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# **New Currents In the Civil Rights Movement**

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EVENTS THIS SPRING have made it abundantly clear that gradualism and tokenism in civil rights will no longer pass for progress. The Negro protest movement has become suffused with a new militancy, a new sense of urgency. This is evident in the widespread use of deliberate mass jail-ins, open sneering and jeering at white policemen, a disposition to meet violence with violence, a tendency to package several demands together—to demand “total integration” rather than to work for one reform at a time-

and the involvement of greater and greater numbers of people from all strata of the Negro community. “Freedom now!” has become the new slogan.

What happened in Birmingham epitomizes this new militancy, and was itself a major stimulus for the events that have transpired since. But the basic forces operating in Birmingham were operative elsewhere. Birmingham basically functioned as the spark that ignited some highly inflammable material.

INDICATIVE OF THE NEW MOOD was the Northwood Theater demonstration in Baltimore, which occurred in February, over two months before Birmingham. Enjoying unusual support in the white community, a rather fair police force and often favorable judges, and moving over the years from one victory to another, the Civic Interest Group—as the student nonviolent movement in Baltimore is called—had been characterized by a relatively mild spirit. Seldom had demonstrators stayed in jail even overnight and the notion of deliberate large-scale arrests was dismissed as unworkable, for no one would ever be able to get that many students from Morgan State College to go to jail. But it was a continuing insult to the dignity of the Morgan student that the neighborhood theater, less than a block from the school, should have resisted

negotiations and picketing for over eight years, and this in the face of the desegregation of practically every other business establishment in the same shopping center, and of all the other theaters in that part of the city.

When Civic Interest Group leaders and student government officials met once more to discuss the matter early last February, it was obvious that the students were in a mood to employ some new and dramatic techniques. The upshot was that over four hundred Morgan students (and several white students from Goucher College and Johns Hopkins University) were arrested, filling the city jail to overflowing. Punitively high bail set by the judge only encouraged further arrests. Finally, after three days of distressing turmoil, embarrassed by the nationwide publicity and facing a primary election in two weeks, the city's mayor compelled the theater to capitulate.

The Negro community in Baltimore was stirred as it had not been in all the previous years of demonstrations. Students who had been skeptical of direct action found themselves trespassing and going to jail, and for the first time large numbers of fraternity members, honors students and outstanding athletes participated along with the more anonymous students who had heretofore formed the backbone of Civic Interest Group activity. Adults who wondered about all the fuss over one single theater were told that it was the principle that counted. Parents whose mixed feelings of anger and fear soon turned to pride, even urged that their children be kept in jail until the theater opened its doors. Certain powerful figures in the community, themselves previously sympathetic to the student activists, at first frankly questioned the wisdom of this particular action, but eventually came to give the students their militant support. And at the other end of the social scale, it was reported that for the first time the nonviolent demonstrations were a topic of excited conversation in the lower class bars of East Baltimore.

The whole experience was clearly a new departure for Baltimore. Few if any towns had witnessed so many arrests at a single place of business. And though the jails were filled at Albany, Ga. and on the Freedom Ride to Jackson, this was one of the first successful attempts to deliberately disrupt the city's political and judicial machinery by mass arrests and filling the jail. The experienced veterans of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) regarded the Northwood Theater demonstration as a highly significant development. And SNCC, itself, shortly thereafter launched its Greenwood, Miss. registration drive, in the heart of the White Citizens Councils' territory—the most difficult and dangerous task any of the civil rights organizations had yet undertaken in their voter registration work. Then came the William

Moore memorial trek, Birmingham, and the outbreak of new demonstrations around the country.

OUR CASE STUDY OF THE Northwood Theater demonstration illustrates in microcosm an essential factor that has been at the base of all the demonstrations this Spring—a rising mood of frustration with previous tactics due to the lack of concrete progress, a sense of frustration that made these communities especially sensitive to the stimulus that came from Birmingham. What occurred this Spring is in a way remarkably like what happened in 1960, when the demonstration at Greensboro, N.C. sparked a sit-in movement throughout the South, because youth were becoming impatient and disillusioned with older techniques. In practically all of the Southern cities where direct action has taken place this Spring there has been a history of such action, often of a sustained nature. In Savannah, Georgia a brilliant campaign conducted by the NAACP that included a fifteen month boycott, had obtained not only the desegregation of buses, lunch counters and municipal facilities but also over a hundred new jobs for Negroes as sales clerks and cashiers. But since then little or no progress had been made. In Jackson, following the Freedom Ride, both NAACP and SNCC stimulated nonviolent action there for a brief period (and disagree as to which organization deserved the credit for it), while both SNCC and CORE joined in the voter registration work there. Danville, Virginia, it is true, had had no previous demonstration, but for two years an affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), had been working unsuccessfully.

The North Carolina communities had a rich history of demonstrations and achievements in 1960–1961, though little had been accomplished recently. In Cambridge, Md. there had been a year of bitter conflict with city authorities that began with the Civic Interest Group's Eastern Shore Freedom Ride in the Spring of 1962, but intermittent efforts by the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee founded at that time had brought no results. In the North, the past three years had witnessed sharply increased agitation over both jobs and de facto school segregation; and frustration there was augmented—as it was in the South—by the serious unemployment problem. Thus, everywhere there was growing disillusionment with methods that seemed to be bringing little in the way of tangible accomplishments. In essence what Birmingham did was transform this disillusionment and frustration into constructive, direct action efforts for social change throughout the nation.

Actually what is going on today is the culmination of efforts under way since the late 1950's. There was a shift in emphasis from legalism to direct action, and a broadening of the scope of civil rights activity. In membership and leadership the civil rights move-

ment became more and more a Negro movement, and more and more a mass movement. The competitive rivalry among civil rights organizations supplied additional impetus. The emerging African states, and their importance in international affairs, gave American Negroes a new self-image. There was the goad of swelling unemployment at the very time that the gradually accelerating pace of change in American race relations and the embarrassment the American race system was causing in the conduct of the nation's foreign policy, combined to create a revolution of expectations in Negro thinking. All of these are interrelated and interlocking phenomena; but the net result was that here, indeed, was a classic case of a rising class in society, confident of itself and its future, but denied its just place in the social structure, and therefore turning to increasingly radical tactics in order to secure that goal.

TODAY, THE FOUR LEADING CIVIL RIGHTS organizations are—in order of historical appearance—the NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. (We omit from the discussion, as being somewhat peripheral to our interests, the Urban League. This, the most conservative of the Negro advancement organizations, is not strictly a civil rights institution, but a cross between that and a social welfare agency.)

A decade ago the NAACP was easily preeminent among civil rights organizations. Often interlocked with it were the voter registration groups that had been formed in the South after the Supreme Court invalidated the white primary in 1944. Called conservative today, the NAACP's program of protest and political and legal action had originally been regarded as radical, in contrast to the accommodating ideology of Booker T. Washington in the ascendancy when the NAACP was founded in 1909. By the mid-Fifties the NAACP's legal arm had secured an impressive series of Supreme Court decisions which appeared to guarantee voting rights and set forth a set of legal precepts that unequivocally banned any official support for segregation—whether in transportation, housing, or in publicly owned facilities. During the late fifties the NAACP's Southern work consisted largely of litigation against the South's resistance to the school desegregation decision, and fighting the attacks an aroused white South was now making on the organiza-



tion and its leaders. In the North there was a broadening program, with increasing emphasis on fair housing and especially on employment. The organization's vigorous labor department scored some significant breakthroughs in both the North and the South, most notably the opening up of several hundred jobs at the Lockheed Plant in Marietta, Georgia.

Throughout the country there was major stress on voter registration as the fundamental technique by which to obtain civil rights legislation and the favorable ear of public officials. More recently Northern branches have been giving major attention to eliminating de facto school segregation. Prior to 1960, nonviolent direct action was a peripheral NAACP concern, though in 1958 and 1959, NAACP college and youth groups in Oklahoma City and St. Louis engaged in successful sit-ins and elsewhere, as in Louisville and Baltimore, adult branches had sponsored direct action projects.

CORE, a decade ago, was still a small, chiefly white organization, confined to the Northern and border states, and lacking even a single paid staff member. Founded in 1942, CORE utilized methods that had been developed over the preceding two or three years by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. This group of religious pacifists had, at the suggestion of A. J. Muste, combined Gandhi's method of satyagraha with the sit-down tactics of the Detroit automobile strikers to produce the technique known as the sit-in. The synthesis of union methods (including picketing) with Gandhian nonviolence having proved successful as far South as Baltimore and St. Louis, CORE in 1956 hired its first field secretary, and soon thereafter began its Southern work in earnest (though actually its first foray in that direction had been the Freedom Ride in the Upper South in 1947). CORE's major emphasis throughout the Fifties was on public accommodations. Early in the decade, however, it had pioneered in the method—later so effectively employed and popularized by the Philadelphia ministers—of selective buying to obtain employment; and in 1958–1959 it began using direct action to secure desegregation of privately owned apartment houses. Today, in the North, CORE concentrates on employment and housing, with some work in school desegregation; in the South it concentrates on public accommodations and to a lesser extent on voter registration.

CORE pioneered in satyagraha in the United States, but it was the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955–1956 that dramatically brought it to the attention of the nation, and popularized its use among Negroes. And it has been Martin Luther King, catapulted into prominence by the boycott, who has become the leading symbol of this strategy. Before the court decision (obtained by NAACP Legal Defense Fund lawyers) had spelled success for the Montgomery Improvement Association, a similar movement had started in Tallahassee, under the leadership of Rev. C. K. Steele, (president of the NAACP branch, and later a vice-president of SCLC). Later,

similar action was undertaken in Birmingham where, following the state's injunction against NAACP operations, a group of ministers headed by Fred Shuttlesworth had established the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. About the same time, there appeared the Tuskegee Civic Association, which conducted a three-year boycott of local merchants in response to the state legislature's gerrymandering Negro voters out of the town's limits. This campaign attained its object when the Supreme Court ruled the gerrymander illegal in 1960.

The events in Montgomery, Tallahassee and Tuskegee were widely heralded as indicating the emergence of a "New Negro" in the South—militant, no longer fearful of police harassment, jails and white hoodlums, and determined to use his collective economic strength to obtain his freedom. Seizing upon the new mood, King in 1957 organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—an organization of affiliates rather than a membership organization like the NAACP and CORE. Ideologically committed to a thoroughgoing pacifism of the Gandhian persuasion, SCLC's program includes not only the familiar mass demonstrations, but also citizenship training institutes which prepare local leaders to work on voter registration in their communities.

The NAACP perceived the beginning of the end to the Negro's second-class citizenship in the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Yet, impressive as it was to cite the advances made in the post-war years, in spite of state laws and Supreme Court decisions, something was clearly wrong. Negroes were still disfranchised in most of the Deep South; legal decisions in regard to transportation were still largely ignored there; discrimination in employment and housing was the rule, even in states with model civil rights laws; the Negro unemployment rate grew constantly due to recessions and automation; and, rather than giving in, the South responded with the White Citizens Councils.

At the very time that legalism was thus proving itself a limited instrument, Negroes were gaining a new self-image as a result of the rise of the new African nations; King and others were demonstrating that nonviolent direct action could be effective in the South; and the new laws and court decisions, the gradually increasing interest of the federal government, and the evident drift of white public opinion developed a new confidence in the future among American Negroes. As a result of this revolution in expectations, Negroes no longer felt that they had to accept the humiliations of second-class citizenship, and consequently these humiliations—somewhat fewer though they now were—appeared to be more intolerable than ever. This increasing impatience accounted for the rising tempo of nonviolent direct action in the late 1950's which culminated in the student sit-ins of 1960. Ironically, the NAACP by its very successes

in the courts and legislatures had done more than any other agency to create the revolution in expectations that was to disillusion so many Negroes with the limitations of the NAACP program.

Many date the "Negro Revolt" from the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955—and the significance of this event cannot be over-emphasized. Yet it seems to me that the truly decisive break with the past came with the college student sit-ins that began spontaneously at Greensboro in 1960. These sit-ins involved, for the first time, the employment of nonviolent direct action on a massive South-wide scale that led to thousands of arrests and elicited the participation of tens of thousands of people. Moreover, a period was inaugurated in which youth were to become the spearhead of the civil-rights struggle. And this is still the case—for it has been the youth who have been the chief dynamic force in compelling the established civil-rights organizations to revamp their strategy, which they found it imperative to do to retain their leadership in the movement.

The NAACP quickly went into action, and the national office deliberately speeded up the creation of youth councils and college chapters with the specific intent of engaging in demonstrations, while national staff members "knocked heads together" at regional conferences that Spring in a vigorous effort to obtain local NAACP participation and support for this type of mass action. In fact, a great deal of the sit-in activity during 1960 and 1961 was carried on by NAACP youth councils and college chapters. Like the NAACP, SCLC sought to get on the student bandwagon, and it sponsored the Raleigh Conference in April, at which the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was founded—though SNCC and SCLC later drifted apart. CORE in 1960, seemed to be a dying organization, its methods appropriated by more enterprising successors. But in 1961, after the Freedom Ride to Alabama and Mississippi, CORE re-emerged as the most imaginative and resourceful of the civil-rights agencies in the application of the tactics in which it had pioneered.

THUS, EACH OF THE FOUR ORGANIZATIONS is now committed to direct action. In other ways also the differences between them appear largely to be differences of emphasis. All four are now engaged in voter registration; all of them have moved energetically into the employment problem; and both CORE and NAACP—the only two with Northern operations—are stepping up their activities in regard to de facto school segregation and housing. The NAACP however has eschewed primary emphasis on direct action, regarding it as an extremely useful technique; the others regard direct action as the chief focus of their work and consider legal remedies of distinctly secondary value. This fact should not obscure the importance of the legal work done in support of the direct-actionists, most notably in



the Supreme Court decisions secured on behalf of the demonstrators. (In fact there is evidence that one reason for the willingness of so many youth to violate Southern laws has been the fact that there was a general expectation that the Court would rule, as it has done thus far, in behalf of demonstrators convicted of trespass, disorderly conduct, parading without a permit, breach of the peace and so forth.

Even the differences in emphasis between the NAACP and the other organizations seem likely to disappear in the light of what happened at the NAACP's recent national convention, where militants among the rank and file and the "radicals" on the paid staff triumphed against the more conservative elements. The convention enthusiastically endorsed direct action as the major NAACP tactic for the future. Undoubtedly the 1963 convention will mark a real turning point in NAACP history.

However, there has been one important difference in the way in which direct action is conducted by national NAACP leaders as compared to that of the leaders of other organizations. The NAACP has tended to act on the premise that the "professionals" should not go to jail; while all the others believe that the "professionals" should not only go to jail along with their followers, but they should also stay there with them. Roy Wilkins' arrest in Jackson was thus a highly significant *symbolic* act.

On the other hand, there are differences in style among the three more exclusively action-oriented bodies. King and SCLC appear to be the most cautious, and to specialize in a few showy projects. The SNCC people are the most spontaneous. For some of them, demonstrating and going to jail almost appear to have become a way of life. Status is measured by the number of arrests and amount of time spent in jail. More than any of the others the SNCC people are the "true believers."

AS IN OTHER GREAT MOVEMENTS for the advancement of human welfare, the idealistic and egoistic motivations among civil-rights leaders become so inextricably intertwined that one often cannot tell where one ends and the other begins. Consequently, it is not surprising that the events of 1960 and 1961 ushered in a period of intense competitive rivalry for power and prestige in the civil-rights field. It has been a four-way struggle between SCLC, NAACP, SNCC and CORE, and even the Urban League has become more aggressive.

Of the four it may be said that SNCC has probably been the most dynamic force closely seconded by CORE. SNCC, theoretically a coordinating committee of affiliated college and youth groups, ordinarily operates through a small group in Atlanta which engages in action of its own choosing and enlists the aid of people in the communities where it decides to work. SNCC has been extraordinarily effective. Though it has the most modest budget of any of

the four (its field secretaries, currently reported as numbering about ninety, work on a subsistence basis), and although it has, until very recently, received far less publicity than the other organizations, it can probably be said that it has supplied the major drive for the civil rights movement in the South.

While various SCLC affiliates have taken the lead in non-violent action in certain communities, especially in NAACP branches dominated by conservative leadership, King himself functions as a symbolic or "spiritual leader." Ordinarily, he moves into situations after they have been started, and then lends the magic of his image to the support of the local movement. King operates effectively in this way both because he is a superb symbolic figure, and also because he is easily the most effective interpreter of Negro aspirations to white America. Elsewhere there have arisen numerous local organizations, often established by ministers, taking various names and unattached to any national body. Sometimes these are "umbrella" groups, including local units of national bodies; at other times they are independent of, though not necessarily hostile to the NAACP or other established groups. As the oldest and therefore the most bureaucratic of the civil rights agencies, in many localities dominated by older conservative leaders, the NAACP has quite naturally been on the defensive in a number of cities. Yet, while the NAACP can scarcely take credit for initiating the use of direct action techniques, it is clearly invalid to stereotype it as run by a conservative Black Bourgeoisie irrevocably wedded to legalism. Pushed and shoved by the more exclusively action-oriented groups, the NAACP has pretty effectively met the challenge posed by them—though its dominance in the civil rights field, not seriously contested as late as 1960, has been broken. Often, in fact, one gets the impression that rivalry among the different groups is not due so much to differences in philosophy, tactics or degree of militancy, as much as to a power struggle for hegemony in the civil rights movement. Painful as these conflicts have been, the rivalry of the civil rights groups has actually proved to be an essential ingredient of the dynamics of the Negro protest movement over the past three and a half years. For, in their attempt to outdo each other, each organization puts forth a greater effort and is constantly searching for new avenues along which to develop programs. And despite all rivalries, when the chips are down, the different agencies can and usually do manage to cooperate. Especially significant has been the growing cooperation between CORE and SNCC in the past few months. The best example of this cooperation amidst rivalry is, of course, the fact that all four of these organizations, along with others, are currently working together in sponsoring the March on Washington to take place late in August.

It is impossible to generalize about the NAACP. To arrive at a

valid account of the relationship of the NAACP to the nonviolent movement one would have to make a detailed study of the complexities in various local situations, and the policies of the national staff. The patterns of what actually happened seem infinitely varied. Some branches have resisted the direct action approach; others have embraced it wholeheartedly. In some branches there has been fierce internal fighting. Thus in Philadelphia one faction denounced the branch leaders for being conservative, picketed their homes with signs calling them "Uncle Toms," and having captured the branch offices has subsequently enjoyed, an unusual degree of support from the masses of people. In Lynchburg a few years ago, the initiative in civil rights passed to a group of ministers affiliated with the SCLC because the branch leadership there was a conservative group, consisting chiefly of businessmen and school people. (Teachers, because of their vulnerability have been the most cautious group in the Negro community. When, therefore, the Birmingham teachers openly sided with their demonstrating students it was an event of major significance.) In some instances adult leadership worked well with youth, as in Durham, one of the first action groups in the South to add successful work in the area of employment to its achievements in desegregating places of public accommodation. In Memphis militant NAACP adult leadership maneuvered originally autonomous youth groups into the NAACP, and misunderstanding and some bitterness followed when the adults and youth did not agree on tactics, since the adults did not see the necessity of so many arrests.

In a number of places it was the youth chapters that pushed the adult branches into action. Thus in St. Louis there was also some friction. There adults organized the youth council, then thought the youth were moving too fast and finally when dramatic youth action brought results, they wished to take the credit for the achievement. In Charlotte and Richmond also, the college activists quarreled with adult NAACP leadership over tactics and credit, the students being action-oriented, impatient with negotiating, and intolerant of anything that smacked of compromise. Such personality and tactical conflicts undoubtedly explain why CORE, in the aftermath of its Freedom Highways project in the summer of 1962, has been able to enlist so much support from NAACP people in North Carolina—so much so, in fact, that the state youth conference leaders were tempted to go lock, stock and barrel over to CORE. In Durham the activists now refer to themselves as NAACP-CORE, and that town's unusually able and dedicated NAACP lawyer, Floyd B. McKissick, was this past June elected National Chairman of CORE. Something of the same order occurred in Savannah, where there was a break between an unusually militant branch president and the youth leader. The upshot was that the NAACP predom-

ance in civil rights activity in Savannah was broken. Both the NAACP branch and the SCLC affiliate there now have vigorous, but independent programs, with some cooperation. However, it is the work of the SCLC affiliate that is currently receiving national attention.

The story of the interaction between the NAACP and the more activist groups is therefore one that defies easy generalization. In at least three cases—Atlanta, Tallahassee, and Nashville—dynamic NAACP branch presidents became heads of local SCLC affiliates. What the NAACP has been aggrieved about is not their direct action work, but the fact that its leaders' identification with SCLC subtracted deserved credit from NAACP. In Danville, a project initiated by the local SCLC affiliate, CORE and SNCC sent field workers to assist, and both the local and state NAACP are also cooperating. In Baltimore, the NAACP's effort to dominate the Civic Interest Group led to a bitter quarrel; but the local arrangements for the CIG's Eastern Shore demonstrations in the Spring of 1962 were set up by an NAACP field secretary, and on the basis of these demonstrations he was able to establish or reactivate several NAACP branches in the area, to the benefit of the Maryland State NAACP Conference, presided over by the head of the Baltimore branch.

In some cases the NAACP's problem seems to be that it is too aggressive, as in Baltimore and Philadelphia. In other cases its problem arises from the fact that it is not aggressive enough. In New York, CORE and NAACP have worked together on picketing the Harlem Hospital construction site in an effort to secure employment for skilled Negroes in the building trades, but there has been some disagreement on who deserves the credit. In Philadelphia, the problem is more serious; but even there, though the fractionalization of leadership has been deplored, analysis of the situation reveals that the nasty rivalry over who is going to do most to secure new employment opportunities in the skilled trades, has led both groups to step up their activities more than otherwise anticipated, and has thus led to more rapid progress than would otherwise have been possible. In Jackson, on the other hand, SNCC and CORE people who had been assisting the NAACP in its recent major effort there, felt that the NAACP's failure to conduct continuous massive demonstrations was a serious tactical error arising from NAACP timidity and lingering faith in legalism, and eventually they withdrew from the demonstration. The NAACP itself was not unified on the matter; not only were certain local elements anxious to have more vigorous action, but it has been reported that national leaders who were on the scene were not agreed among themselves.

In Louisville, the tension between the NAACP and other organizations operated in quite a different fashion. For some reason

the NAACP there was quiescent during 1960, and not until a tiny CORE group led the way at the end of the year was the NAACP galvanized into action. After some bickering, a coordinating committee was organized to run the demonstrations which included the NAACP, CORE and a voter registration group. Under the forcible leadership of the son of the local Negro newspaper publisher, a mass boycott of all downtown Louisville, mammoth parades, mass arrests and other colorful—if, at the time, rather unorthodox—techniques, resulted in the complete desegregation of downtown Louisville. The campaign cost the local NAACP treasury some \$6,000—given under the compulsion of circumstances—and most of the demonstrators happened to be members of the NAACP. But the organization did not get the lion's share of the credit. The NAACP is still bitter about this; Roy Wilkins referred specifically to the Louisville situation in his acid remarks last month about other organizations taking the credit and letting the NAACP foot the bills. Yet the truth in Louisville is a complex one, for youthful dynamism, CORE's prodding, the resourceful leadership of a person on the NAACP executive board who neither spoke for the branch, nor was an officer of it, and NAACP money were *all* essential ingredients of the movement's spectacular and probably unparalleled success.

These questions of finances and credit are touchy ones. Concern with the latter is not entirely unjustified. As responsible officials in both CORE and NAACP have put it to me, it is essential for their respective organizations to receive full credit for what they are doing, since each needs a good image if it is to attract the members and funds necessary to carry on and expand its work. And it is, in fact, in large part this need for a good public image that has propelled the NAACP into more and more direct action throughout the nation, either by itself or in coalition with other organizations. The NAACP, particularly the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the two wealthiest civil rights organizations, have played an important role in financing the direct action movement. The Legal Defense Fund has performed an exceedingly important function in representing activists both in and out of the NAACP, in the courts. However, it should be noted that since 1955, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund has been a completely independent organization, legally, administratively, and financially. As for the other groups, CORE and SNCC are in chronic need of funds; while the best heeled of the more strictly actionist organizations is easily the SCLC. There is a widespread feeling in the civil rights movement that King is able to get a great deal of money because of his excellent public relations image, but that most of it is spent on overhead. His field staff, for example, is small—half a dozen compared to the dozens that are employed by SNCC, whose annual budget has not been much more than \$100,000.

SINCE 1960 THE PUSH FROM THE YOUTH and the competitive rivalry between the various organizations have galvanized the civil rights cause. Organizations and leaders just have to take more dramatic action if they are to maintain their position since arrests numbering fifty or a hundred are scarcely news any longer. Both the NAACP and SCLC, as we have observed, attempted to tie the student movement to its image. But youth have a way of being independent, overthrowing the yoke of their elders. The importance of the work of NAACP youth in 1960 and 1961 was made very evident at the NAACP 1961 convention, when the organization was faced with a serious revolt of its own youth councils and college chapters, which regarded themselves as setting the pace for the adults. They demanded and received greater autonomy and representation on convention committees and on the national board. As one youth was overheard to remark: "We can do without the adults, but they can't do without us." Though in view of the students' dependence upon the adults for financial and legal aid this statement was clearly an oversimplification, it did epitomize the dynamics of the situation. Thus, when CORE recouped itself by the 1961 Freedom Ride, it was the Nashville students who were responsible for continuing it when it bogged down in Alabama. Later, when CORE and SCLC leaders thought it was time to call the whole thing to a halt, the students insisted on continuing to bring Freedom Riders into Jackson.

Student groups have kept things humming ever since. King, the youth tend to say, stays in jail only long enough to obtain the publicity necessary to maintain his symbolic leadership. Especially revealing is an incident reported to have occurred during the recent Birmingham demonstration. The decision to use young children was not King's, but was made by two younger men—one a man on King's staff (and a former leader in the student movement), and the other a CORE representative—while King and other adult leaders were out of the city. By the time King returned the children were ready to move, and at the very moment when King was questioning the tactics at a strategy meeting—so the report goes—the two young men slipped the children out of the church and led them on their way to jail in what probably proved to be the most brilliant tactic of the whole campaign. And just as King, many felt, had to help lead the Birmingham campaign in order to revive his fading image,\* so it was obvious that the NAACP had to do something. That this something proved to be Jackson was apparently due not only to the external pressures facing the NAACP, but also, in part, to the considerable pressure from the youth groups in Jackson itself for direct action. Similarly the acclaim accorded Paul Zuber for his victory in the New Rochelle school case must have been a major stimulus for the

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\* His reputation had been severely damaged by his two defeats in Albany, Ga.

NAACP's all-out attack on educational segregation in the North. As we shall point out below there are several factors that account for the recent burgeoning civil rights activity in the North, but surely the competition between CORE and NAACP is partly responsible for the vigor with which these two organizations are now working on de facto school segregation, job discrimination and housing. Finally, the pressure of competing organizations was very largely responsible for the turn taken by the NAACP annual convention held in July, 1963. Not only did the convention resolve to emphasize direct action work, but the youth were granted greater autonomy than ever, and the convention recommended to the national board procedures for removing do-nothing conservative branch officials.



TWO OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT aspects of the civil rights movement since 1960—and essential components of its dynamics—are that it has become increasingly a Negro movement and a mass movement. The two developments are not unrelated; and both of them, of course, had their origins well before 1960. The NAACP membership and branch leadership had always been almost entirely Negro; but at the start, most of the staff and executive board were white liberals. In 1921 the NAACP employed its first Negro executive secretary, James Weldon Johnson; in 1933 its legal staff came under Negro direction when Charles Houston took over; and today only two NAACP staff members are white (though the Legal Defense Fund's chief counsel, Jack Greenberg, is white). Constitutional changes made in 1947 and 1962 have permitted greater membership participation in the selection of the national board; one result has been a decline in the number of whites on it so that today they make up less than one-fourth of its membership. CORE started off as a predominantly white liberal middle-class organization. As late as 1960, perhaps only one-third of its membership was Negro, and at that time its three chief executive officers, as well as its national chairman were white. With the selection of James Farmer as national director in 1961, CORE's image in the Negro community changed markedly, and it was thereby able to attract far more Negro support. Today, of CORE's four chief paid executives, two are white and two are Negro. While the majority of Northern CORE members are still white there has been increasing Negro participation and in the South CORE's membership is almost entirely Negro. CORE's recent

convention, held in June 1963, witnessed two firsts: it was the first time that a majority of the delegates were Negro, and it was the first time that a Negro was elected national chairman. And the Southern Negro delegates set the tone for the convention and moved into positions of leadership.

The March on Washington Movement during the Second World War encouraged current tendencies insisting upon an all-Negro membership and leadership; and the same holds true of the Negro American Labor Council formed in 1960, to combat discriminatory trade-union practices within the AFL-CIO. Organizations like SCLC and the various local movements that have sprung up around the country have been Negro organizations from the start. SNCC has avoided any form of union with the predominantly white Northern Student Movement for Civil Rights—though it and Northern white students generally have been a prime source of SNCC's funds. SNCC has a number of white field secretaries, but it consciously projects itself as a Negro-led organization, and Negroes dominate SNCC's power structure. There has, in fact, been a growing insistence that Negroes must take the initiative and leadership in achieving their freedom, that white liberals tend to be compromisers who cannot be fully trusted, though their financial assistance and their participation in direct action—under Negro leadership—are to be welcomed.

CORE's experience has shown clearly that in order to attract large numbers of Negroes to the civil rights movement Negro leadership is essential. White liberals—and radicals—in the movement have accepted this fact. The NAACP had originally appealed to the élite Negroes, and during the 1930's some of the younger intellectuals like Ralph Bunche criticized it for doing nothing about the problems of the Negro working masses. The Association modified its program somewhat, and during the forties and fifties, largely as a result of the energetic work of its labor secretary, made an increasing appeal to working-class people. Actually it would be impossible to make any generalization about the sources of NAACP branch membership and leadership today, since the variations are so great, and since so much depends on local conditions and personalities. In some branches the more élite people in the community set the tone; in others the professional and business people show no interest and blue collar workers dominate. Thus, suburban New York branches have an élite tone, while the Youngstown, Ohio branch, for example, is under labor control and has a steelworker for president. At the risk of much oversimplification one may say that, in general, branch leadership today tends to be more middle class rather than either lower class or upper class. For example, the noted work of the Savannah branch was carried out under the leadership of a postal worker.



CORE originally attracted white collar middle-class Negroes. Since 1960, however, it has found blue collar skilled and even semi-skilled workers joining its ranks, both in the North, where it has started to place major emphasis on the problem of obtaining jobs for working-class Negroes, and in the South. The youthful sit-inners of 1960 and 1961 were chiefly of working-class origins—that is they tended to be upward mobile members of the Negro lower-middle and upper-lower classes, though their leadership was more likely to be of middle-class origin. From the beginning the bus boycotts of the South were mass movements, and the same is true of movements like the Albany Movement and the selective buying campaigns that appeared in a number of cities, though it should be pointed out that all classes of the community are involved in these efforts and that the upper-middle and even upper classes are disproportionately represented in their leadership.

A RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGHEST SIGNIFICANCE has been the active involvement in the civil rights movement of menial lower-class people, many of whom are chronically unemployed. Apparently it was they who were responsible for the brick and bottle throwing in Birmingham and Jackson. Generally, individuals of this group have heretofore avoided actual participation in demonstrations sponsored by the direct action groups. I personally remember how in Chestertown, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where most of the Negro population is composed of unskilled cannery workers with only seasonal employment, few of the local people attended the mass meetings or participated in demonstrations—but they were ready, more than ready, to fight the white hoodlums who attacked the interracial teams of nonviolent demonstrators. In fact a riot at that time (the Spring of 1962) was only narrowly averted. Especially remarkable was the situation in Jacksonville, Florida, a year or so ago, where youthful Negro gangs started to defend the NAACP demonstrators from attacks by white gangs. The NAACP was able to establish contact with the Negro gangs and creatively channeled and coordinated their activity to fit in with NAACP direct action strategy.

It is exceedingly significant that some individuals from lower lower-class background have actually begun to demonstrate with nonviolent activists. Unlike the latter, they have not remained non-violent in the face of provocation from white mobsters, but have become involved in fracasés with them in places like Cambridge and Nashville. In the North, people of this class are chiefly concerned with obtaining jobs; in the South, despite a high rate of unemployment, they are becoming involved in the struggle for public accommodations, though this is quite likely a result, at least in part, of the new practice of packaging demands for desegregation

of lunch counters and so forth, with demands for jobs. CORE's experiments with direct action to secure improvement of slum housing in Newark and Brooklyn suggest that the major civil rights organizations will soon be deliberately making a bid, through concrete action projects, for the support of this most underprivileged element in the Negro population.

There are those who believe that overt violence on the part of Negro demonstrators will rise, and that in hard-core areas of the South, Gandhian techniques will not work and disillusionment with nonviolence will set in even among those heretofore committed to it. Certainly, few of the demonstrators in CORE or SNCC are philosophically committed to nonviolence. Rather it has been a technique that has proved successful, and has given those who use it a certain sense of moral superiority. But with the increasing police brutality as in Alabama, Danville and elsewhere, the growing frustration at the resistance to change on the part of the white South, and the expanding involvement of lower-class people whose values condone the use of violence, it is likely that the tendency to fight back rather than accept brutality passively, may increase. In retrospect, the incident involving Robert Williams of Monroe, North Carolina, who was suspended as NAACP chapter president in 1959, because he held that Negroes should fight in self-defense when attacked, which at the time seemed to be a unique and relatively inconsequential phenomenon, turns out to be something of a harbinger of the future. Williams later said that only if Negroes fought back would federal intervention on their behalf occur—and recent events in Birmingham suggest that there was an element of truth in this prediction. There are some who believe that rioting and bloodshed are inevitable and could even be of value in compelling the intervention of federal authority and the recognition of the Negro's constitutional rights. Moreover, it is possible that the dire predictions in the daily press about the likelihood of racial violence may act in the nature of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Whether or not extensive racial violence occurs, astute leadership in the civil rights movement will certainly employ its possibility as a device for eliciting quicker action from the white power structure. In any event, the movement is at the point where CORE, SNCC and many NAACP leaders say that no matter what the risks of violence may be, they cannot stop pressing forward now. The outlook is therefore clearly for more direct action, not less.

One must conclude that there has emerged a real thrust for achieving "Freedom Now" from the working class and lower-middle class people. SNCC, highly critical of both the Black Bourgeoisie and the white liberals, regards itself as the vanguard of the Negro masses—and to a remarkable extent that is exactly what the youthful demonstrators of the years since 1960, have proved to be. And

this pressure from the working class—especially working-class youth—has been largely responsible for the greater momentum the civil rights movement has recently attained. It is ironical that what started out some time ago as a Negro middle- and upper-class and a white liberal movement, has ended up as a movement where the largest impetus is coming from the Negro working masses. In fact, the competition for prestige and power among the major civil rights organizations is in considerable degree a competition for control over the masses of working-class Negroes. It is also likely that a large part of the waxing militancy of middle- and upper-class Negroes is derived from the new militancy of the working classes. As Bayard Rustin wrote concerning Birmingham in the June, 1963 issue of *Liberation*, here was a "black community [that] was welded into classless revolt. A. G. Gaston, the Negro millionaire who with some ministers and other upper-class elements had publicly stated that the time was not ripe for such a broad protest, finally accommodated himself, as did the others, to the mass pressure from below and joined the struggle." There is, however, a wide range of patterns. Thus in Baltimore it has been the example of certain prominent ministers and the Urban League Executive Secretary, who were arrested July 4, at the Gwynn Oaks Amusement Park demonstration, that is galvanizing large numbers of adults in the community to a willingness to participate in direct action activity.

It has become fashionable in activist circles to criticize the Negro bourgeoisie and the white liberals as being conservative compromisers, wedded to gradualism and legalism. But this is a gross oversimplification of the true situation. Much of the leadership in the civil rights movement comes from the more élite Negroes. Even the leadership of SNCC, which is most vociferous in its denunciation of the Black Bourgeoisie is largely of middle-class origins. From Cambridge to Albany the leadership of the Southern movement is peppered with members of the middle and upper classes. And the Birmingham experience suggests that if the businessmen and leaders drawn from the upper strata wish to retain their position they will have to go along with the tide.

It is as erroneous to stereotype the white liberals as it is to stereotype the Black Bourgeoisie. "Farewell to the white liberal," has now become a familiar slogan. And in large part this feeling is justified. As far back as the middle Fifties, Negroes exhibited disillusionment with many white liberals who thought the NAACP (of all organizations) was going too fast. Liberal labor leaders have temporized on the issue of trade union discrimination in deference to prejudiced elements within their unions, especially in the South. Often white liberals, who ideologically think in terms of gradual change and compromising where necessary, and whose wide-ranging concerns sometimes lead them to feel that progress in other areas

should not necessarily be sacrificed for an all-out attack on civil rights (a point of view that plagued the Kennedy Administration during its first two years and more in office) display what to Negro activists is an alarming tendency to compromise, if not betray, their cause. Certain white liberals who have entered the Establishment since Kennedy became President, tend to urge a go-slow approach because they do not like to see the President placed in a difficult position.

Yet, all liberals are not alike; a significant number are activists themselves. Faculty members and students from Duke University and the University of Tennessee, and more recently Vanderbilt University have participated in direct-action demonstrations, as have a handful of liberal white professors in the Negro colleges. White liberals formed an important element in CORE's 1961 Freedom Ride, and CORE still draws largely from the liberal white group in the North; a very substantial share of the financial support (possibly over half) of SNCC, SCLC, CORE and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund comes from liberal whites; many hundreds of northern white liberal college youth have participated in demonstrations in Maryland, and some have worked as field secretaries for SNCC in the Deep South. Moreover, it seems inevitable that as desegregation progresses in the South, increasing numbers of Southern white liberal youth will want to participate. If they do so in significant numbers, the most active ones will certainly wish to participate in policy-making, and thus SNCC will have to re-examine its Negro-only leadership policy. It is natural that Negroes should want to discard paternalistic white leadership. But the ironic result is that a movement for racial equality operates ideologically with the notion that whites should be subordinate in it to Negroes. Undoubtedly this is a passing phase; as we approach genuine full citizenship for American Negroes this sort of anomaly will disappear.

The sharpest censure of liberal whites is of course reserved for those labor leaders and politicians who, subjected to many cross-pressures, do not act fully in accordance with their ideals. Southern union locals and vested interest groups who do not wish to share their monopoly of skilled jobs or their power within the unions with others, resist granting equality to Negro union members. Even unions that pass resolutions in support of Negro rights, significantly compromise the rights of their own Negro members. The situation in the ILGWU, for example, where non-whites make up a large proportion of the membership is a scandal. There is not a single Negro on the union's General Executive Board, and though non-whites make up over 90% of the membership of certain locals all managers are white. Not only are there no Negroes in positions of real leadership in the ILGWU, but Negroes have difficulty in entering the skilled craft local unions. Even the UAW, known for

years for its outstanding liberalism on the race issue, has lacked Negro participation in its top circles. Not until the 1962 convention was a Negro elected to the International Executive Board—and this came about only after a Negro caucus conducted a spirited two year fight on the floor of the convention. The situation, of course, is far worse in most of the old-line illiberal AFL unions, especially in the building trades, printing and skilled metal crafts. In the South, union locals are sometimes identified with the white supremacists, as in Savannah, Front Royal, Virginia, Lithonia, Ga., and elsewhere. In the steel center of Birmingham, the most highly unionized town in the South, and in Little Rock, Atlanta and New Orleans, which are all well unionized, organized labor failed to take a stand in behalf of civil rights during the racial crises in those cities. Union leaders have simply abdicated their responsibilities on this issue. All this is not lost on Negro workers. As far as Negroes are concerned, the theory of Negro-Labor unity is meaningless. Thus, with few exceptions, labor, which many conceive of as the natural ally of the Negro, is under attack from Negro protest groups.



THE TREMENDOUS PRESSURES generated by the Negro protest movement in recent months have forced the President to finally come out forcefully for Negro citizenship rights on moral grounds and to make some relatively strong legislative recommendations to Congress. While pleased with the step forward Kennedy has taken, Negro leaders, even Roy Wilkins, are nevertheless dissatisfied with his proposals. In many ways, they feel that the legislative package could and must be strengthened. They are particularly disappointed that Kennedy's recommendations do not attack the heart of the employment problem, whose solution they are now coming to recognize as the key to the solution of the whole problem of racial discrimination. And there have been strong rumblings of dissatisfaction over the Administration's seeming willingness to compromise on the public accommodations proposals. Thus Kennedy is caught between the accelerating Negro demands and the counter-pressures from groups hostile to civil rights. Under the circumstances, whatever he feels able to do will not satisfy the integrationists.

Yet in attacking white liberals, and in making the incontrovertible assertion that Negroes through their own actions have

brought about more changes in the past three years than took place in all the preceding fifty, it seems to me that the civil rights activists appear to be taking a somewhat narrow view of social causation. Leaving aside the role of white liberals in creating the climate of opinion which makes more rapid advancement now possible, it should be pointed out that the civil rights movement even now depends a great deal financially upon the contributions of liberal white. Kennedy acts too late and then too little on civil rights matters, but it is doubtful that if Nixon had won the presidency with southern support there would have been much significant progress. Indeed, undoubtedly the current Negro mood is partly rooted in the expectation that Kennedy would act decisively. Disillusionment set in when he did not.

Some white liberals, no longer regarded as authorities on strategy by Negro integrationists, amazed at some of the demands that Negroes are now making—such as bringing white children into Negro areas for school so as to create racially balanced educational facilities, and giving Negroes preferential treatment on jobs until employment equality is achieved—must feel rather like the Girondists did when overtaken by the Jacobins. Should violence become a common tactic rather than a sporadic reaction, more will find themselves in this position. Thus to some extent, there is a tendency for many white liberals to feel rather alienated from the civil rights movement today. This is true even for those who participate in the movement. They sense the general suspicion of white liberals, the deliberate exclusion of whites from leadership, and their relegation, as whites, to secondary and supporting roles. (I do not intend to suggest that this attitude toward white participation is universal. Baltimore, North Carolina and probably Nashville would be exceptions. In North Carolina a white Duke University student was elected president of the NAACP state youth conference in 1962; in Baltimore where the NAACP leadership has for years held that "You can't trust any white people," the nonviolent demonstrators in CORE and CIG tend to regard some of the more extreme activists in SNCC as something akin to racists.)

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH THERE ARE SIGNS that the white radicals in the civil rights movement are also somewhat alienated from it. Radicals of various hues—Socialists, Trotskyites, Russophile Communists and others—perceived in the student nonviolent movement important implications. They saw it as a potentially revolutionary movement and believed that, given the context of American life in the sixties, in this movement lay the key to a more socialized America. They may yet be right, not because their aims are the aims of the Negro activists, not because they will be able to generate a truly revolutionary movement out of the Negro protest, but because the

unemployment problem facing Negro workers is of such serious dimensions that the government may be compelled to take what by American standards would be highly radical steps to solve it. For civil rights leaders are on the road to making employment their chief area of direct action, and it is the area most fraught with the danger of explosive violence in the North. In a sense, the solution to the nation's growing economic problems is a key to the solution of the civil rights question. Integration will be meaningless without jobs, and not very meaningful if the jobs are the old menial ones. In fact, a major source of the very urgency characterizing the Negro protest movement today is the economic deprivation suffered by millions of unskilled and semi-skilled Negro workers and their families.

The Socialists, and particularly the more militant revolutionary Marxists saw a golden opportunity in the student movement and the expanding work of SCLC. Superficially their ideas fitted in well enough with the vocabulary of the Negro activists, who were imbued with the mystique of conducting a "revolutionary" movement destined to shake the social structure to its very foundations, and who identified themselves with the Negro masses against the Black Bourgeoisie. Undoubtedly the white radicals added to the revolutionary, anti-Negro-bourgeois, anti-white-liberal psychology of the Movement. Their presence was welcomed by many, though fully understood by only a few, for they seemed sincere, dedicated and uncompromising in their advocacy of civil rights. Attending the SNCC meeting in 1962 was like going to a Popular Front affair in the 1930's.

Lately one can discern some disenchantment on the part of the white radicals. In the Winter 1963 issue of *Freedomways*, Ann Braden voiced concern over the second-class position accorded to Southern white radicals in the civil rights movement.

More significantly, some of the revolutionary Marxists, both Negro and white, are looking with dismay upon the signs that Southern businessmen are coming to terms with the demonstrators since this would deflect the Movement from what they believe is its true revolutionary course. They regard it as regrettable that Negroes would be satisfied with the ballot, a home and a car. But they have really missed the point of the Negro protest movement. After all, the vote, a job, a decent standard of living, the right to come and go like other American citizens, are what Negroes are really striving for.

The non-ideological activists are not aiming at radical change in the social structure—they simply talk as if they are. In speaking with Negro youth who use the vocabulary of revolution, one soon discovers that the vast majority of them are attempting to *reform*

American society. They want to "revolutionize" the system of race relations, and anticipate that in the process the political system of the South will undergo a radical transformation into a two-party system. But they contemplate no change in the basic political and economic structures; at most, some of them talk rather vaguely of the identity of interest between poor white and poor Negroes. More fundamentally what most of them want is the opportunity to participate fully in American society as it stands.



SINCE THE AMERICAN NEGRO IS NOW an emerging class that demands the opportunity to participate fully in the American social structure, one would expect that, like thwarted emerging classes elsewhere, if the employment situation is not improved, and if unbreakable resistance should persist in the South, or if a period of reaction should reverse the present trends, he might become a genuine revolutionary radical, and reject entirely the American system and what it stands for. But in such an eventuality the trend is not likely to be toward Marxism—which has had practically no impact upon the Negro activists—but toward some form of nationalism. Until recently, in fact, it seemed quite possible that the unskilled, lowest-class urban Negroes might turn to the escapist nationalist ideology of the Black Muslims, for this sect offered a sense of dignity and a hope for the future to those whom the civil rights movement neglected. More than anything else increasing unemployment joined with the revolution in expectations created a climate in which the Black Muslims thrived. The Black Muslims are simply one of several nationalist movements, but the only one of any size, and though their number is almost certainly below 100,000 they have many admirers. Historically, extreme nationalism of this sort has been usually found among the most dispossessed of the Negro masses (the chief exception being the discouraging decade prior to the Civil War when considerable interest in colonization was to be found among the Negro élite), though there are certain tiny groups of nationalist intellectuals, like the avowedly Marxist Monroe Defense Committee, and like the Liberation Committee for Africa, which seems to lack any coherent program.



**JUST AS THE GARVEY MOVEMENT** was the lower-lower-class counterpart of the New Negro of the 1920's, so the Black Muslims are the counterpart of the new "New Negro" of the 1960's. They preach an eschatological vision of the doom of the white devils and the coming dominance of the black man, promise a Utopian paradise of a separate territory within the United States in which Negroes will establish their own state, and offer a more practical program of economic accumulation and building up Negro business through hard work, thrift, middle-class morality, and racial unity. Nevertheless, despite the stark contrast between the integrationist aims of the civil rights organizations, and the separatist ideology of the Black Muslims, it is important to recognize that the two have much in common. Both are manifestations of a militant rejection of white discrimination and doctrines of Negro inferiority. Both are essentially a quest for recognition of the Negroes' human dignity. Both reflect the new self-image of American Negroes arising out of the emergence of the new African states. Both exhibit profound dissatisfaction with the traditional Christianity of the Negro masses which offered rewards in heaven rather than a correction of abuses here on earth. Both work for a future in which Negroes lead the life of bourgeois Americans. Both exhibit a skepticism about liberal whites. And both are indications of Negro rejection of the philosophy of gradualism. In part, perhaps because they have sensed the increasing attraction for the masses of the direct-action activists of the civil rights organizations which have been moving more vigorously into the area of employment discrimination; in part, undoubtedly, because they thought the moment opportune to make a bid for leadership of the entire Negro community, since March 1963, the Black Muslims appear to have made a turn to the right. They now give less emphasis to separatism, and place more emphasis on the generalized abstractions of justice and freedom; they even urge support of the programs of the civil rights groups which are working for freedom and justice for the race.

The influence of the Black Muslims on the civil rights movement is somewhat speculative. Negroes of all classes approve of their searing indictment of the American race system, and of their ability to place white men on the defensive. Their renown may have contributed to some extent to the vogue of asserting pride in being black that has enjoyed some popularity among Negro activists in recent years. Their presence has also probably contributed not a little to the intensified activities of the more traditional organizations like the NAACP and Urban League, and may in fact have helped alert the civil rights organizations generally to the importance of vigorous action on behalf of the unemployed. This of course will, in turn, almost certainly undermine the Black Muslims' appeal. And finally, the fear of the Black Muslims has certainly

accelerated the efforts of influential whites to satisfy the demands of the civil rights organizations. Ironically, the Black Muslims, by frightening white people, are putting themselves out of business.

IT IS FAREWELL TO THE WHITE LIBERALS, and probably also to the white radicals, and quite likely it will be the same shortly for the Black Muslims. Prejudice and discrimination have produced strong ambivalences in the psychology of American Negroes. They wish to be accepted as Americans, and yet are forced to an ethnocentric loyalty to the black race. Basically they wish to participate in the American social structure, yet they are forced into revolt against it. But revolutionary radicalism, whether of the nationalist or the Marxist variety seems to be an unlikely haven for the majority of Negroes, simply because, in contrast to the Africans, they are in a minority that is too small and too dispossessed to obtain freedom and dignity by either of these methods. But they are numerous enough to be a crucial factor in national and in many state and local elections; they are numerous enough to disrupt the normal operations of city life by demonstrations; and they are numerous enough and prosperous enough to wield a mighty economic threat through the power of selective patronage. The future success of the Negro protest movement therefore lies in the use of economic and political pressures, dramatized by nonviolent demonstrations, that will compel the politicians and the business community (in the South the so-called moderates) to accord equal treatment to Negroes in American society. I do not conceive of the politicians or the business community as allies of the Negroes; rather they are the power blocs most susceptible to pressures that Negroes are able to exert.

If, as I think, this will be the likely course of events, we will be faced with another interesting irony in that certain groups that in the past have done so much to advance the cause of civil rights will be the least to benefit from the results. I refer to the Black Muslims who have advanced civil rights by scaring the white man, and to the white liberals and radicals who have worked directly for racial equality. Though one may anticipate that for some time Negroes will remain a relatively distinct group in view of the ethnic pluralism traditional in our society, there will no longer be a base upon which the Black Muslims can erect a powerful movement



although they will continue to appeal to the thousands of disadvantaged people whose problems cannot be solved even if tremendous progress is made. Nor will Negroes have any more cause to be liberal or radicals than Americans generally.

Unless the problems posed by automation prove insoluble within the framework of a capitalist economy, the United States is likely to remain dominated by a middle-class ideology; the routes of upward mobility for Negroes will be the same as those for whites; and Negroes consequently will share in the typical bourgeois values and aspirations of American life.

The new thrust from the Negro masses, the complex patterns of rivalry and cooperation among the civil rights organizations, the increasing power of the Negro vote in the urban centers North and South, the growing realization of the Negro's economic power that he has learned from successful boycotts, the obvious sensitivity of the government to foreign criticism of our racial system, have together resulted in a broadening and intensification of the Negro protest. Year by year and month by month, Negroes have been growing more militant, more immediatist, more fed up with limited successes and tokenism. Paradoxically both the increasing pace of advancement and the growing resistance in the South are leading to greater and greater Negro militance. It is conceivable that a stiffening of Southern white intransigence, or large-scale unemployment may complicate matters and encourage the development of a Black nationalist revolutionary ideology. But two things are quite certain—Negro militance is bound to grow, and an accelerated tempo of improvement in civil rights appears almost inevitable.

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