.

In varying degrees, the exploitation exists everywhere in our land. But in the South, in those areas where the Negro people occupy a concentrated and continuous land-area, the problem is a special one. Here are the deepest political and economic oppressions; and here is the greatest concentration of "white supremacy" attitudes and practices.

For in that area, forming a crescent from the Virginia tidewater section through twelve states into the eastern part of Texas and the southern part of Arkansas, there is a population of approximately five million Negroes in a

total population of approximately ten million people. In almost half of the counties in this area the Negro people are in the majority.⁵

Here the problem is essentially a land-problem. "Only one out of every ten Negro farmers owns any land, and scarcely half of these have enough to make a living," writes Arthur F. Raper, Southern scholar. "The ownership of the best land is in the hands of a comparatively small group of white families; landlessness and chronic dependence is the lot of over half of the white families and nearly nine-tenths of the colored."⁶

Added to the unequal land-distribution, are the other tyrannies exercised over Southern families, Negro and white; interest rates that have ranged from "19.1% for cash advances to 72.1% for supplies advanced by merchants";⁷ exorbitant prices for seeds and supplies; fraudulent division of the returns in marketing the crops.

Land and cheap credit! Here in our own South is the problem whose echoes we hear all over the world, where colonial peoples are throwing off their yokes; in India, the Philippines, Africa.

We would, however, be overlooking the real source of power and control if we did not see Wall Street's role in the exploitation of the South. Shortly after the Civil War the North began to consolidate its economic control of the South. As the industrial system and the corporation grew, investment in the South increased until by 1900 it amounted to "double the then existing volume of foreign investments."⁸ In the ensuing years investments abroad increased but the share in the South is still larger than in any single foreign country.⁹

Who are the owners of the South?

The Morgan interests through the United States Steel Corporation own the steel plants of the Tennessee, Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company in Birmingham, Ensley, Bessemer, and Fairfield, Alabama; its captive iron ore mines

in Alabama and its 362,432 acres of captive coal veins in Alabama and Tennessee.

The Morgan interests own other steel plants in Alabama, Tennessee and Texas, as well as the Commonwealth and Southern, leading southern utility company, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Southern Railway Company.

The duPonts own large rayon, nylon, plastic, explosive and chemical plants throughout the South, as well as the General Motors plants at Memphis and Atlanta and various saw mills and timber tracts in Tennessee, Arkansas and Louisiana.

The Rockefellers are the principal holders of one of the South's greatest natural resources — petroleum.

The Mellon interests own Gulf Oil with millions of acres under lease, as well as the Koppers Company with many Southern plants, and the Virginian Railway Company.

In tobacco, cotton, rubber, meatpacking, the record of Northern ownership is clear. The leading national firms in the respective fields own also the Southern industries.¹⁰

Finally, the system of Southern agriculture is itself Northern-owned, through control of credit in the hands of Northern banks. "For example, the state of Georgia is 85% absentee-owned, and 50 cents of every dollar on deposit in Georgia banks is owned in the North."¹¹

This system of colonial control not only provides an economic base for America's leading racist forces. It creates conditions which aggravate American economic life as a whole. The corporations which, nation-wide, opposed the moderate measures of the New Deal, will naturally not permit their Southern minions to tolerate any betterment of conditions there. In the words of one writer:

"The manager who represents the absentee control of the North (or East), such as the power companies and the transportation system, is the simplest

to understand. Whether Southern or Northern-born he lives to carry out the desires of his owners, and since the owners have placed investments in his hands for the purpose of profit, the motivation of each manager is to protect these profits, a chore which takes him into great activity on every front. Basically his corporation wants low wages, so the manager spearheads anti-union activities. His company interlocks with other Northern corporations who manufacture finished products sold in the South, so he has fought to keep the freight-rate differentials, since if the South developed its own industries they would cut into the Northern company's profits. The manager's Northern masters profit by the maintenance of a higher tariff, so he fights any attempt to bring the tariffs down.

"Increased taxes for education, health and roads make costs higher for the absentee owner. They are not to be encouraged. Reforestation, soil conservation, crop diversification, all cost money, to no immediate benefit to the Northern corporate aristocrat. This manager, pushed by economic drives, is on principle against any and all of them, and it is fairly simple to follow his processes. He commands the colonial outposts for Northern overlords who have never been averse to the maintenance of the entire South as a slum area, a gigantic sweatshop dedicated to Northern profit."¹²

Stubborn opposition to mild reform is a token of the opposition to those more radical reforms which the South needs for its rehabilitation; land for its farmers, Negro and white, and planned investment of the nation's total resources in draining the colonial swamp.

In the recent days of cold-war hysteria, the forces of reaction in the South have added to their strength. Yet every act of repression has also strengthened the forces of

the people. The growing militancy of the Negro people, the organizing of Negroes and whites into non-segregated unions, the awakening political consciousness of Southern Negroes and whites, these are long steps in the direction of economic freedom.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLITICS OF RACISM

WE know, vaguely and generally, of the great influence of the Southern bloc in Congress. The full size and scope of this control becomes clear when we look at the details. To be sure, as we have seen, the South, in turn, is controlled by Wall Street. Yet this power, exercised by Wall Street through its Southern bloc, rests primarily on one base; the exploitation and disenfranchisement of the Negro people.

For in the poll-tax states, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia, only ten to fifteen percent of the potential voters actually vote, as compared to fifty percent in the rest of the Union.¹

If we average the record in these states together with the Southern states in which other legal and extra-legal bars to voting exist, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma and North Carolina, only about twenty percent of the potential voters actually vote. Despite the fact that the Negro people constitute a majority in large sections of the South, the rigging of the election laws is such that they have virtually no representation at any level of government.

How large does Southern power loom on the national horizon? The above-named states, though they represent approximately one-tenth of the total American electorate, command nearly one-fourth of the votes in the electoral college.²

Statistics, however, do not tell the real story. This story is told in terms of the South's power to manipulate Congressional machinery. Committee heads in Congress are chosen on the basis of seniority. Southern Congressmen have at times headed more than half of the standing committees of the House of Representatives.

This is understandable when we see how few votes a Southern Congressman must obtain in order to perpetuate himself in office. In states such as South Carolina, or Mississippi, 4,000 votes will elect a man to office; whereas in states such as Rhode Island or Illinois it takes over 135,000 votes.

In the Northern and Western states there are no legal bars to voting, and the extra-legal pressures have been fewer; yet electoral districts have been broken up or "gerrymandered" so as to divide the Negro vote.

The system of power built on this base shows itself not only in law but in administration. The Department of Justice has virtually abdicated its right to prosecute violations of civil rights in the States. The FBI, which performs the investigative functions for the Civil Rights Section of the Department of Justice, has "not measured up to the Bureau's high standard in the handling of other types of cases," declared the 1947 Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, in a masterpiece of understatement.³ "The tendency of FBI agents to work in close cooperation with local police officers has sometimes been detrimental to the handling of civil rights investigations."⁴

This cooperation of the FBI with local agents has not only been "detrimental"; it has given a green light to Southern hoodlums and their influential backers.

Although the main burden of brutality has been borne by the Negro and Mexican-American people, yet the system of power which sustains this brutality hits also directly at the Jewish people.

Bilbo and Rankin are not too long dead but that we can still remember the vile words that came from their mouths. Rep. Gossett of Texas, who saw in all Jewish immigrants potential subversives; Rep. Francis Walter of Pennsylvania, who stated in Congress that the opposition to the McCarran Walter Immigration Act comes mainly from "professional Jews"; the former, unlamented Attorney General, McGrath, who, when talking to the Bar Associa-

tion in December 1951 about corrupt lawyers could think only of "the Teitelbaums, the Nathans, the Nasters and the Menkins."⁵

These instances merely scratch the surface. They merely give a hint of future things that are at stake. In recent days not only has the forward movement of the American people been stopped. The rapid decline of our liberties under the Taft-Hartley Act, the McCarran Act, the McCarran-Walter Act, the Smith Act prosecutions of leaders of the Communist Party, the loyalty oaths, screening tests and investigative committees; and the destruction of the New Deal — these are long strides in a backward movement in American history.

Full freedom of the Negro people is thus at the pivot of our future social development. If we burst the Negro's bonds we shall pour new, fresh forces into the mainstream of democracy. If we permit the present flight backwards, we will deepen the atmosphere of repression; we will create those conditions of chaos upon which fascism and anti-Semitism thrive.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW STRONG IS ANTI-SEMITISM IN AMERICA?

HOW shall we measure the size and strength of anti-Semitism in America? What anti-Semitic incidents are merely isolated incidents; and what ones, like the spark that lights up a saturated sky, show the whole firmament of anti-Semitism?

Consider a few incidents.

In early 1952, in Philadelphia, a group of youth calling themselves Hitler Youth Group fire-bombed a synagogue and terrorized Jewish children. Complacently, Alfred Segal, syndicated writer in the Anglo-Jewish press, wrote as follows:

"I have taken these brats in stride, as I do the little boys I see playing cops and robbers with toy guns in our streets . . . I tell my friends that these Philadelphia delinquents are nothing for Jewish dignity to get excited about. In riper wisdom—because of long years and experience — I refuse to get excited." ¹

Can we agree that these acts were simply a matter of spontaneous generation, of the hot impulses of youth? Few children work themselves up to the "childish prank" of bombing a synagogue. Few children affix to themselves the name of a man who was a world-wide abomination. No, this rather indicates a whole blanketing atmosphere of anti-Semitism; it indicates a generally "permissive" community attitude such as led the youths to suppose that they could get by with this. It should lead us to explore in depth the forces that were summed up in this incident; the years of ceaseless propaganda, the power-groups that profit by this, the social forces that gather and flare into flame.

Consider a few incidents around the Walter-McCarran

Act. In Congress, Representative Walter declared that the bill was opposed mainly by "professional Jews." In the Los Angeles hearing before the President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, a woman stated that she wanted to keep America from becoming like "Jew York."

At the Los Angeles hearing this writer (among others) expressed his indignation to one of the members of the Commission, for the woman's remarks had been allowed to stand without comment or without even any evident reaction from the Committee. The Committee member replied, "She's just a crackpot."

Yes, but the crackpots, in their crude way, are voicing the doctrines that are winning the day. In respect of immigration and naturalization law, history has dropped to their level. And does not the Committee's conduct reveal an all-pervading atmosphere of anti-Semitism such as rendered them either callous or afraid? And is not the ominous thing about the McCarran-Walter Act, in addition to its racist and repressive features, the very fact of its passage? For does this not show the power and depth of racism and reaction in America?

How shall we recognize anti-Semitism in its true proportions? Certainly it is not as easy to see a "social force" as it is to see a person or an event. We can note the name of a rabble-rouser or (on the rare occasions that they are apprehended) the names of those who perpetrate beatings and bombings. But to discern the causes underlying these things can be a more difficult matter. I say, "can be," but I do not think it really is a difficult matter. I think we knew full-well in the anti-fascist period who our enemies were and what social forces moved them.

Let us look for a moment at both realms; the realm of people and events, and that of social forces.

In the streets of New York, elderly Jewish men and young Jewish boys have been terrorized and beaten by gangs of men and boys, and street meetings have been broken up by Ukrainian and Eastern European emigrants

who are the beneficiaries of the Displaced Persons Acts and the McCarran-Walter Act.

Beatings have also taken place in Boston and Philadelphia. In the latter city for a long while there were daily anti-Semitic epithets scrawled on the walls of Independence Hall. Counterpart of the Hitler Youth Group in Philadelphia was the Nazi Storm Troopers Club of teenagers in New Orleans, who had stored knives and ammunition at their headquarters.

A Jewish synagogue, together with a Catholic Church and the homes of Negro people were bombed in Miami, Florida. In a number of cities Jewish graveyards have been overturned, and swastikas painted on the walls of Jewish institutions.

In Peekskill, New York, mobs yelling anti-Negro and anti-Jewish epithets stoned and maimed persons attending a concert by Paul Robeson; and in Peoria street, Chicago, Illinois, mobs of 2,000, expressing hostility to a Jew who had allowed a Negro to move into his home, roamed the streets "looking for Jews."

The Jewish men and boys on the receiving end of this violence, the witnesses to this destruction and desecration, have felt and seen, in their several places and times, anti-Semites and anti-Semitic actions.

A Jewish boy of twelve living in a small town near Los Angeles, California, tells his parents that he is afraid to reveal to his schoolmates the fact that he is a Jew. A survey of children around the age of seven in Philadelphia schools reveals that only "10 percent of the children were found to accept Jewish children as equals, and 27 percent openly rejected Jewish children."²

Many of us know already, and the rest of us soon find out, that there are many large utilities and industries, and a great number of trades and services, in which our search for jobs will be futile. Many schools for general and professional training are either highly restricted or closed altogether to our youths. In Jewish vocational guidance

we accept this as one of the facts of life, and steer job-seekers elsewhere.

The job-seeker or school applicant who meets this experience head-on feels the full force of anti-Semitism. Aside from occasional published surveys, however, the rest of us are not informed or called upon to respond with alarm or action. Nor, with rare exceptions, are we called upon to respond to social discrimination, and exclusion from hotels, restaurants, and resorts. Some Jews even dismiss social discrimination as a "subjective, personal matter," of little consequence. Yet, this is far from the case, as Carey McWilliams shows in his "*A Mask for Privilege.*"³ "Social" groupings reflect the prevailing Anglo-Saxon control, and guarantee its perpetuation. Exclusion from certain clubs is the counterpart of exclusion from certain industries, from the diplomatic service, from the higher posts in the Navy.

To these first-hand experiences with anti-Semites and anti-Semitism, we must add what we learned about home-grown anti-Semitism in our fight against Hitler. We learned not only that there were crackpots but that certain powerful financial interests stood behind the crackpots. This knowledge was not easy to acquire nor to keep firmly before the eyes of the Jewish people. Jewish men of means, into whose hands Jewish self-defense gravitated, were not inclined to identify our real enemies, particularly when these Jews themselves aspired to the citadels of wealth and power. Sturdy fighters, such as Rabbi Stephen Wise, and Jewish workers' organizations, were not so wary of the truth. So today, for the sake of the record, and also that we may profit from experience, we must briefly recall what we have learned.

We must recall what we were told by various investigating committees; the LaFollette-Thomas Committee investigating violations of civil liberties, Senator Black's "Special Committee to Investigate Lobbying", and the Munitions Investigating Committee.

From these committees, we learned the names of those who supported the American Liberty League and, directly or indirectly, supported anti-Semitic outfits such as the Crusaders and The Sentinels of the Republic.

High on the roster were the duPont family; Alfred P. Sloan of General Motors; Edward F. Hutton of General Foods; Joseph H. Emery, Jr., of Chase National Bank; Howard Heinz of H. J. Heinz Company, a director of the Mellon National Bank; E. T. Stotesbury, a Morgan partner; W. S. Farrish of Standard Oil; W. L. Clayton of the Anderson-Clayton Company which controls the cotton of America; Sewell Avery of Montgomery Ward; John J. Raskob; Colonel Robert W. McCormick; Remington, Rand and Company, and numerous others.

When we compare these names with the lists of America's leading industrial and banking groups as set forth in the Senate Small Business Committee's Report on "Economic Concentration and World War II", we see the men who hold a monopoly of American economic power within their hands. Here are the groups which organized and control the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce. Here are the groups which predominate in both the Republican and Democratic parties.

Here are the groups which, through loans and cartels, supported the financiers and industrialists who maintained Hitler in power, and supported the men who built Japan's munitions industry.

Here are the men who aided actual conspiracy; the proposed putsch revealed by General Smedley Butler to the McCormack-Dickstein Committee in 1934; the proposals for commercial and political alliances discussed by the duPonts, General Motors and Baron von Killinger (Congressional Record, Aug. 20, 1942, pps. A 3364-66).

Here are the men who control the news-sources of America; Hearst, whose agent Major A. Clyde Gill organized the first convention of anti-Semites held in America in

Asheville, North Carolina, in 1936, and whose columns regularly paid tribute to the efficiency of Hitler's and Mussolini's system of government; Life magazine, in which Mussolini, Franco, Mannerheim were glorified, year after year in "long and glowing articles"; Time magazine, which in the early thirties used such phrases as "spider-Jew Blum," "heavy-jowled Jew Fleishhacker," "smart Jew," "garrulous Jew", "shrewd Jew"; Fortune magazine, which in 1934 contained "the greatest glorification of Italian fascism to appear anywhere in America"; the Saturday Evening Post, which, on April 5, 1941, published Demaree Bess' article in which a Nazi general defends Nazi treatment of Polish Jews and "whitewash(es) the most terrible crime in the world, genocide" ⁴; the Chicago Tribune, which on May 29, 1950, ran a front-page article by its Washington correspondent, Walter Trohan, declaring that "Frankfurter, Morgenthau and Lehman" constitute a "secret government of the United States."

Here are the men who would bring fascism, not necessarily with the Hitler trappings, but, as Huey Long used to boast, under the guise of anti-fascism. Big business control of government behind the scenes has, in the past decade, given way to a policy of open control of the apparatus of government. In a speech before the Investment Bankers Association on December 10, 1940, Virgil Jordan, President of the National Industrial Conference Board (research arm of the N.A.M.) stated:

"Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked on a career of imperialism in world affairs . . . At best England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism . . . This involves . . . the acceptance of appointments in governmental posts . . . In other words, as our country has begun to evolve its overall foreign policy, starting with the most important contribution it can make — 'men in government.' This applies to its domestic policies also." ⁵

In the intervening years, since this declaration of

policy, virtually all branches of administration, foreign and domestic, on high policy levels and in key executive posts, are filled by men on leave from the banks, insurance companies and industrial corporations of the land.⁶ Eisenhower's cabinet of millionaires provides the structure with its capstone.

Are we here merely raking over past history? Or has the past left a residue of fateful importance to the Jewish people? Are the persons and incidents we have enumerated merely isolated ones, or do they make for an atmosphere saturated with anti-Semitism?

In October of 1947 Fortune magazine published an Elmo Roper poll in which people were asked which of various groups were getting more economic and political power than is good for the country. With respect to economics, about 40% of the people refused to select any group; but of the remaining 60%, more than half selected the Jews. With respect to politics, about 50% refused to select any group, but of the rest about 40% selected the Jews. In both cases the Jews were the leading scapegoat.

When Carey McWilliams states that this poll shows that "the Jews have become the residual legatees of the countertradition in American life," he is referring not only to the history recited above, but to the long years that lie behind it. He is referring to racism as a whole and Anglo-Saxon superiority in particular. He is referring to the years of the last century when the industrial giants of America, "largely of North European stock, mainly English and Scotch and Irish, and of Protestant backgrounds," the Vanderbilts, Huntingtons, Hills, Armours, Rockefellers, Carnegies, Cooks, Morgans, Armours, sought to protect their wealth and power with the philosophy of Anglo-Saxon superiority; how preachers, professors and journalists took up the chorus and gave forth theories no less vicious than those of Goebbels and Alfred Rosenberg; how years of pounding on this theme led to the Immigration Law of 1924; how the Ku Klux Klan, Henry Ford, the

anti-Semitism. The many incidents, the surveys, the polls, show the degree to which anti-Semitism has already grown, even before we have been subjected to the driving force of a full-blown anti-Semitic political movement.

In the face of this can we remain sanguine and unmoved? Can we doubt that the rich and the strong will yet pour millions in money and all their energies into the defense of their strongholds? Can we, whose fate is at stake, proceed on any less realistic an assumption? Must we not awaken ourselves and those about us, to see the picture in its full dimensions, and to take the steps that will strengthen and sustain us?

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT KIND OF UNITY?

THOUGH we have, in the immediately preceding pages, heavily accented the menace of anti-Semitism, this should not lead us to the conclusion that the problems of the Negro and Jew are equal in status or in fatefulness for the future. Neither in magnitude of suffering, nor in decisiveness for America's future, is there an equality.

The Jewish people do suffer, in job-discrimination, in housing-discrimination, in social-discrimination; and, as in Germany, we stand always under threat of a widespread anti-Semitic and fascist movement. But compared to the Negro people, the Jewish people have relative mobility in jobs, homes, civil rights and in many aspects of American life; while for the Negro nothing short of open terror adequately describes the bloody lynchings, the daily danger to life and limb, the forcible isolation in disease-ridden ghettos, the exclusion from citizenship, the abasement of simple human dignity that is the daily portion of the Negro people.

Not only in suffering, but in relation to America's future, the role of the Negro people is more decisive. For their oppression is woven into the very fabric of American life.

The depth of the oppression measures the height to which the freedom-fight will lift us. For as the Negro people win their freedom, how many old evils and injustices will be swept aside!

As Jewish people we must sum this up in a special way. As an imperiled people, everything that adds to the violence and chaos in American life augments our own peril. Everything that impedes the full unfolding of eco-

conomic and political democracy threatens also our immediate security and our future survival. Moreover, and perhaps of most importance in a strategic sense, the enemies of the Negro people are our own enemies. America's anti-Semites are at the same time the owners of the South and the oppressors of the Negro people throughout the land. The lists of individuals and interest groups set forth above as owners of the South, and the list set forth as America's anti-Semites, are, in almost complete detail, one and the same.

The massive struggle of the Negro people is therefore our struggle. The main and most powerful blow against anti-Semitism in America is the blow against the enemies of the Negro people. The self-interest of the overwhelming masses of the Jewish people therefore demands that they identify themselves with this fight.

If we are clear on these matters, if we know the decisive role of the Negro people to all who have a stake in democracy, and the special concern of the Jewish people, we will know also certain other things that naturally follow. We will seek to achieve a unity of "all" who suffer from the oppression of the Negro people.

To broaden our sights in this way is necessary. At first blush, it would appear that we are seeking merely close cooperation between Negro and Jew. This, however, would miss the very essence of all that we have written. We can no more limit the problem of oppression of the Negro people to Negro-and-Jew than we can limit it to Negro alone.

In general terms we have spoken of the stake of American workers, of the Jewish people and other minority groups, of all who cherish democracy, in the fight for Negro rights. To specify further in full detail would be beyond the space-limitations of this work. Yet we must know that the Mexican-American people, three-and-a-half to four million strong in our Southwestern states, are among the chief victims of racism and exploitation; that there is a

direct line from the slave-doctrine and the gospel of Anglo-Saxon superiority to the territorial, economic and cultural subjugation of the Mexican people in our land. And we must know that this same chain of causes has reached to the brown peoples of our ocean islands, to the Asiatics within our midst, and to the fourteen million foreign born who today have been reduced by the McCarran-Walter Act to the status of second-class citizens.

It is over all of these groups that the shadow of oppression falls. It is with all of them together that we must seek to join our forces. Within this perspective, it is, of course, necessary and important for Jewish organizations to join with Negro organizations on given issues or in cultural celebrations. This joint action, however, must be no stopping-place, but rather a point-of-departure for the broader unity which we must achieve.

For many reasons there has existed among Jewish people and organizations a tendency to "go it alone." This tendency was greatly battered by Hitler and his American counterparts. And while the anti-fascist fight was on we came, with some exceptions, to know that our fate was linked to the forces of progress in the world. In this period, also, we began to understand that the sword pointed at the Negro people is directed at our own breast.

Whether these insights were strong and lasting is something which we must now examine. This accounting must be made, however, in terms of the unity whose essence we have been exploring. We must seek out beyond ourselves and beyond mere Negro-Jewish unity to a grand alliance of all who suffer from oppression of the Negro people. We must work with these great groupings of people and add our measure of strength to the common cause.

CHAPTER SIX

WHITE SUPREMACY AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE

THE logic of our case has been stated. For all the reasons set forth, the Jewish people have a stake in the fight for Negro rights. Yet, can we say that this is enough?

There are many who will give ready intellectual assent to all of the grand principles stated. But how prepared are they to take action in their personal and organizational lives?

With some Jews the record is clear enough; they are either part of the exploiting group, or they stand mute in the face of exploitation. But there are others, some most ardent in their allegiance to principles of equality; and yet, in one way or another, they display deep habits of white supremacy, in thought and in turn of expression, in inability to move from thought to action.

This work will therefore be futile if it does not go behind an appeal to the mind; if it does not strip bare the habits and emotions that are the equipment of all of us in a white supremacist atmosphere.

As things now stand, the record of the Jewish people in the fight for Negro rights is far from exemplary.

Many of the areas of contact of Negro and Jew have been exploitative ones. Few accounts of the Negro in America, whether written by Negro or white, omit the fact that certain Jewish landlords, Jewish merchants and Jewish housewives have exploited the Negro people. In the Harlem riots of 1935, Jewish merchants were a special target of attack. In the words of Professor Arnold M. Rose, "A definite feeling of anti-Semitism . . . has been generally

present during riots, among Northern Negroes at least, ever since." ¹

That Negroes in such instances think of Jews not simply as white exploiters but as Jews is a sign of the potency of anti-Semitism in America. This is not said to "excuse" exploitation by Jews or to "explain" anti-Semitism to Negroes. Our central aim is to mobilize the Jewish people to fight against white supremacist acts and attitudes.

In Los Angeles, for instance, a fight was recently successfully waged to achieve the hiring of a Negro clerk in a Jewish-owned store in a Negro neighborhood. Jews who joined in the picket-line evidenced, in perhaps the most effective way, that exploitation is a matter of economics, not of race, religion or nationality. And the participation of Jewish people in the picket-line aided not only in the fight for Negro rights but also in the fight against all discrimination, including that against the Jewish people.

With some exceptions, Jewish owners of commercial and manufacturing establishments tend to act like all other owners. They discriminate in hiring, they assign Negroes to inferior jobs, they pay less to Negroes than to whites.

How about Jewish organizational life? Jewish organizational life is complex, and it is in process of change, yet certain things are evident. To the extent that it is influenced by those who exploit Negroes, or by those whose business involvements tie in with the general pattern of exploitation, it is bound to be weakened in defense of Negro rights.

Approximately ten years ago, the writer was present at a meeting of a leading middle-class Jewish organization, where the two local Jewish defense professionals and a prominent rabbi were discussing Jewish self-defense. When someone in the audience asked the question, "What should be the role of the Jewish people in relation to the Negro people?", one of them answered (in essence) "The Jewish people are sufficiently beset by their own problems and should not take on the problems of the Negro people." He elaborated that, from a "public relations" point of view,

there was no advantage in linking to the Jewish people the less favorable status of the Negro people. The other two speakers acquiesced in these statements.

In the ensuing years, however, in the period of the anti-fascist war, there was some forward movement. The Negro workers were moving into war industries and into new localities. The C.I.O. was making its mark in broader community circles. At a meeting in the C.I.O. building the writer heard one of the aforementioned Jewish speakers pledge his people's support in the fight for Negro rights.

In the summer of 1942, the Negro scholar, L. D. Reddick, in an article in the Negro Quarterly, analysed the failures of both Negro and Jewish middle-class groups to reach out to other minority groups. This was due, he said, to the fact that the members of these groups were seeking individual solutions to their personal problems, that their concern for their careers, their tendency to change their names and to "pass," dictated their notions of group defense.

"Thus," says Reddick, "when these middle-class groups looked away from the true interests of the masses of their own people, it could hardly be expected that they would give any real thought to alliances with other despised minorities."

Since the end of World War II the momentum of the preceding days has carried forward in some fields, in educational conferences on "race relations," "inter-cultural relations," "group relations"; in legal fights and in public relations; in the movement of some Jewish youth groups and fraternal organizations to unite with Negroes in athletic and social events; and in an occasional fight such as that against discrimination in bowling alleys and athletic tournaments. Fund drive appeals, too, now refer more frequently to the need to fight for Negro rights.

Essentially, however, Reddick's commentary still stands. In the hard fight for jobs, housing, and against police brutality, there is almost no action.

Among Jewish workers the fight against white supremacy has been much sharper. They themselves have had to wage the fight against discrimination together with all of America's immigrant workers. This reflected itself in the constitution of their unions, in legislative action, and in rallying around causes such as the Scottsboro case and that of Angelo Herndon. The Jewish workers' support of industrial unionism contributed to recruitment of millions of minority workers into trade unions.

With all of this acknowledged, however, infinitely more remains to be done. In unions such as the needle trades, for instance, which share the proud history cited above, the skilled jobs are predominantly held by Jewish workers. The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Italians and Japanese who now total more than the Jewish workers, are predominantly assigned to less-skilled and lower-paying jobs. Jewish workers and Jewish trade union leaders have not done enough to guarantee upgrading, training programs, protection from discriminatory hirings and firings.

White supremacy operates in a multitude of hidden forms; in acts of omission, in insensitivity to the persons and problems of the Negro people, in resistance to action. Our blind spots and blockages are products of the overwhelming atmosphere of white supremacy.

Illustration of this point, in John Galsworthy's play "*Loyalties*," concerning anti-Semitic prejudice, covers many types of hidden chauvinism. In Galsworthy's play the scene is set in an English week-end party, with one Jew among the guests. One of the guests loses something of value. Immediately the "loyalties" of all good Englishmen come into play; the Jew, of course, must be guilty! The point of hidden prejudice is further sharpened in a scene in which "Graviter" and "Margaret Orme" are discussing the jury chosen to try the Jew. The jury contains two Jews, and Margaret asks,

"Don't you think they ought to have been challenged?"

"Graviter: De Levis might have challenged the other ten, Miss Orme."

"Margaret: Dear me, now! I never thought of that."

This drama is re-enacted daily offstage in countless ways. "Charges," constituting grounds for dismissal from jobs, arrests on "suspicion" or on no charges at all, are the frequent plight of the Negro people. To be able to see through these charges, to take up the fight against discriminatory treatment is the constant challenge to all of us. Special effort is required to overcome the chauvinism of even the most progressive people.

The need for "special effort" is so obvious that it would not itself need special attention, were it not that some people attack this as "unAmerican" and, indeed, as "communistic". When progressive workers in certain unions proposed election of a Negro to the executive board, this was attacked and was labelled "Jim Crow in reverse". "Negroes should not be elected as Negroes," they said. "Election is equally open to all, on the basis of individual merit."

This is to use the language of "equality" to cover up the manifestly unequal conditions under which Negroes live. "Special effort" was needed in the first place to bring Negro workers into unions. "Special effort" is needed to make them feel that they are wanted at union meetings and to accept committee appointments and positions of responsibility.

The evident common-sense of this is reflected in a comment by the authors of *"Black Workers and the New Unions"*:

"Any union organizer should have realized that, in view of the peculiar position of Negro workers, special treatment was imperative to overcome their trepidation and hesitancy. The social distance existing between white and Negro workers was hard to overcome. Negroes often lived in a separate and segregated part of the city with little or no social intercourse with the white community. Since,

in the past they had never been approached by whites, they tended to look with suspicion on any sudden invitation to cooperate with them. Years of competition between the races stimulated by open-shop practices only intensified the racial antagonisms inbred in the Southern background of many Negro workers. None of these factors should have been overlooked by union organizers. To expect Negroes to join unions simply by virtue of their employment in the industry was to ignore the crux of the racial problem. However, the failure to recognize these difficulties is reflected in the statements of many organizers of this period."

The point expressed above is also seen in the matter of upgrading workers. When a job opening appears, many white workers fall into the error of saying, "We believe in equal opportunity, but there are no skilled Negroes able to take the job." There is, of course, no equal opportunity under such circumstances. Unless "special effort" is exerted to insure training periods and apprenticeship programs, there will be no opportunity. The techniques for such training already exist in union contracts and state-sponsored programs, and they must be applied to Negro workers.

There is no great mystery in the plea for special effort, except on the part of those who raise theories with a liberal phrasing to cover up their fear of a real struggle for Negro rights.

Some progressive people, who have fought good fights against various forms of discrimination, are surprised on the occasions when they themselves are criticized for white supremacy acts and attitudes. The typical expression is "I'm a progressive person. I couldn't be a chauvinist." The extreme expression is, "I haven't a trace of white chauvinism in me."

This kind of general disclaimer overlooks the whole influence of our racist environment. Progressive people particularly should know that there is no pure or traceless self. Only in interaction with the environment is the

self molded. At best those who have "thought" themselves out of chauvinism remain divided selves, reflecting the basic contradictions in our society. And the only way that we can sway our personal balance in a progressive direction is by action, not by thought alone.

Sometimes, of course, this knowledge of the great pressure of racist influences is used to minimize the seriousness of chauvinism; accent is placed on "how *easy* it is to succumb," rather than on "how *hard* we must exert ourselves." One form of this is to acknowledge the chauvinist act or attitude but to say, "It wasn't intentional." But it is precisely its unintentional or undeliberate character that marks hidden chauvinism. How can we expect it to be otherwise, when we are daily flooded with the propaganda of white supremacy, when the Negro people are kept in the most menial of jobs, when the movies, advertising displays and newspapers saturate us with the images of white supremacy?

To go on further to examples of the Galsworthy-Loyalty type. The writer was present at a Jewish choral group's discussion of a proposal to open the group to Negroes. One of the participants raised the question, "Should we take in Negroes even if they can't sing?" Another participant responded, "You haven't raised that question concerning whites as a whole. Why should you raise it regarding Negroes?" The response showed up the chauvinism of the original question. It is not that whites or Negroes as individuals would necessarily be exempt from tests of ability. But, if the situation were reversed, if, for instance, a non-Jewish chorus were discussing the admission of Jews, the raising of the question of ability would certainly show itself to Jews as anti-Semitism. Individual ability to sing is so self-evidently the first requirement of choral membership that it is irrelevant to the discussion of a people as a whole.

On another occasion, members of a fraternal group were asked concerning a Negro who had left the group,

whether they had ever invited him to one of their homes on a social basis. One person responded, "He never invited us to his home." This, of course, is chauvinist on a number of counts. It is a statement of reprisal and cover-up for one's own shortcomings. It overlooks the whole set of special circumstances that would make the Negro extremely unlikely to take such initiative. It overlooks the need for "special effort" on the part of whites to achieve social relationships between the Negro people and themselves.

Sometimes, "with the best intentions," in the very fight against chauvinism itself, we betray our chauvinist limitations. Sometimes in meetings set up to take action on an incident we hear white people say, "We must help the Negro people," "We must work for the Negro people." The Negro people can justifiably resent these expressions. It is not the Negro people for whom we are working, but ourselves. When an air of pity or sympathy accompanies such expressions the error is compounded. The Negro people do not want our pity or sympathy, or the patronising and condescending attitudes these betoken. The Negro people are themselves on the move, and it is up to the rest of us to bestir ourselves, for the sake of our own lives.

Another instance of this error is to talk of the "Negro problem." As many Christian scholars have noted with respect to anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism is not a "Jewish problem." It is the problem of the non-Jew. So, too, white supremacy is the problem of the whites. To talk of a "Negro problem" is to talk as if the Negro people are the source and origin of their own problems.

To know these distinctions and to avoid these errors is not an automatic and easy matter, and the writer particularly has reason to abstain from a "holier-than-thou" attitude. Once in leading a discussion before a trade-union group the writer used the expression "Negro problem."

A Negro arose and said, "When I walk down the street I'm not a problem, I'm a human being."

What was he here expressing? Resentment that we have mislocated the problem; or that we have implied that the Negro "constitutes" a problem; or that we have been callously impersonal. Some or all of these, I suspect, were involved; and it gives us pause and makes us take stock.

It would not be difficult to obtain from many Jewish people expressions of opposition to restrictive covenants, to segregated housing and jim-crow in general; yet, how many understand the white chauvinism expressed in the tendency to move away from areas into which Negro people move? Home owners talk of a fall in real estate values. Yet, actual study of the influence of Negro in-migration destroys the myth that there is a fall in real estate values. The same general economic determinants prevail in Negro or mixed sections as elsewhere, with the exception that the tendency to charge more rent in segregated areas lifts sales prices upward also.

Press reports in the middle of 1952 emanating from the Federal Housing Administration in Washington, D. C., indicated that studies of many cities support the general conclusion that real estate values respond to general economic factors rather than to racial character.

Failure to resist such flights from mixed areas or to combat the chauvinism on which they rest, is one of the "acts of omission" which contribute to the final result of oppression and exploitation of the Negro people.

Insofar as Jewish people breathe in the air of white supremacy they engage also in the general use of language which imputes inferior status to the Negro. The use of the words "boy" and "girl" in reference to Negroes regardless of their age, reflects the menial positions as household servants and janitors, to which Negroes have been confined. In a discussion in a fraternal organization in which the writer, as a discussion-leader, elaborated the importance

of rooting-out such words, one of the persons present related an incident involving the white and Negro workers in her shop. The word "girl" was used, and the Negro women protested. The white women "hastened to explain" that they were just using the word "girl" in the whimsical way of women resisting their age, and that the Negro women were "too sensitive." This report was given by the speaker as if she were just elaborating what the discussion-leader had said. But there is quite evidently all the difference in the world between a struggle to root out chauvinist language and the excuse that Negroes are "too sensitive" on the score. It is not for whites to appraise the history of indignity that underlies each chauvinist word. It is not for us to palm off as "innocent merriment" the use of the word "girl" as "explained." There is no whimsy in it for Negro women. Our job is not to smooth over the Negro people's sensitivity but to eradicate the words that flow from our own insensitivity.

The word, "the shvartze," as used by Jewish people, is a case in point. When told that this is a chauvinist word, some Jewish people respond, "It simply means, 'the black one.' What's wrong with that?"

It is true, of course, that the word "Negro," itself means "black." And it is true, as Lloyd L. Brown points out in his article "*Words and White Chauvinism*,"² that context is important, and that the word "white" is woven into the texture of our language to express the "significance of the sun as the source of light, warmth and growth," and the word "black" to express its opposite, darkness, with its "sinister connotations." This general use of the words "black" and "white" and words such as "blacklist," "dark fate," have nothing to do "with the character of the Negro people." But words such as "n.....r," "darkie," "shine," "eight-ball," etc. are tied in with the white's superior and derogatory attitude towards the Negro people.

Such a word as "n.....r," Lloyd L. Brown tells us, "burns like a branding iron, it chokes like a lynch rope;

it lashes like a whip; it smells of the slave ship. It is a word that carries the sum-total of the unparalleled oppression of a people; behind it stand three hundred years of human torture, misery, poverty, and pain."

The word "shvartze" is laden with chauvinist content. As applied to persons such as employed help or even fellow-workers and acquaintances, whose identities and names are well known to the user, it assumes that the individual identity of the Negro is inconsequential. It is as if a non-Jew referred to a Jewish individual not by his name, but as "the Jew."

In the word "shvartze" is also the belittlement, the assumed inferiority of the Negro; the sum-total of qualities of "shiftlessness," "irresponsibility," etc., that make up the stereotype.

Lack of awareness of the whole area of "chauvinist language" is almost certainly a sign of lack of contact with Negroes on a social and personal plane. Jewish people, so long segregated, and so subject to all the slanders of the stereotype, should know how the caricature of a people grows under forced exclusion. Failure to fight stereotypes in the movies and arts, failure to break down social exclusion in public and fraternal gatherings, failure to enlarge the area of one's own social life to include Negro people; these are the acts of omission, of inertia, of resistance, that impede our forward movement.

The overcoming of these failures, in addition to the struggle for housing, jobs, and against brutality, mark the advance from intellectual conviction to action. Not until we move along these ways do we begin to cope with the effects of chauvinism as they show themselves in our personal lives and conduct.

CHAPTER 7

PROGRAM OF ACTION

WHEN we think of action, we must think of the great groups of Americans who have the primary stake in fighting for Negro rights.

That American workers are the ultimate target of racism is abundantly clear. It is also clear that, despite much chauvinism in the ranks of workers, the record of the trade unions in the fight for Negro rights far exceeds that of any other organized group in the American community.

The crusade for industrial unionism that enlarged the trade union movement from one and one-half million to fifteen million workers since 1929 was in good part due to the fact that the barriers of race, color and national origin were thrown down. Nothing like that early militancy exists today. Yet, despite this, the basic interests of the workers makes this fight a continuingly vital issue. No clearer test can be found than in the fact that virtually all of organized labor favors fair employment practices legislation, whereas virtually all of organized industry opposes it.

Increasing sections of Negro workers organized into trade unions and groups such as the National Negro Labor Council, give power of unprecedented proportions to the fight for the rights of all people. In the founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council in 1951, William R. Hood, President of the Council, and Secretary of Ford Local 600 of the United Auto Workers, C.I.O., declared:

"In the Civil War thousands upon thousands of Negro workers who took arms in the union cause won, not only

their own freedom — the freedom of the Negro people — but by abolishing the institution of slave labor, provided the base for the development of free trade unions in America.”

He also went on to say:

“If thirty million Americans — fifteen million Negro people united with fifteen million workers — join with the Jewish people to say there shall be no more anti-Semitism, and mean it, then there will be no more anti-Semitism.”

This statement comes with especial significance from a worker in a Ford plant. Fifteen years ago the doors of the Ford plant, with the cooperation of management, were open to all the anti-Semitic influences of the Silver Shirts, the Black Legion and the Ku Klux Klan. What a change in a plant whose workers in recent years voted support for national legislation to outlaw anti-Semitism!

Negro workers, and white workers, close to the actual facts of exploitation, compose the first line of strength in our common fight.

Beyond workers' groups, the advance in organization and strength of the Negro, Mexican-American, Japanese-American and other minority groups, gives us a next line of strength. The programmatic examples given by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Negro Elks and many Negro fraternal and religious organizations, the joint reports of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Jewish Congress, these are a strong base on which we may build.

Organized religion, despite its past defaults, is being awakened by the challenge of recent events. It is discovering its own dilemma, evident in the exclusionist policy of most white churches.

This awakening was evident in the June, 1952 meeting in Claremont, California, of the Congregational Churches of America, which adopted a resolution against discrimination and segregation.¹ It was evident in the ini-

tiative taken in early 1952 by the Indianapolis Church Federation, in cooperation with the National Council of Churches, in circularizing questionnaires concerning the acceptance at services of visitors of other races. Of the white churches that responded, thirty-five of the fifty-eight declared in favor of visitors of other races. Nineteen Negro churches were unanimously in favor of the proposal.²

These, and other signs, such as discussions at national church conventions, and actions in various local churches, indicate that growing sections of the church community are ready to join in the fight against white supremacy.

Finally, we must seek allies among those groups of people who are fighting for the everyday needs of the people, for social security, for better housing, for child care, for peace. Groups such as these, whose number and strength has grown over the years, depend upon solidarity, and in turn foster solidarity, of all people. The logic of their fight leads them against the forces that also oppose racial equality. The currents running in these many streams of activity swell the mainstream of the struggle for equal rights.

From discussion of allies we go to discussion of action. Yet, unfortunately, a program of action must be prefaced by a plea for the very concept of action itself. We shall make such a plea and criticize certain tendencies in organized Jewish life. Yet this criticism is made on the premise that Jewish groups, despite their differences, cannot indulge the luxury of disunity. All have their portion to contribute. The resources and information of Jewish defense groups is a tremendous potential asset. The access to large groups of Jews and non-Jews enjoyed by Jewish fraternal and religious groups can be of inestimable value. The readiness of working-class groups to lead picketing and demonstrations and to join in on the educational, legal and other aspects of defense, rounds out a sizable sum-total of forces.

From this vantage-point we support a program of

"action" against attempts to replace it by policies of "education," "public relations," "good will." In the middle thirties vast sections of the Jewish community broke with such notions. "Education," "public relations," etc., are certainly necessary as a partial program, yet it was clear during the anti-Hitler fight that such programs were used to prevent mass meetings, petition campaigns, delegations to public officers, and boycotts against German goods. More was needed, and the Jewish people responded to pleas such as those of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise and Samuel Untermyer. From this period also date most of the Jewish Community Councils, which sprang into existence over the opposition of those who favored "education," and "work-behind-the-scenes."

Today the forces of hysteria that have encouraged attacks on the Negro and Jewish people have also thrown some Jews into fear of making a sturdy defense of their people's rights. The philosophy of inaction, decked out now in titles such as "the silent treatment," "the quarantine treatment," threaten to prevail again.

In key instances of police brutality, job and housing discrimination, it should be clear that the failure to rally around the victims simply emboldens the perpetrators, and leads to new incidents. On the other hand nothing is better than a strong fight, even in one industry or residential district. Such a fight alerts all wrongdoers and warns them that the public eye is on them. In Los Angeles, in 1949, months of fruitless negotiations with the Golden State Creamery Company in a case of anti-Jewish discrimination was followed by a consumer's boycott in one of the city's areas. This action brought results not only in Golden State Creamery, but in Bordens and others, where, in addition, Negro workers were hired for the first time.

The great victory over jim-crow in the Metropolitan Housing Project in Stuyvesant Town, New York City was achieved only by the action of Jewish residents in moving

Negro families into their apartments, and in the subsequent rallying of community support.

In Los Angeles, there were protracted negotiations with the Bank of America in the attempt to secure hiring of Negro tellers. Only in those districts where picket lines were placed was the action finally successful.

Such actions, whether they eventuate in victory or loss, are an eventual gain for the people. They cut across and expose the major forces of good and evil in our society. They educate people for more intelligent action on all fronts. This contrasts strikingly with the philosophy of those who shun public action, who would leave defense work to a few "experts," who conduct few or no campaigns, and who publish statistical reports that are seldom read and offer little inspiration.

The period of World War II provided a decisive answer to those who cautioned against unrestricted hiring and unrestricted residential policies in public housing projects. Dire results, bloodshed, riots, were predicted. But it was discovered that Negro and white shortly were working and living in amity with each other. In reviewing the Detroit race riots of 1942-3, Professor Alfred McClung Lee, chairman of the Department of Sociology of Wayne University, wrote as follows:

"A solution to such problems that works amazingly well wherever it is tried is the simple one of permitting people to live wherever their tastes and financial resources, their friends and desired facilities may lead them. Negroes and whites who lived as neighbors did not fight one another in the Detroit race riots. They had come to know and understand each other as human beings. Whites rioted against Negroes moving into the Detroit Sojourner Truth Homes in 1942. Then both whites and Negroes were amazed at the decline of friction after the Negroes had quietly made themselves at home."³

The almost universal success in breaking down barriers by direct action is the decisive answer to those who say that progress can only be achieved gradually and through "education."

With these preliminaries, "education" assumes its place as a mode of action. Education is needed to wipe out the lies and distortions upon which "white supremacy" is built. It is needed to expose the poisonous slander that the Negro people are "inferior" and to combat such myths as the "financial control" of the Jewish people.⁴

Beyond education, we must activize ourselves in all the ways mentioned throughout these pages.

1) To fight for fair employment practices, and for decent training and upgrading programs for Negro workers.

2) To fight against segregation in public and private housing.

3) To conduct an unrelenting campaign against police brutality.

4) To insure Negro representation at all levels of our local, state and federal governments, and to alter the electoral and administrative processes which thwart this end.

5) To rise to the defense of Negro victims of white-supremacy frameups, and to the defense of Negro leaders imprisoned or persecuted because of their courageous leadership.

6) To protest stereotypes and other white chauvinist expressions in the movies, television, radio, literature and the arts; and to insure the spread of the truth of Negro history through rewriting of school-texts and through celebration of Negro History Week in our schools, and town councils and libraries.

7) To join with persons in all walks of life, in their individual and organizational capacities, in working for the laws and practices which will end the monstrous evil of white supremacy.

I have not, in these pages, offered "ultimate solutions" for the Negro or Jewish people. I have not broached those vital questions of definition and of future status of the two groups among the many groups that make up the whole American folk. If the Jewish people are moved to action in the specific ways mentioned, if out of such action comes a closer union with all who have a stake in fighting for Negro rights, a significant advance will have been made in American life. The freedoms achieved will include the freedom to define and shape our group life and to shape the patterns of culture of our respective peoples.

This, in summary, has been a plea to Jewish people to identify themselves with the struggles of the Negro people. It has not been made out of pity or compassion. The Negro people do not want our pity or compassion; they themselves are on the move, in greater strength with each passing day. It is their motion and strength that have yielded up whatever gains have been made in the otherwise bleak years since World War II. Because Macio Snipes, Isaiah Nixon and Robert Mallard valued the right to vote more than they valued life; because Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Moore died to protest "lynch justice"; because Ada Lois Sipuel fought jim-crow in higher education; and because millions have rallied around these and other battles such as those for Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, the Trenton Six, Mrs. Rosalie Ingram, and Wesley Robert Wells — because of all this there is a movement in the land that grows and grows and that will not be denied.

To know fully the meaning of this for our own survival; to range ourselves alongside all who fight for Negro rights; this is the challenge before the Jewish people today.

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