

BLACK SEPARATISM

THE RELATIONSHIP OF CIVIL LIBERTIES TO BLACK SEPARATISM

By Bayard Rustin

A paper prepared for workshop discussion of "ACLU and the Urban Crisis" at the June 20-25, 1968 Biennial Conference at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Mr. Rustin was born on March 17, 1910, in West Chester, Pa. He attended Cheyney State Teachers College, and the City College of New York. From 1941-1953 he was Race Relations Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He was youth organizer for A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington and became the first field secretary of the newly formed Congress of Racial Equality. In 1942 Mr. Rustin was imprisoned in Lewisburg Penitentiary as a conscientious objector. He was released in 1945.

Mr. Rustin worked with Dr. Martin Luther King on the Montgomery Bus Protest, and at Dr. King's request drew up the plans for the founding of the SCLC. Mr. Rustin was Deputy Director of the March on Washington of August 28, 1963, and was director of the New York School Boycott. He has been arrested 24 times in the struggle for civil rights. He is currently Executive Director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

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Black separatism is not a new phenomenon in American life. It has occurred after every period in our history where Negroes were led to entertain high hopes for the achievement of their full rights, and where these hopes, instead of being fulfilled, were dashed.

Black separatism emerged after the setbacks of Reconstruction, when Booker T. Washington called upon Negroes to "cast down their buckets," to turn their backs upon academic education in favor of industrial and craft education, and, in effect, to accommodate to the refusal of the white society to concede their full rights of citizenship. It emerged again as a result of the disillusionments of the post World War I period, when Marcus Garvey, responding to the growing frustration and des-

pair among black people, called upon them to give up their dreams about America and go back to Africa. And, more recently, black separatism -- the form with which we are now concerned -- emerged after the great civil rights protest crusade of the past decade, when the bulk of the black underclass opened their eyes and discovered that their social and economic condition had remained virtually unchanged -- if anything, had grown perceptibly worse.

Undoubtedly, separatism, wherever and whenever it occurs, confronts a society with political, philosophical, and psychological problems both complex and sensitive -- many of them affecting our feelings for or about national unity, our commitment to equal rights and privileges, and our notion of a common citizenship. In the case of black separatism, however, the most serious problems it poses the society are social and economic -- for it is the constant and heartless denial of these legitimate aspirations which ultimately leads black people to reject or surrender the idea of kinship with American society and American values as they presently exist.

In light of this, it seems likely that America will continue to be besieged with the demand for black separatism, and be forced to continue grappling with all the sensitive issues which are related to that demand, until as a nation it provides the kind of social and economic solutions which alone will end frustration, despair and the impulse to withdraw from the mainstream of the national life.

Until such a time arrives, however, it is only natural and right that those institutions in our society whose concerns are challenged by the advocacy of black separatism should associate themselves with some of the issues which impinge upon that advocacy.

One of those issues, and certainly the one which would animate ACLU most, is the issue of tolerance. Are the rights of advocacy to be guaranteed, regardless of the substance of such advocacy? Is the principle of free discussion to be applied to those ideas which are firmly within the mainstream of American belief and precept, but rescinded where such ideas are across the accepted American grain? Is due process a luxury we extend to those partisanships we support, but withhold from those we dispute?

Such questions, I am aware, have always been at the heart of the civil libertarian commitment, and therefore central to ACLU's work. But the manner in which ACLU applies these questions or values to the advocacy of black separatism, especially within the present climate of American culture and politics, will be an important test of the seriousness of its commitment, the wisdom of its conduct, and the integrity of its beliefs.

I say this because while at best -- which is to say while ACLU is dealing only among white groups -- while at best it is no easy task to protect and affirm fundamental liberties, the task of guaranteeing these liberties to black separatism, with all the volatile emotions which swirl on all sides of that issue, could, although it need not, become eminently more difficult.

But it need not become more difficult if ACLU acts in a spirit which while affirming constitutional guarantees also ignores the politics of separatism. I mean by this that it is necessary for ACLU to defend the expression of ideas while remaining aloof from the quality or the peculiar claims of such ideas. In short, I mean that ACLU must struggle to protect democratic principle while standing firmly above the struggle for political principle or advantage.

In this sense, the relationship of ACLU to black separatism is no different from its relationship to the DAR or any other issue or group in our society. It must continue to affirm the right of due process, to challenge and indict the excesses of public power, and to keep the climate of the American spirit hospitable to partisanship and political difference.

More specifically, in the past, ACLU has not expended any major part of its efforts to helping ordinary Negroes obtain redress from such grievances as police brutality, miscarriages of justice in the courts, and the gratuitous denial of the right to free speech and assembly. Therefore, I am happy to see that ACLU is now broadening its activities to cover ghetto Negroes regardless of their politics; to defending their civil liberties as vigorously as it has defended the liberties of more privileged groups in society.

As I said before, however, it is absolutely important that ACLU's activities in behalf of Negro groups (whether they are for separatism or integration) be an extension into the ghetto of the kind of work it has been doing elsewhere. It should not revise its philosophy to accommodate the moods of despair, or to the peculiar psycho-political mood of any particular group. It cannot fail to defend liberties across the board -- those liberties denied to separatists and those denied by them. It cannot set up separate and parallel structures to deal with separate and parallel causes.

For ACLU to violate these guidelines would be to compromise the integrity of its beliefs and also to subvert the very foundations of civil liberties which it is committed to safeguard.

A Condensation of an Address to YWCA National Board Members

The Effect of the Negro Revolt on American Institutions



United Press International photo

Mr. Rustin

by **BAYARD RUSTIN**
executive director of the
A. Philip Randolph Institute

CONTRARY TO WHAT we are being asked to believe, the goal of integration is certainly not being rejected by the great majority of the Negro people—only by a very small and basically insignificant minority, and we ought not to be overwhelmed by screamers. LeRoi Jones simply does not reflect the thinking of the majority of Negroes.

Two and a half million Negroes are organized in the AFL-CIO. The NAACP, the National Urban League and my organization have received grants from The Ford Foundation and the federal government for the very purpose of speeding up the integration of Negroes into the trade

union movement, particularly the building trades. Everywhere you look there are more civil rights groups than at the time of the March on Washington. And they are fighting to get better housing, better education, more jobs; to get their share of the cake—not to make a new cake.

It may be titillating to some white middle-class people who have experienced affluence and therefore know the limitations and the poverty of plenty to think that a small group of left-wing Negroes are somehow or other going to change the nature of American institutions for their benefit. But that is wishful thinking. The argument that we want segregated

schools is made not by Negro radicals but by Negro PhDs who are less interested in what happens to Negro children than they are in whether they can control the system. And this results from their inability to move as whites do into a variety of middle-class positions of power.

We are again in a period that is not new to the American Negro. There is a recurrent pattern made up of three parts: high hopes; hopes unrealized; frustration syndrome. Once again after the great civil rights crusade of the late 1950s and early 1960s, we are in a period of frustration—great hopes followed by a dashing of hopes.

We find today that there are more young Negroes in segregated schools than there were in 1954. The ghettos are still there, except they are larger with more rats and more roaches. Unemployment among Negro males is almost double what it was in 1954; in our cities unemployment among Negro youth is up to 30, 35 and 40 percent. Hence, a new period of intense frustration.

Frustration Politics

In light of this, the small group that rejects democracy, rejects integration and rejects white people inevitably will come up with demands that are irrelevant. They will not work. This is their rationale: "The United States promised, and we believed. Now look how bad things are. This nation thinks it is incapable of ever bringing integration, and therefore let's be done with it."

Now, if the Black Power people believe this nation is vile and that the Negro can never get justice and freedom here, logically they cannot have a program. What does that extreme group have to say about medical help? Nothing! What is their program for jobs? None! What is their program for housing? None! What is their program for education? None! If they cannot believe in the society and if they cannot have a program, then their energy will be directed against those Negroes who do believe in programs; thus they are much more dangerous to these people than George Wallace.

Frustration Sociology

Bear in mind that the so-called Negro revolt is, in reality, a revolt. It is a revolt against objectionable conditions in this country and is meaningful as long as it is related to positive actions. But it becomes a *double* frustration at the point where people reject the society and reject programs for dealing with the ills within it. So they talk about let's forget integrated schools. If Negroes do not fight for integration where it is possible, then we're going to have in America two school systems—one private for whites and one public for Negroes. If that's

what white people want, they should support this group in its separatist stand.

On the other hand, if a group of Negroes can appoint the principal, can determine what the curriculum is to be, can say there will be no white teachers, then we are in sore trouble. For then what is to stop white extremists from insisting on white Protestant principals, bringing white fascist curricula into the schools and preventing Negro teachers from coming into their areas? This is the game of frustration sociology.

This is also frustration economics. I am all for Negroes being in business; I am for anybody being in business who can make it. But we are in a period where small businessmen are not being encouraged to stay in business; they are being squeezed out. Any time a chain store wants to put a small Negro cooperative out of business, it can because it can sell more cheaply. Therefore, this is not an answer to the economic problems of the Negro. The Negro is going to become uplifted largely because he takes his place, not merely in his own grocery store, but more importantly in the basic industrial and economic fabric of this nation.

Some Progress but More Aspiration

Many of those whites who joined the 1963 March on Washington for the right of Negroes to vote and for the desegregation of public accommodations did so because these gains would not cost them a penny. But now the demand is for decent housing, decent jobs and schools, and this does cost money—billions each year out of the taxpayers' pockets. The fact that the liberal community has not seen its way clear to continue a vigorous effort for these economic and social gains has caused some unhappiness among younger Negroes.

Today we are fighting to create the kind of political climate and political coalition which makes it possible for the nation to try integration. We have failed to create the political atmosphere and the political forces that, in combination, can make integration work.

The civil rights bill and the voter

rights bill obviously meant progress. Twice as many Negroes are voting in the South as were voting before that bill, and look at the number of Negroes who are being elected or appointed to important city and state offices. Of course there has been a great deal of progress!

But having said that I haven't said a thing. To understand progress we have to see it in relation to aspiration. Here is where the problem is difficult. What people forget is that aspiration has gone up through the ceiling and the gap between the tremendous progress we have made and the increase in aspiration is so great as to call for revolt on the part of many people.

Therefore, we have got to see that the desire for social change is served not by strategies of frustration and revolt but by demanding relevant, realistic programs which can take us a step further. And the action on the part of anyone who obstructs the course of positive program is negative action.

Our problem is now political. We must go to Congress to get billions of dollars. Negroes cannot go alone. We must have as many people from religious groups, labor, student communities as we can get to go with us. Any black or white withdrawal from or sidestepping of that fundamental objective is to throw us deeper into a ditch.

The question arises as to whether violence ultimately is sometimes good. I don't want to discuss it in those terms; that's too broad and too ridiculous a question. Philosophically, who is to say that violence in the world didn't do good at some point? The question of violence is the question of a tactic. A tactic is only useful as it is related to an objective. It is not a philosophical discussion which is needed. Therefore, any continuation of rioting and violence on the part of Negroes has to be ultimately destructive to our cause. Because this nation will not tolerate violence on the part of the Negro. It will ultimately repress the Negro and, in the process, take your civil liberties away from you.

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The real question is what I call "white guilt feelings and white masochism." That's as dangerous as Negro frustration. Some nice liberal white people really think they are communicating with and getting nearer the Negro people by saying, "We've mistreated you so we'll give you 50 percent of the votes, but please stay in the meeting." That's an insult, because they still believe that the Negro is something different. Such foolishness is creating a stupid, frustrated Black Power movement in which the Negroes who believe in it are not the biggest enemy—but the whites who accommodate it.

I have been in jail 24 times, I have been beaten in the South, but I am sticking to three principles which I hope the YWCA will put down as "fundamental":

- We reject violence.
- We stand for achieving progress by constitutional means.
- We are dedicated to integration as the only answer for the American society.

Integration, democracy and constitutional means—short of that we can achieve nothing. If we are asked to violate these principles in the interest of Negro communication we ought to reject communication because there can only be real communication for this society on the basis of those three principles.

For further reading:

"The Lessons of the Long Hot Summer" by Bayard Rustin (October 1967: *Commentary*) reprint 25 cents.

"A Way Out of the Exploding Ghetto" by Bayard Rustin, reprint 20 cents.

Both may be ordered from the A. Philip Randolph Institute, 217 West 125 Street, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Chapter 4, "The Basic Causes" (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25).

Violence in the Streets and the YWCA

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tension, this may help bridge the gap between groups in adversary positions.

10. Use contacts with press or police to reduce tension situations. One Association, involved in a controversial interracial project, won agreement from the local press not to "fan the situation." In another YWCA interracial dances attended by teenagers attracted the surveillance of five to seven policemen, which aroused resentment and restlessness in the young people. The executive director was advised to see the police captain, explain that the police presence was creating additional tension and ask for a phone number where help could be gotten quickly if needed.

11. In an actual situation of open civil disorder the YWCA can serve as an information center; help locate people who get separated; offer housing to individuals and families who are dislocated because of danger of fire or violence; offer staff for emergency services sponsored by the Health and Welfare Council or other civic organizations.

M.O.R.

Additional program guides and further reading:

"Where to Get the Least for Your Money"—discriminatory consumer and credit practices in ghetto neighborhoods and what YWCA groups can do about them—also in this issue of THE YWCA MAGAZINE.

"Do Crash Programs Really Cool the Long, Hot Summers?"—description of projects carried out last summer by the Los Angeles YWCA—also in this issue.

"Citizen Responsibility and Police Accountability," also in this issue.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25), Chapters 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17.

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**THE
FAILURE
OF
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SEPARATISM**

BY BAYARD RUSTIN

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About the article and the author

"With every new social phenomenon now being dubbed a 'revolution,' the term has in fact become nothing more than a slogan which serves to take our minds off an unpleasant reality. . . . Whatever there is of revolution today, in any meaningful sense of the term, is coming from the Right."

So begins Bayard Rustin, one of America's most trenchant Negro intellectuals and organizers, in "The Failure of Black Separatism" on page 25 of this issue. "The call for Black Power is now over three years old," Mr. Rustin writes, "yet to this day no one knows what Black Power is supposed to mean and therefore how its proponents are to unite and rally behind it." What has been the real effect of separatist rhetoric and black chauvinism on American Negroes and on the American political climate? Have the phenomena furthered significant reforms in our national life, or merely served to strengthen the present conservative mood? Have they prompted whites to acknowledge the human evils of racism in this country, or only reinforced the Nixon Administration's inaction? Is it indeed a mark of advancement among black militants and "progressive" whites to believe that integration is now passé?

Mr. Rustin argues that much of the black separatist rhetoric, buttressed by the romanticism of not a few "deracinated liberals" and "nihilistic New

Leftists," has constituted a politics of escape rooted in hopelessness. "Ordinary Negroes," he writes, "will be the victims of its powerlessness to work any genuine change in their condition." In discussing such questions as black capitalism, the language of black rage, financial reparations, and the Negro and organized labor, he asks for an intelligent and broad-ranging strategy that would extend the "magnificent black struggle for freedom."

Bayard Rustin himself has devoted his whole life to that struggle. A native of Pennsylvania, he attended The City College of New York in the 1930s, where he supported himself by singing with Josh White and Leadbelly. He worked as a youth organizer for A. Philip Randolph and as a field secretary for CORE, participated in 1947 in the first Freedom Ride, was arrested in North Carolina and served on a chain gang, went to Montgomery to assist Martin Luther King in the first boycott in 1955, worked as special assistant to Dr. King for seven years, organized the 1963 civil-rights march on Washington, directed the 1964 school boycott in New York, aided the striking sanitation workers of Memphis, and led the massive march following Dr. King's assassination. While involved in this work he has been arrested more than twenty times. Currently he is executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

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Bayard Rustin

THE FAILURE OF BLACK SEPARATISM

The politics of race may foster the illusion of action and social progress, but the real well-being of America's Negroes depends on a revamping of the economy that will bring benefit to all.

We are living in an age of revolution—or so they tell us. The children of the affluent classes pay homage to their parents' values by rejecting them; this, they say, is a youth revolution. The discussion and display of sexuality increases—actors disrobe on stage, young women very nearly do on the street—and so we are in the midst of a sexual revolution. Tastes in music and clothing change, and each new fashion too is revolutionary. With every new social phenomenon now being dubbed a "revolution," the term has in fact become nothing more than a slogan which serves to take our minds off an unpleasant reality. For if we were not careful, we might easily forget that there is a conservative in the White House, that our country is racially polarized as never before, and that the forces of liberalism are in disarray. Whatever there is of revolution today, in any meaningful sense of the term, is coming from the Right.

But we are also told—and with far greater urgency and frequency—that there is a black revolution. If by revolution we mean a radical escalation of black aspirations and demands, this is surely the case. There is a new assertion of pride in the Negro race and its cultural heritage, and although the past summer was marked by the lack of any major disruptions, there is among blacks a tendency more pronounced than at any time in Negro history to engage in violence and the rhetoric of violence. Yet if we look closely at the situation of Negroes today, we find that there has been not the least revolutionary reallocation of political or economic power. There is, to be sure, an increase in the number of black elected officials throughout the United States and particularly in the South, but this has largely been the result of the 1965 Voting Rights

Act, which was passed before the "revolution" reached its height and the renewal of which the present Administration has not advocated with any noticeable enthusiasm. Some reallocation of political power has indeed taken place since the Presidential election of 1964, but generally its beneficiaries have been the Republicans and the anti-Negro forces. Nor does this particular trend show much sign of abating. Nixon's attempt to reverse the liberal direction of the Supreme Court has just begun. Moreover, in the 1970 Senate elections, 25 of the 34 seats to be contested were originally won by the Democrats in the great liberal surge of 1964, when the political picture was quite different from that of today. And if the Democrats only break even in 1970, the Republicans will control the Senate for the first time since 1954. A major defeat would leave the Democrats weaker than they have been at any time since the conservative days of the 1920s.

There has been, it is true, some moderate improvement in the economic condition of Negroes, but by no stretch of the imagination could it be called revolutionary. According to Andrew Brimmer of the Federal Reserve System, the median family income of Negroes between 1965 and 1967 rose from 54 per cent to 59 per cent of that for white families. Much of that gain reflected a decrease in the rate of Negro unemployment. But between February and June of 1969, Negro unemployment rose again by 1.3 per cent and should continue to rise as Nixon presses his crusade against inflation. The Council of Economic Advisers reports that in the past eight years the federal government has spent \$10.3 billion on metropolitan problems while it has spent \$39.9 billion on agriculture, not to men-

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tion, of course, \$507.2 billion for defense. In the area of housing, for instance, New York City needs at the present time as many new subsidized apartments—780,000—as the federal housing program has constructed *nationally* in its entire thirty-four years. The appropriations for model cities, rent supplements, the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and other programs have been drastically reduced, and the Office of Economic Opportunity is being transformed into a research agency. Nixon's welfare and revenue-sharing proposals, in addition to being economically stringent, so that they will have little or no effect on the condition of the Northern urban poor, are politically and philosophically conservative.

Any appearance that we are in the grip of a black revolution, then, is deceptive. The problem is not whether black aspirations are outpacing America's ability to respond but whether they have outpaced her willingness to do so. Lately it has been taken almost as axiomatic that with every increase in Negro demands, there must be a corresponding intensification of white resistance. This proposition implies that only black complacency can prevent racial polarization, that any political action by Negroes must of necessity produce a reaction. But such a notion ignores entirely the question of what *kind* of political action, guided by what *kind* of political strategy. One can almost assert as a law of American politics that if Negroes engage in violence as a tactic they will be met with repression, that if they follow a strategy of racial separatism they will be isolated, and that if they engage in anti-democratic activity, out of the deluded wish to skirt the democratic process, they will provoke a reaction. To the misguided, violence, separatism, and minority ultimatums may seem revolutionary, but in reality they issue only from the desperate strivings of the impotent. Certainly such tactics are not designed to enhance the achievement of progressive social change. Recent American political history has proved this point time and again with brutal clarity.

The irony of the revolutionary rhetoric uttered in behalf of Negroes is that it has helped in fact to promote conservatism. On the other hand, of course, the reverse is also true: the failure of America to respond to the demands of Negroes has fostered in the minds of the latter a sense of futility and has thus seemed to legitimize a strategy of withdrawal and violence. Other things have been operating as well. The fifteen years since *Brown vs. Topeka* have been for Negroes a period of enormous dislocation. The modernization of farming in the South forced hundreds of thousands of Negroes to migrate to the North where they were confronted by a second technological affliction, automation. Without jobs, living in cities equipped to serve neither their material nor spiritual needs, these modern-day immigrants responded to their brutal new world with despair and hostility. The civil-rights movement created an even more fundamental social dislocation, for it destroyed not simply the legal structure of segregation but also the psycho-

logical assumptions of racism. Young Negroes who matured during this period witnessed a basic challenge to the system of values and social relations which had presumed the inferiority of the Negro. They have totally rejected this system, but in doing so have often substituted for it an exaggerated and distorted perception both of themselves and of the society. As if to obliterate the trace of racial shame that might be lurking in their souls they have embraced racial chauvinism. And as if in reply to past exclusions (and often in response to present insecurities), they have created their own patterns of exclusiveness.

The various frustrations and upheavals experienced recently by the Negro community account in large part for the present political orientation of some of its most vocal members: seeing their immediate self-interest more in the terms of emotional release than in those of economic and political advancement. One is supposed to think black, dress black, eat black, and buy black without reference to the question of what such a program actually contributes to advancing the cause of social justice. Since real victories are thought to be unattainable, issues become important in so far as they can provide symbolic victories. Dramatic confrontations are staged which serve as outlets for radical energy but which in no way further the achievement of radical social goals. So that, for instance, members of the black community are mobilized to pursue the "victory" of halting construction of a state office building in Harlem, even though it is hard to see what actual economic or social benefit will be conferred on the impoverished residents of that community by their success in doing so.

Such actions constitute a politics of escape rooted in hopelessness and further reinforced by government inaction. Deracinated liberals may romanticize this politics, nihilistic New Leftists may imitate it, but it is ordinary Negroes who will be the victims of its powerlessness to work any genuine change in their condition.

The call for Black Power is now over three years old, yet to this day no one knows what Black Power is supposed to mean and therefore how its proponents are to unite and rally behind it. If one is a member of CORE, Black Power posits the need for a separate black economy based upon traditional forms of capitalist relations. For SNCC the term refers to a politically united black community. US would emphasize the unity of black culture, while the Black Panthers wish to impose upon black nationalism the philosophies of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Chairman Mao. Nor do these exhaust all the possible shades and gradations of meaning. If there is one common theme uniting the various demands for Black Power, it is simply that blacks must be guided in their actions by a consciousness of themselves as a separate race.

Now, philosophies of racial solidarity have never been unduly concerned with the realities that operate outside the category of race. The adherents of

these philosophies are generally romantics, steeped in the traditions of their own particular clans and preoccupied with the simple biological verities of blood and racial survival. Almost invariably their rallying cry is racial self-determination, and they tend to ignore those aspects of the material world which point up divisions within the racially defined group.

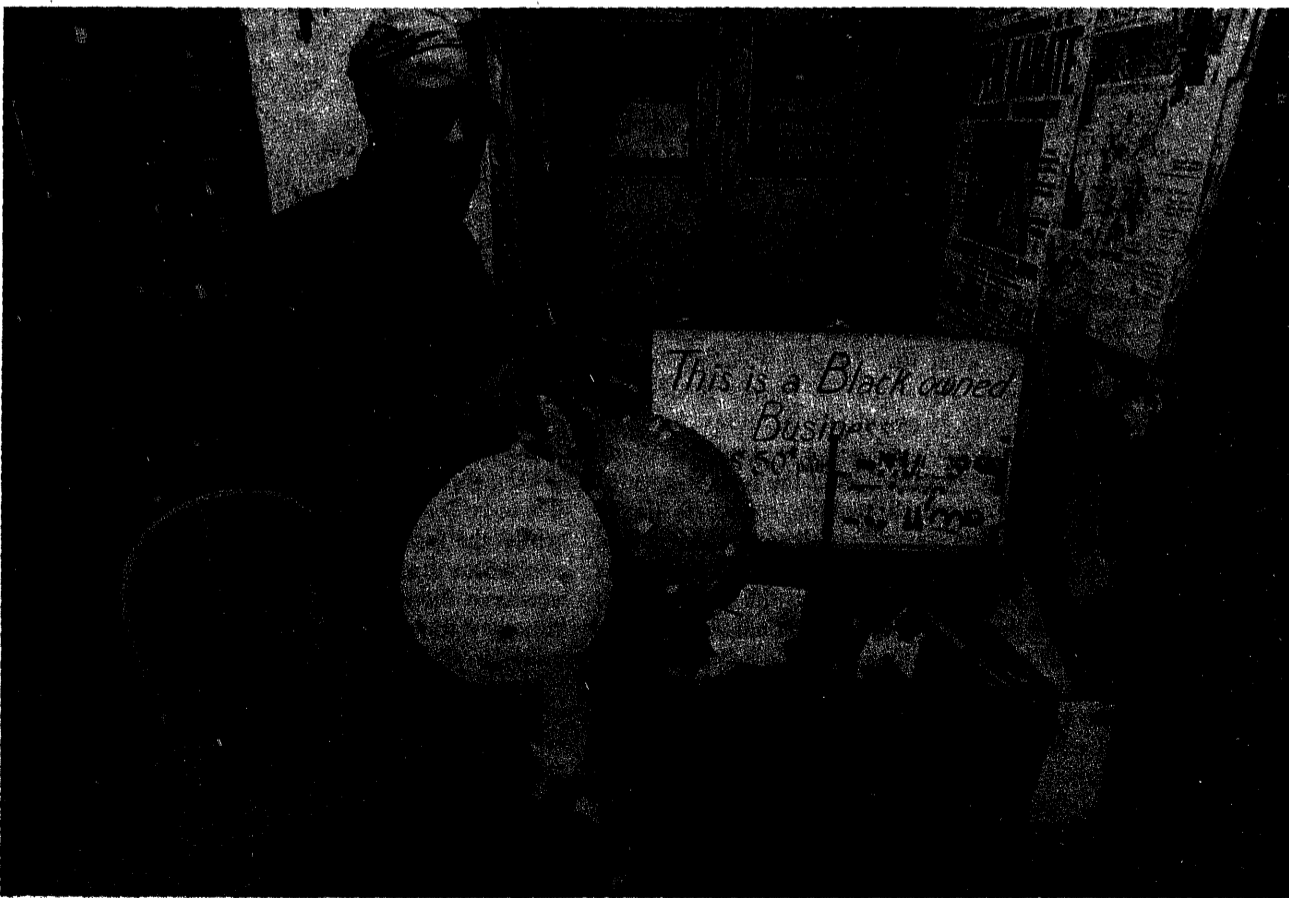
But the world of black Americans is full of divisions. Only the most supine of optimists would dream of building a political movement without reference to them. Indeed, nothing better illustrates the existence of such divisions within the black community than the fact that the separatists themselves represent a distinct minority among Negroes. No reliable poll has ever identified more than 15 per cent of Negroes as separatists; usually the percentage is a good deal lower. Nor, as I have already indicated, are the separatists unified among themselves, the differences among them at times being so intense as to lead to violent conflict. The notion of the undifferentiated black community is the intellectual creation of both whites—liberals as well as racists to whom all Negroes are the same—and of certain small groups of blacks who illegitimately claim to speak for the majority.

The fact is that like every other racial or ethnic group in America, Negroes are divided by age, class, and geography. Young Negroes are at least as hostile toward their elders as white New Leftists are toward their liberal parents. They are in addition separated by vast gaps in experience, Northern

from Southern, urban from rural. And even more profound are the disparities in wealth among them. In contrast to the white community, where the spread of income has in recent years remained unchanged or has narrowed slightly, economic differentials among blacks have increased. In 1965, for example, the wealthiest 5 per cent of white and non-white families each received 15.5 per cent of the total income in their respective communities. In 1967, however, the percentage of white income received by the top 5 per cent of white families had dropped to 14.9 per cent while among non-whites the share of income of the top 5 per cent of the families had risen to 17.5 per cent. This trend probably reflects the new opportunities which are available to black professionals in industry, government, and academia, but have not touched the condition of lower-class and lower-middle-class Negroes.

To Negroes for whom race is the major criterion, however, divisions by wealth and status are irrelevant. Consider, for instance, the proposals for black economic advancement put forth by the various groups of black nationalists. These proposals are all remarkably similar. For regardless of one's particular persuasion—whether a revolutionary or a cultural nationalist or an unabashed black capitalist—once one confines one's analysis to the ghetto, no proposal can extend beyond a strategy for ghetto development and black enterprise. This explains in part the recent popularity of black capitalism and, to a lesser degree, black cooperatives: once both the economic strategy and goal are defined in terms

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of black self-determination, there is simply not much else available in the way of ideas.

There are other reasons for the popularity of black capitalism, reasons having to do with material and psychological self-interest. E. Franklin Frazier has written that Negro business is "a social myth" first formulated toward the end of the nineteenth century when the legal structure of segregation was established and Negro hopes for equality destroyed. History has often shown us that oppression can sometimes lead to a rationalization of the unjust conditions on the part of the oppressed and following on this, to an opportunistic competition among them for whatever meager advantages are available. This is, according to Frazier, exactly what happened among American Negroes. The myth of Negro business was created and tied to a belief in the possibility of a separate Negro economy. "Of course," wrote Frazier, "behind the idea of the separate Negro economy is the hope of the black bourgeoisie that they will have the monopoly of the Negro market." He added that they also desire "a privileged status within the isolated Negro community."

Nor are certain Negro businessmen the only ones who stand to gain from a black economy protected by the tariff of separatism. There are also those among the white upper class for whom such an arrangement is at least as beneficial. In the first place, self-help projects for the ghetto, of which black capitalism is but one variety, are inexpensive. They involve no large-scale redistribution of resources, no "inflationary" government expenditures, and above all, no responsibility on the part of whites. These same upper-class whites may have been major exploiters of black workers in the past, they may have been responsible for policies which helped to create ghetto poverty, but now, under the new dispensations of black separatism, they are being asked to do little more by way of reparation than provide a bit of seed money for a few small ghetto enterprises.

Moreover, a separate black economy appears to offer hope for what Roy Innis has called "a new social contract." According to Innis's theory, the black community is essentially a colony ruled by outsiders; there can be no peace between the colony and the "mother country" until the former is ruled by some of its own. When the colony is finally "liberated" in this way, all conflicts can be resolved through negotiation between the black ruling class and the white ruling class. Any difficulties within the black community, that is, would become the responsibility of the black elite. But since self-determination in the ghetto, necessitating as it would the expansion of a propertied black middle class, offers the advantage of social stability, such difficulties would be minimal. How could many whites fail to grasp the obvious benefit to themselves in a program that promises social peace without the social inconvenience of integration and especially without the burden of a huge expenditure

of money? Even if one were to accept the colonial analogy—and it is in many ways an uninformed and extremely foolish one—the strategy implied by it is fatuous and unworkable. Most of the experiments in black capitalism thus far have been total failures. As, given the odds, they should continue to be. For one thing, small businesses owned and run by blacks will, exactly like their white counterparts, suffer a high rate of failure. In fact, they will face even greater problems than white small businesses because they will be operating in predominantly low income areas where the clientele will be poor, the crime rate and taxes high, and the cost of land, labor, and insurance expensive. They will have to charge higher prices than the large chains, a circumstance against which "Buy Black" campaigns will in the long or even the short run have little force. On the other hand, to create large-scale black industry in the ghetto is unthinkable. The capital is not available, and even if it were, there is no vacant land. In Los Angeles, for example, the area in which four-fifths of the Negroes and Mexican-Americans live contains only 0.5 per cent of all the vacant land in the city, and the problem is similar elsewhere. Overcrowding is severe enough in the ghetto without building up any industry there.

Another current axiom of black self-determination is the necessity for community control. Questions of ideology aside, black community control is as futile a program as black capitalism. Assuming that there were a cohesive, clearly identifiable black community (which, judging by the factionalism in neighborhoods like Harlem and Ocean Hill-Brownsville, is a far from safe assumption), and assuming that the community were empowered to control the ghetto, it would still find itself without the money needed in order to be socially creative. The ghetto would still be faced with the same poverty, deteriorated housing, unemployment, terrible health services, and inferior schools—and this time perhaps with the exacerbation of their being entailed in local struggles for power. Furthermore, the control would ultimately be illusory and would do no more than provide psychological comfort to those who exercise it. For in a complex technological society there is no such thing as an autonomous community within a large metropolitan area. Neighborhoods, particularly poor neighborhoods, will remain dependent upon outside suppliers for manufactured goods, transportation, utilities, and other services. There is, for instance, unemployment in the ghetto while the vast majority of new jobs are being created in the suburbs. If black people are to have access to those jobs, there must be a metropolitan transportation system that can carry them to the suburbs cheaply and quickly. Control over the ghetto cannot build such a system nor can it provide jobs within the ghetto.

The truth of the matter is that community control as an idea is provincial and as a program is extremely conservative. It appears radical to some people because it has become the demand around which the frustrations of the Negro community have coalesced. In terms of its capacity to deal with

the social and economic causes of black unrest, however, its potential is strikingly limited. The call for community control in fact represents an adjustment to inequality rather than a protest against it. Fundamentally, it is a demand for a change in the racial composition of the personnel who administer community institutions: that is, for schools, institutions of public and social service, and political organizations—as all of these are presently constituted—to be put into the keeping of a new class of black officials. Thus in a very real sense, the notion of community control bespeaks a fervent hope that the poverty-stricken ghetto, once thought to be a social problem crying for rectification, might now be deemed a social good worthy of acceptance. Hosea Williams of SCLC, speaking once of community control, unwittingly revealed the way in which passionate self-assertion can be a mask for accommodation: "I'm now at the position Booker T. Washington was about sixty or seventy years ago," Williams said. "I say to my brothers, 'Cast down your buckets where you are'—and that means there in the slums and ghettos."

There is indeed profound truth in the observation that people who seek social change will, in the absence of real substantive victories, often seize upon stylistic substitutes as an outlet for their frustrations.

A case in point is the relation of Negroes to the trade-union movement. In their study *The Black Worker*, published in 1930, Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris describe the resistance to separatism among economically satisfied workers during the heyday of Marcus Garvey:

... spokesmen of the Garvey movement went among the faction-torn workers preaching the doctrine of race consciousness. Despite the fact the Garveyism won a following everywhere at this time, the Negro longshoremen of Philadelphia were deaf to its pleas, for their labor movement had won them industrial equality such as colored workers nowhere else in the industry enjoyed.

The inverse relation of black separatism and anti-unionism to the quality of employment available to Negroes holds true today also. In the May 1969 UAW elections, for example, black candidates won the presidency and vice-presidency of a number of locals. Some of the most interesting election victories were won at the Chrysler Eldon Gear and Axle Local 961 and at Dodge #3 in Hamtramck where the separatist Eldon Revolutionary Union Movement (ELRUM) and Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) have been active. At both locals the DRUM and ELRUM candidates were handily defeated by black trade unionists who campaigned on a program of militant integrationism and economic justice.

This is not to say that there are not problems within the unions which have given impetus to the

separatist movements. There are, but in the past decade unions have taken significant steps toward eliminating discrimination against Negroes. As Peter Henle, the chief economist of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, has observed:

Action has been taken to eliminate barriers to admission, abolish discrimination in hiring practices, and negotiate changes in seniority arrangements which had been blocking Negro advances to higher-paying jobs. At the same time, unions have given strong support to governmental efforts in this same direction.

Certainly a good deal is left to be done in this regard, but just as certainly the only effective pressure on the unions is that which can be brought by blacks pressing for a greater role *within* the trade-union movement. Not only is separatism not a feasible program, but its major effect will be to injure black workers economically by undermining the strength of their union. It is here that ignorance of the economic dimension of racial injustice is most dangerous, for a Negro, whether he be labeled a moderate or a militant, has but two alternatives open to him. If he defines the problem as primarily one of race, he will inevitably find himself the ally of the white capitalist against the white worker. But if, though always conscious of the play of racial discrimination, he defines the problem as one of poverty, he will be aligned with the white worker against management. If he chooses the former alternative, he will become no more than a pawn in the game of divide-and-conquer played by, and for the benefit of, management—the result of which will hardly be self-determination but rather the depression of wages for all workers. This path was followed by the "moderate" Booker T. Washington who disliked unions because they were "founded on a sort of enmity to the man by whom he [the Negro] is employed" and by the "militant" Marcus Garvey who wrote:

It seems strange and a paradox, but the only convenient friend the Negro worker or laborer has in America at the present time is the white capitalist. The capitalist being selfish—seeking only the largest profit out of labor—is willing and glad to use Negro labor wherever possible on a scale reasonably below the standard union wage... but if the Negro unionizes himself to the level of the white worker, the choice and preference of employment is given to the white worker.

And it is being followed today by CORE, which collaborated with the National Right to Work Committee in setting up the Black Workers Alliance.

If the Negro chooses to follow the path of interracial alliances on the basis of class, as almost two million have done today, he can achieve a certain degree of economic dignity, which in turn offers a genuine, if not the only, opportunity for self-determination. It was this course which A. Philip Randolph chose in his long struggle to build a

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Negro-labor alliance, and it was also chosen by the black sanitation workers of Memphis, Tennessee, and the black hospital workers of Charleston, South Carolina.

Not that I mean here to exonerate the unions of their responsibility for discrimination. Nevertheless, it is essential to deal with the situation of the black worker in terms of American economic reality. And as long as the structure of this reality is determined by the competing institutions of capital and labor (or government and labor, as in the growing public sector of the economy), Negroes must place themselves on one side or the other. The idea of racial self-determination within this context is a delusion.

There are, to be sure, sources beyond that of economic discrimination for black separatism within the unions. DRUM, ELRUM, and similar groups are composed primarily of young Negroes who, like whites their age, are not as loyal to the union as are older members, and who are also affected by the new militancy which is now pervasive among black youth generally. This militancy has today found its most potent form of expression on campus, particularly in the predominantly white universities outside of the South. The confusion which the movement for programs in black studies has created on campus almost defies description. The extremes in absurdity were reached this past academic year at Cornell, where, on the one hand, enraged black students were demanding a program in black studies which included Course 300c, Physical Education: "Theory and practice in the use of small arms and hand combat. Discussion sessions in the proper use of force," and where, on the other hand, a masochistic and pusillanimous university president placed his airplane at the disposal of two black students so that they could go to New York City and purchase, with \$2,000 in university funds, some bongo drums for Malcolm X Day. The foolishness of the students was surpassed only by the public-relations manipulateness of the president.

The real tragedy of the dispute over black studies is that whatever truly creative opportunities such a program could offer have been either ignored or destroyed. There is, first, the opportunity for a vastly expanded scholastic inquiry into the contribution of Negroes to the American experience. The history of the black man in America has been scandalously distorted in the past, and as a field of study it has been relegated to a second-class status, isolated from the main themes of American history and omitted in the historical education of American youth. Yet now black students are preparing to repeat the errors of their white predecessors. They are proposing to study black history in isolation from the mainstream of American history; they are demanding separate black-studies programs that will not be open to whites, who could benefit at least as much as they from a knowledge of Negro history; and they hope to permit only blacks (and perhaps some whites who toe the line) to teach in these pro-

grams. Unwittingly they are conceding what racist whites all along have professed to believe, namely, that black history is irrelevant to American history.

In other ways black students have displayed contempt for black studies as an academic discipline. Many of them, in fact, view black studies as not an academic subject at all, but as an ideological and political one. They propose to use black-studies programs to create a mythologized history and a system of assertive ideas that will facilitate the political mobilization of the black community. In addition, they hope to educate a cadre of activists whose present training is conceived of as a preparation for organizational work in the ghetto. The Cornell students made this very clear when they defined the purpose of black-studies programs as enabling "black people to use the knowledge gained in the classroom and the community to formulate new ideologies and philosophies which will contribute to the development of the black nation."

Thus faculty members will be chosen on the basis of race, ideological purity, and political commitment—not academic competence. Under such conditions, few qualified black professors will want to teach in black-studies programs, not simply because their academic freedom will be curtailed by their obligation to adhere to the revolutionary "line" of the moment, but because their professional status will be threatened by their association with programs of such inferior quality.

Black students are also forsaking the opportunity to get an education. They appear to be giving little thought to the problem of teaching or learning those technical skills that all students must acquire if they are to be effective in their careers. We have here simply another example of the pursuit of symbolic victory where a real victory seems too difficult to achieve. It is easier for a student to alter his behavior and appearance than to improve the quality of his mind. If engineering requires too much concentration, then why not a course in soul music? If Plato is both "irrelevant" and difficult, the student can read Malcolm X instead. Class will be a soothing, comfortable experience, somewhat like watching television. Moreover, one's image will be militant and, therefore, acceptable by current college standards. Yet one will have learned nothing, and the fragile sense of security developed in the protective environment of college will be cracked when exposed to the reality of competition in the world.

Nelson Taylor, a young Negro graduate of Morehouse College, recently observed that many black students "feel it is useless to try to compete. In order to avoid this competition, they build themselves a little cave to hide in." This "little cave," he added, is black studies. Furthermore, black students are encouraged in this escapism by guilt-ridden New Leftists and faculty members who despise themselves and their advantaged lives and enjoy seeing young Negroes reject "white middle-class values" and disrupt the university. They are encouraged by university administrators who prefer political accommodation to an effort at serious

education. But beyond the momentary titillation some may experience from being the center of attention, it is difficult to see how Negroes can in the end benefit from being patronized and manipulated in this way. Ultimately, their only permanent satisfaction can come from the certainty that they have acquired the technical and intellectual skills that will enable them upon graduation to perform significant jobs competently and with confidence. If they fail to acquire these skills, their frustration will persist and find expression in ever-newer forms of antisocial and self-destructive behavior.

The conflict over black studies, as over other issues, raises the question of the function in general served by black protest today. Some black demands, such as that for a larger university enrollment of minority students, are entirely legitimate; but the major purpose of the protest through which these demands are pressed does seem to be not so much to pursue an end as to establish in the minds of the protesters, as well as in the minds of whites, the reality of their rebellion. Protest, therefore, becomes an end in itself and not a means toward social change. In this sense, the black rebellion is an enormously expressive phenomenon which is releasing the pent-up resentments of generations of oppressed Negroes. But expressiveness that is oblivious to political reality and not structured by instrumental goals is mere bombast.

James Forman's *Black Manifesto*, for instance, provides a nearly perfect sample of this kind of bombast combined with positive delusions of grandeur. "We shall liberate all the people in the U. S.," the introduction to the *Manifesto* declares, "and we will be instrumental in the liberation of colored people the world around.... We are the most humane people within the U. S. . . . Racism in the U. S. is so pervasive in the mentality of whites that only an armed, well-disciplined, black-controlled government can insure the stamping out of racism in this country. . . . We say think in terms of the total control of the U. S."

One might never imagine from reading the *Manifesto* that Forman's organization, the National Black Economic Development Conference, is politically powerless, or that the institution it has chosen for assault is not the government or the corporations, but the church. Indeed, the exaggeration of language in the *Black Manifesto* is directly proportional to the isolation and impotence of those who drafted it. And their actual achievements provide an accurate measure of their strength. Three billion dollars in reparations was demanded—and \$20,000 received. More important, the effect of this demand upon the Protestant churches has been to precipitate among them a conservative reaction against the activities of the liberal national denominations and the National Council of Churches. Forman's failure, of course, was to be expected: the only effect of an attack upon so organizationally diffuse and nonpolitical an institution as the church can be the deflection of pressure away from the

society's major political and economic institutions and, consequently, the weakening of the black movement for equality.*

The possibility that his *Manifesto* might have exactly the opposite effect from that intended, however, was clearly not a problem to Forman, because the demands he was making upon white people were more moral than political or economic. His concern was to purge white guilt far more than to seek social justice for Negroes. It was in part for this reason that he chose to direct his attack at the church, which, as the institutional embodiment of our society's religious pretensions, is vulnerable to moral condemnation.

Yet there is something corrupting in the wholesale release of aggressive moral energy, particularly when it is in response to the demand for reparations for blacks. The difficulty is not only that as a purely racial demand its effect must be to isolate blacks from the white poor with whom they have common economic interests. The call for three billion dollars in reparations demeans the integrity of blacks and exploits the self-demeaning guilt of whites. It is insulting to Negroes to offer them reparations for past generations of suffering, as if the balance of an irreparable past could be set straight with a handout. In a recent poll, *Newsweek* reported that "today's proud Negroes, by an overwhelming 84 to 10 per cent, reject the idea of preferential treatment in hiring or college admissions in reparation for past injustices." There are few controversial issues that can call forth greater uniformity of opinion than this in the Negro community.

I also question both the efficacy and the social utility of an attack that impels the attacked to applaud and debase themselves. I am not certain whether or not self-flagellation can have a beneficial effect on the sinner (I tend to doubt that it can), but I am absolutely certain it can never produce anything politically creative. It will not improve the lot of the unemployed and the ill-housed. On the other hand, it could well happen that the guilty party, in order to lighten his uncomfortable moral burden, will finally begin to rationalize his sins and affirm them as virtues. And by such a process, today's ally can become tomorrow's enemy. Lasting political alliances are not built on the shifting sands of moral suasion.

On his part, the breast-beating white makes the same error as the Negro who swears that "black is beautiful." Both are seeking refuge in psychological solutions to social questions. And both are reluctant to confront the real cause of racial injustice, which is not bad attitudes but bad social conditions. The Negro creates a new psychology to avoid the

*Forman is not the only militant today who fancies that his essentially reformist program is revolutionary. Eldridge Cleaver has written that capitalists regard the Black Panther Breakfast for Children program (which the Panthers claim feeds 10,000 children) "as a threat, as cutting into the goods that are under their control." He also noted that it "liberates" black children from going to school hungry each morning. I wonder if he would also find public-school lunch programs liberating.

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reality of social stagnation, and the white—be he ever so liberal—professes his guilt precisely so as to create the illusion of social change, all the while preserving his economic advantages.

The response of guilt and pity to social problems is by no means new. It is, in fact, as old as man's capacity to rationalize or his reluctance to make real sacrifices for his fellow man. Two hundred years ago, Samuel Johnson, in an exchange with Boswell, analyzed the phenomenon of sentimentality:

Boswell: "I have often blamed myself, Sir, for not feeling for others, as sensibly as many say they do."

Johnson: "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They pay you by feeling."

Today, payments from the rich to the poor take the form of "Giving a Damn" or some other kind of moral philanthropy. At the same time, of course, some of those who so passionately "Give a Damn" are likely to argue that full employment is inflationary.

We are living in a time of great social confusion—not only about the strategies we must adopt but about the very goals these strategies are to bring us to. Only recently whites and Negroes of good will were pretty much in agreement that racial and economic justice required an end to segregation and the expansion of the role of the federal government. Now it is a mark of "advancement," not only among "progressive" whites but among the black militants as well, to believe that integration is passé. Unintentionally (or as the Marxists used to say, objectively), they are lending aid and comfort to traditional segregationists like Senators Eastland and Thurmond. Another "advanced" idea is the notion that government has gotten too big and that what is needed to make the society more humane and livable is an enormous new move toward local participation and decentralization. One cannot question the value or importance of democratic participation in the government, but just as misplaced sympathy for Negroes is being put to use by segregationists, the liberal preoccupation with localism is serving the cause of conservatism. Two years of liberal encomiums to decentralization have intellectually legitimized the concept, if not the name, of states' rights and have set the stage for the widespread acceptance of Nixon's "New Federalism."

The new anti-integrationism and localism may have been motivated by sincere moral conviction, but hardly by intelligent political thinking. It should be obvious that what is needed today more than ever is a political strategy that offers the real possibility of economically uplifting millions of impoverished individuals, black and white. Such a strategy must of necessity give low priority to the various forms of economic and psychological ex-

perimentation that I have discussed, which at best deal with issues peripheral to the central problem and at worst embody a frenetic escapism. These experiments are based on the assumption that the black community can be transformed from within when, in fact, any such transformation must depend on structural changes in the entire society. Negro poverty, for example, will not be eliminated in the absence of a total war on poverty. We need, therefore, a new national economic policy. We also need new policies in housing, education, and health care which can deal with these problems as they relate to Negroes within the context of a national solution. A successful strategy, therefore, must rest upon an identification of those central institutions which, if altered sufficiently, would transform the social and economic relations in our society; and it must provide a politically viable means of achieving such an alteration.

Surely the church is not a central institution in this sense. Nor is Roy Innis's notion of dealing with the banking establishment a useful one. For the banks will find no extra profit—quite the contrary—in the kind of fundamental structural change in society that is required.*

Moreover, the recent flurry of excitement over the role of private industry in the slums seems to have subsided. A study done for the Urban Coalition has called the National Alliance of Businessmen's claim to have hired more than 100,000 hard-core unemployed a "phony numbers game." Normal hiring as the result of expansion or turnover was in some cases counted as recruitment. Where hard-core workers have been hired and trained, according to the study, "The primary motivation . . . is the need for new sources of workers in a tight labor market. If and when the need for workers slackens, so will industry's performance." This has already occurred. The *Wall Street Journal* reported in July of 1969 that the Ford Motor Company, once praised for its social commitment, was forced to trim back production earlier in the year and in the process "quietly closed its two inner-city hiring centers in Detroit and even laid off some of the former hard-cores it had only recently hired." There have been similar retrenchments by other large companies as the result of a slackening in economic growth, grumblings from stockholders, and the realization by corporate executives that altruism does not make for high profits. Yet even if private industry were fully committed to attack the problem of unemployment, it is not in an ideal position to do so. Private enterprise, for example, accounted for only one out of every ten new jobs created in the economy between 1950 and 1960. Most of the remainder were created as the result of expansion of public employment.

While the church, private enterprise, and other

*Innis's demand that the white banks deposit \$6 billion in black banks as reparations for past injustices should meet with even less success than Forman's ill-fated enterprise. At least Forman had the benefit of the white churchman's guilt, an emotion not known to be popular among bankers.

institutions can, if properly motivated, play an important role, finally it is the trade-union movement and the Democratic party which offer the greatest leverage to the black struggle. The serious objective of Negroes must be to strengthen and liberalize these. The trade-union movement is essential to the black struggle because it is the only institution in the society capable of organizing the working poor, so many of whom are Negroes. It is only through an organized movement that these workers, who are now condemned to the margin of the economy, can achieve a measure of dignity and economic security. I must confess I find it difficult to understand the prejudice against the labor movement currently fashionable among so many liberals. These people, somehow for reasons of their own, seem to believe that white workers are affluent members of the Establishment (a rather questionable belief, to put it mildly, especially when held by people earning over \$25,000 a year) and are now trying to keep the Negroes down. The only grain of truth here is that there is competition between black and white workers which derives from a scarcity of jobs and resources. But rather than propose an expansion of those resources, our stylish liberals underwrite that competition by endorsing the myth that the unions are the worst enemy of the Negro.

In fact it is the program of the labor movement that represents a genuine means for reducing racial competition and hostility. Not out of a greater tenderness of feeling for black suffering—but that is just the point. Unions organize workers on the basis of common economic interests, not by virtue of racial affinity. Labor's legislative program for full employment, housing, urban reconstruction, tax reform, improved health care, and expanded educational opportunities is designed specifically to aid both whites and blacks in the lower- and lower-middle classes where the potential for racial polarization is most severe. And only a program of this kind can deal simultaneously and creatively with the interrelated problems of black rage and white fear. It does not placate black rage at the expense of whites, thereby increasing white fear and political reaction. Nor does it exploit white fear by repressing blacks. Either of these courses strengthens the demagogues among both races who prey upon frustration and racial antagonism. Both of them help to strengthen conservative forces—the forces that stand to benefit from the fact that hostility between black and white workers keeps them from uniting effectively around issues of common economic interest.

President Nixon is in the White House today largely because of this hostility; and the strategy advocated by many liberals to build a "new coalition" of the affluent, the young, and the dispossessed is designed to keep him there. The difficulty with this proposed new coalition is not only that its constituents comprise a distinct minority of the population, but that its affluent and youthful members—regardless of the momentary direction of their

rhetoric—are hardly the undisputed friends of the poor. Recent Harris polls, in fact, have shown that Nixon is most popular among the college educated and the young. Perhaps they were attracted by his style or the minimal concessions he has made on Vietnam, but certainly their approval cannot be based upon his accomplishments in the areas of civil rights and economic justice.

If the Republican ascendancy is to be but a passing phenomenon, it must once more come to be clearly understood among those who favor social progress that the Democratic party is still the only mass-based political organization in the country with the potential to become a majority movement for social change. And anything calling itself by the name of political activity must be concerned with building precisely such a majority movement. In addition, Negroes must abandon once and for all the false assumption that as 10 per cent of the population they can by themselves effect basic changes in the structure of American life. They must, in other words, accept the necessity of coalition politics. As a result of our fascination with novelty and with the "new" revolutionary forces that have emerged in recent years, it seems to some the height of conservatism to propose a strategy that was effective in the past. Yet the political reality is that without a coalition of Negroes and other minorities with the trade-union movement and with liberal groups, the shift of power to the Right will persist and the democratic Left in America will have to content itself with a well-nigh permanent minority status.

The bitterness of many young Negroes today has led them to be unsympathetic to a program based on the principles of trade unionism and electoral politics. Their protest represents a refusal to accept the condition of inequality, and in that sense, it is part of the long, and I think, magnificent black struggle for freedom. But with no comprehensive strategy to replace the one I have suggested, their protest, though militant in rhetoric and intention, may be reactionary in effect.

The strategy I have outlined must stand or fall by its capacity to achieve political and economic results. It is not intended to provide some new wave of intellectual excitement. It is not intended to suggest a new style of life or a means to personal salvation for disaffected members of the middle class. Nor is either of these the proper role of politics. My strategy is not meant to appeal to the fears of threatened whites, though it would calm those fears and increase the likelihood that some day we shall have a truly integrated society. It is not meant to serve as an outlet for the terrible frustrations of Negroes, though it would reduce those frustrations and point a way to dignity for an oppressed people. It is simply a vehicle by which the wealth of this nation can be redistributed and some of its more grievous social problems solved. This in itself would be quite enough to be getting on with. In fact, if I may risk a slight exaggeration, by normal standards of human society I think it would constitute a revolution. □

“... it is the trade-union movement and the Democratic party which offer the greatest leverage to the black struggle.”

Separation or Integration for U. S. Negroes?

By BAYARD RUSTIN

THE proposition that separation may be the best solution of America's racial problems has been recurrent in American Negro history. Let us look at the syndrome that has given rise to it.

Separation, in one form or another, has been proposed and widely discussed among American Negroes in three different periods. Each time, it was put forward in response to an identical combination of economic and social factors that induced despair among Negroes. The syndrome consists of three elements: great expectations, followed by dashed hopes, followed by despair and discussion of separation.

The first serious suggestion that Negroes should separate came in the aftermath of the Civil War. During that war many Negroes had not only been strongly in favor of freedom but had fought for the Union. It was a period of tremendous expectations. Great numbers of Negroes left the farms and followed the Union Army as General Sherman marched across Georgia to the sea; they believed that when he got to the sea they would be not only free but also given land—"forty acres and a mule." However, the compromise of 1876 and the withdrawal of the Union Army from the South dashed those expectations. Instead of forty acres and a mule, all they got was a new form of slavery.

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Out of the ruins of those hopes emerged Booker T. Washington, saying in essence to Negroes: "There is no hope in your attempting to vote, no hope in attempting to play any part in the political or social processes of the nation. Separate yourself from all that and give your attention to your innards: that you are men, that you maintain dignity, that you drop your buckets where they are, that you become excellent of character."

Of course, it did not work. It could not work. Because human beings have stomachs, as well as minds and hearts, and equate dignity, first of all, not with caste but with class.

But in spite of all that, it is my conviction that there are three fundamental ways in which a group of people can maintain their dignity: one, by gradual advancement in the economic order; two, by being a participating element of the democratic process; and three, through the sense of dignity that emerges from their struggle. For instance, Negroes never had more dignity than when Martin Luther King won the boycott in Montgomery or at the bridge in Selma.

This is not to say that all the values of self-image and identification are not important and should not be stimulated; but they should be given secondary or tertiary emphasis for, unless they rest on a sound economic and social base, they are likely only to create more frustration by raising expectations or hopes with no ability truly to follow through.

The second period of frustration and the call for separation came after World War I. During that war, 300,000 Negro troops went to France—not for the reason Mr. Wilson thought he was sending them, but because they felt that if they fought for their country they would be able to return and say: "We have fought and fought well. Now give us at home what we fought for abroad."

Again, this great expectation collapsed in total despair as a result of postwar developments: Lynchings in the United States reached their height in the early Twenties; the Palmer raids did not affect Negroes directly but had such a terrifying effect on civil liberties that no one paid any attention to what was happening to Negroes; Ku Klux Klan moved its headquarters from Georgia to Indianapolis, the heart of the so-called North; and unemployment among Negroes was higher at that period than it had ever been before. It was at that time, too, that Negroes began their great migration to the North, not from choice but because they were being driven off the land in the South by changed economic conditions.

The war having created great expectations, and the conditions following the war having shattered them, a really great movement for separation ensued—a much more significant movement than the current one. Marcus Garvey organized over 2 million Negroes, four times the number the NAACP has ever organized, to pay dues to buy ships to return to Africa.

Today, we are experiencing the familiar syndrome again. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 and the Supreme Court decisions all led people seriously to believe that progress was forthcoming, as they believed the day Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream." What made the March on Washington in 1963 great was the fact that it was the culmination of a period of great hope and anticipation.

But what has happened since? The ghettos are fuller than they have ever been, with 500,000 people moving into them each year and only some 40,000 moving out. They are the same old Bedford-Stuyvesant, Harlem, Detroit and Watts, only they are much bigger, with more rats, more roaches and more despair.

There are more Negro youngsters in segregated schoolrooms than there were in 1954—not all due to segregation or discrimination, perhaps, but a fact. The number of youngsters who have fallen back in their reading, writing and arithmetic since 1954 has increased, not decreased, and unemployment for Negro young women is up to 35, 40 and 50 percent in the ghettos. For young men in the ghettos, it is up to 20 percent and this

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Brezhnev Doctrine, New Threat to Peace and

is a conservative figure. For family men, the unemployment is twice that of whites. Having built up hopes, and suffered the despair which followed, we are again in a period where separation is being discussed.

I maintain that, in all three periods, the turn to separation has been a frustration reaction to objective political, social and economic circumstances. I believe that it is fully justified, for it would be the most egregious wishful thinking to suppose that people can be subjected to deep frustration and yet not act in a frustrated manner.

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Not Just Color

I submit that it is not the lumpen-proletariat, the Negro working classes, the Negro working poor, who are proclaiming: "We want Negro principals, we want Negro supervisors, we want Negro teachers in our schools." It is the educated Negroes. If you name a leader of that movement, you will put your finger on a man with a Master's or a Ph.D. degree. Being blocked from moving up, he becomes not only interested in Negro children, but in getting those teaching jobs, supervisory jobs and principal jobs for his own economic interest. While this is understandable, it is not true that only teachers who are of the same color can teach pupils effectively. Two teachers had an effect upon me; one was black and the other was white, and it was the white teacher who had the most profound effect, not because she was white but because she was who she was.

Negroes have been taught that we are inferior and many Negroes believe that themselves and have believed it for a long time. That is to say, sociologically we were made children. What is now evident is that the entire black community is rebelling against that concept in behalf of manhood and dignity. This process of rebellion will have as many ugly things in it as beautiful things.

Also, while rebelling there is rejection of those who used to be loved most. Every teenager has to go through hating mother and father, precisely because he loves them. Now he's got to make it on his own. Thus, Martin Luther King and A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins and Bayard Rustin and all the people who marched in the streets are all "finks" now. And the liberals, and the Jews who have done most among the liberals, are also told to get the hell out of the way.

But to return to separation and nationalism. We must distinguish within this movement that which is unsound from that which is sound, for ultimately no propaganda can work for social change which is not based in absolute psychological truth.

There is an aspect of the present thrust toward black nationalism that I call reverse-ism. This is dangerous. Black people now want to argue that their hair is beautiful. All right. It is truthful and useful. But, to the degree that the nationalist movement takes concepts of reaction and turns them upside down and paints them glorious for no other reason than that they are black, we're in trouble—morally and politically. The Ku Klux Klan used to say: "If you're white, you're right; if you're black, no matter who you are, you're no good." And there are those among us who are now saying the opposite of the Ku Klux Klan: "He's a whitey, he's no good."

The Ku Klux Klan said: "You know, we can't have black people teaching" and they put up a big fight when the first Negro was hired in a white school in North Carolina. Now, for all kinds of "glorious" reasons, we're turning that old idea upside down and saying: "Well, somehow or other, there's soul involved and only black teachers can teach black children." But it is not true. Good teachers can teach children.

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Social Process

What is essential and what we must not lose sight of is that true self-respect and a true sense of image are the results of a social process and not merely a psychological state of mind.

It is utterly unrealistic to expect the Negro middle class to behave on the basis alone of color. They will behave, first of all, as middle-class people. The minute Jews got enough money to move off Allen Street, they went to West End Avenue. As soon as the Irish could get out of Hell's Kitchen, they beat it to what is now Harlem. Who thinks the Negro middle classes are going to stay in Harlem? I believe that the fundamental mistake of the nationalist movement is that it does not comprehend that class ultimately is a more driving force than color and that any effort to build a society for American Negroes that is based on color alone is doomed to failure.

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Furthermore, I believe that the most important thing for those of us in the trade union movement, in the religious communities and in the universities is not to be taken in by methods that appeal to people's viscera but do not in fact solve the problems that stimulated their viscera.

We must find and work for a social and economic program which will lift America's poor, whereby the Negro who is most grievously poor will be lifted to that position where he will be able to have dignity.

Secondly, we must fight vigorously for Negroes to engage in the political process, since there is only one way to have maximum feasible participation—and that is not by silly little committees deciding what they're going to do with a half million dollars, but by getting out into the real world of politics and making their weight felt. The most important thing that we have to do is to restore a sense of dignity to the Negro people.

If that can happen, the intense frustration around the problem of separation will decrease as equal opportunities—economic, political and social—increase. And that is the choice before us.

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Mr. Browne advocated a separate way of life for the blacks in the United States while Mr. Rustin challenged the statements with those presented here.

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However, the compromise of 1876 and the withdrawal of the Union Army from the South dashed those expectations. Instead of forty acres and a mule all they got was a new form of slavery.

Out of the ruins of those hopes emerged Booker T. Washington, saying in essence to Negroes: "There is no hope in your attempting to vote, no hope in attempting to play any part in the political or social processes of the nation. Separate yourself from all that, and give your attention to your innards: that you are men, that you maintain dignity, that you drop your buckets where they are, that you become excellent of character."

Of course, it did not work. It could not work. Because human beings have stomachs, as well as minds and hearts, and equate dignity, first of all, not with caste, but with class.

I preached the dignity of black skin color and wore my hair Afro style long before it became popular; I taught Negro history in the old Benjamin Franklin High School, where I first got my teaching experience, long before it became popular.

But in spite of all that it is my conviction that there are three fundamental ways in which a group of people can maintain their dignity: one, by gradual advancement in the economic order; two, by being a participating element of the democratic process; and three, through the sense of dignity that emerges from their struggle. For instance, Negroes never had more dignity than when Martin Luther King won the boycott in Montgomery or at the bridge in Selma.

This is not to say that all the values of self-image and identification are not important and should not be simulated; but they should be given secondary or tertiary emphasis; for, unless they rest on a sound economic and social base, they are likely only to create more frustration by raising expectation or hopes with no ability truly to follow through.

Post-World War I Separatism

The second period of frustration and the call for separation came after World War I. During that war, 300,000 Negro troops went to France — not for the reason Mr. Wilson thought he was sending them, but because they felt that if they fought for their country they would be able to return and say: "We have fought and fought well. Now give us at home what we fought for abroad."

Again, this great expectation collapsed in total despair, as a result of post-war developments: Lynchings in the United States reached their height in the early twenties; the Palmer raids did not affect Negroes directly but had such a terrifying effect on



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Mr. Rustin's comments, we believe, closely parallel the beliefs for which the Labor Movement was founded... and exists today.)

By BAYARD RUSTIN

Dr. Browne dealt with the concept of separation in psychological rather than sociological terms. The proposition that separation may be the best solution of America's racial problems has been recurrent in American Negro history. Let us look at the syndrome that has given rise to it.

Separation, in one form or another, has been proposed and widely discussed among American Negroes in three different periods. Each time, it was put forward in response to an identical combination of economic and social factors that induced despair among Negroes. The syndrome consists of three elements: great expectations, followed by dashed hopes, followed by despair and discussion of separation.

Post-Civil War Separatism

The first serious suggestion that Negroes should separate came in the aftermath of the Civil War. During that war many Negroes had not only been strongly in favor of freedom but had fought for the Union. It was a period of tremendous expectations.

Great numbers of Negroes left the farms and followed the Union Army as General Sherman marched across Georgia to the sea; they believed that

when he got to the sea they would be not only free but also given land — "forty acres and a mule."

However, the compromise of 1876 and the withdrawal of the Union Army from the South dashed those expectations. Instead of forty acres and a mule all they got was a new form of slavery.

Out of the ruins of those hopes emerged Booker T. Washington, saying in essence to Negroes: "There is no hope in your attempting to vote, no hope in attempting to play any part in the political or social processes of the nation. Separate yourself from all that, and give your attention to your innards: that you are men, that you maintain dignity, that you drop your buckets where they are, that you become excellent of character."

Of course, it did not work. It could not work. Because human beings have stomachs, as well as minds and hearts, and equate dignity, first of all, not with caste, but with class.

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Again, this great expectation collapsed in total despair, as a result of post-war developments: Lynchings in the United States reached their height in the early twenties; the Palmer raids did not affect Negroes directly but had such a terrifying effect on civil liberties that no one paid any attention to what was happening to Negroes; the Ku Klux Klan moved its headquarters from Georgia to Indianapolis, the heart of the so-called North; and unemployment among Negroes was higher at that period than it had ever been before.

It was at that time, too, the Negroes began their great migration to the North, not from choice but because they were being driven off the land in the South by changed economic conditions.

The war having created great expectations, and the conditions following the war having shattered them, a really great movement for separation ensued — a much more significant movement than the current one. Marcus Garvey organized over 2,000,000 Negroes, four times the number the NAACP has ever organized, to pay dues to buy ships to return to Africa.

Present-Day Separatism

Today, we are experiencing the familiar syndrome again. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 and the Supreme Court decisions all led people seriously to believe that progress was forthcoming, as they believed the day Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream." What made the March on Washington in 1963 great was the fact that it was the culmination of a period of great hope and anticipation.

But—what has happened since? The ghettos are fuller than they have ever been, with 500,000 people moving into them each year and only some 40,000 moving out. They are the same old Bedford-Stuyvesant, Harlem, Detroit, and Watts, only they are much bigger, with more rats, more roaches, and more despair.

THE GOAL

Separatism or Integration



WHICH WAY AMERICA??

There are more Negro youngsters in segregated schoolrooms than there were in 1954 — not all due to segregation or discrimination, perhaps, but a fact. The number of youngsters who have fallen back in their reading, writing, and arithmetic since 1954 has increased, not decreased, and unemployment for Negro young women is up to 35, 40, and 50 percent in the ghettos.

For young men in the ghettos, it is up to 20 percent and this is a conservative figure. For family men, the unemployment is twice that of whites. Having built up hopes, and suffered the despair which followed, we are again in a period where separation is being discussed.

A Frustration Reaction

I maintain that, in all three periods, the turn to separation has been a frustration reaction to objective political, social, and economic circumstances.

people can be subjected to deep frustration and yet not act in a frustrated manner. But however justified and inevitable the frustration, it is totally unrealistic to divert the attention of young Negroes at this time either to the idea of seceding from the United States, or to going back to Africa, or to setting up a black capitalism (as Mr. Nixon and CORE are now advocating), or to talk about any other possibility of economic separation, when those Negroes who are well off are the 2,000,000 Negroes who are integrated into the trade union movement of this country.

This is not to belittle in any way the desirability of fostering a sense of ethnic unity or racial pride among Negroes or relationships to other black people around the world. This is all to the good, but the ability to do this in a healthy rather than a frustrated way will depend upon the economic viability of the Negro community, the degree to which it can participate in the democratic process here rather than separate from it, and the degree to which it accepts methods of struggle that are productive.

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I would not want to leave this subject without observing that while social and economic conditions, have precipitated thoughts of separation, it would be




INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL WORKER, MARCH, 1969



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Rustin



an over-simplification to attribute the present agitation of that idea exclusively to those causes. A good deal of the talk about separation today reflects a class problem within the Negro community.

I submit that it is not the lumpen-proletariat, the Negro working classes, the Negro working poor, who are proclaiming: "We want Negro principals, we want Negro supervisors, we want Negro teachers in our schools."

It is the educated Negroes. If you name a leader of that movement, you will put your finger on a man with a Master's or a Ph.D. degree. Being blocked from moving up, he becomes not only interested in Negro children, but in getting those teaching jobs, supervisory jobs, and principal jobs for his own economic interest. While this is understandable, it is not true that only teachers who are of the same color can teach pupils effectively. Two teachers had an effect upon me; one was black, and the other was white, and it was the white teacher who had the most profound effect, not because she was white, but because she was who she was.

Anatomy of Rebelliousness

Negroes have been taught that we are inferior, and many Negroes believe that themselves, and have believed it for a long time. That is to say, sociologically we were made children.

What is not evident is that the entire black community is rebelling against that concept in behalf of manhood and dignity. This process of rebellion will have as many ugly things in it as beautiful things. Like young people on the verge of maturity many Negroes now say, "We don't want help. we'll do it ourselves. Roll over, Whitey. If we break our necks, okay."

Also, while rebelling, there is rejection of those who used to be loved most. Every teen-ager has to go through hating mother and father, precisely because he loves them. Now he's got to make it on his own. Thus, Martin Luther King and A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins and Bayard Rustin and all the people who marched; in the streets are all "finks" now. And the liberals, and the Jews who have done most among the liberals, are also told to get the hell out of the way.

The mythology involved here can be very confusing. Jews may want now to tell their children that they lifted themselves in this society by their bootstraps. And when Negroes have made it, they will preach that ridiculous mythology too. That kind of foolishness is only good after the fact. It is not a dynamism by which the struggle can take place.

But to return to separation and nationalism. We must distinguish within this movement that which is unsound from that which is sound, for ultimately no propaganda can work for social change which is not based on absolute psychological truth.

The Phenomenon of 'Reverse-ism'



What is essential and what we must not lose sight of is that true self-respect and a true sense of image are the results of a social process and not merely a psychological state of mind.

It is utterly unrealistic to expect the Negro middle class to behave on the basis alone of color. They will behave, first of all, as middle-class people.

The minute Jews got enough money to move off Allen Street, they went to West End Avenue. As soon as the Irish could get out of Hell's Kitchen, they beat it to what is now Harlem. Who thinks the Negro middle classes are going to stay in Harlem? I believe that the fundamental mistake of the nationalist movement is that it does not comprehend that class ultimately is a more driving force than color, and that any effort to build a society for American Negroes that is based on color alone is doomed to failure.

Options and Choices

Now, there are several possibilities. One possibility is that we can stay here and continue the struggle; sometimes things will be better, sometimes they will be worse. Another is to separate ourselves into our own state in America. But I reject that because I do not believe that the American government will ever accept it. Thirdly, there is a possibility of going back to Africa, and that is out for me, because I've had enough experience with the Africans to know that they will not accept that.

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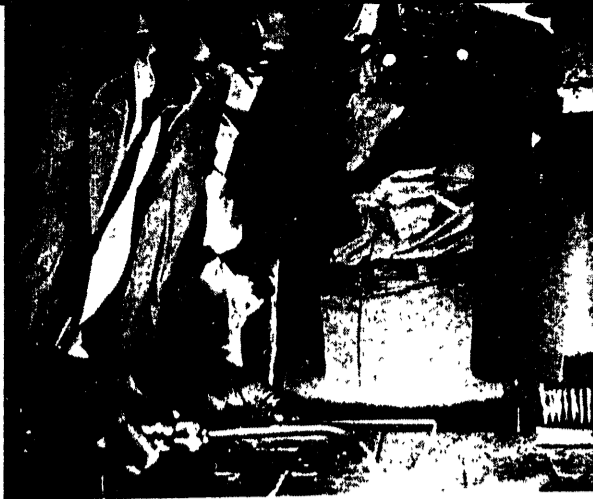
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Secondly, we must fight vigorously for Negroes to engage in the political process, since there is only one way to have maximum feasible participation — and that is not by silly little committees deciding what they're going to do with a half million dollars, but by getting out into the real world of politics and making their weight felt. The most important thing that we have to do is to restore a sense of dignity to the Negro people. The most immediate task is for every one of us to get out and work between now and November so that we can create the kind of administration and the kind of Congress which will indeed bring about what the Freedom Budget and the Poor People's Campaign called for.

If that can happen, the intense frustration around the problem of separation will decrease as equal opportunities — economic, political, and social — increase.

And that is the choice before us.

Articles

HARPER'S - 1970

BAYARD RUSTIN

I agree with Mr. Tollett that "Black Power and Black Separatism are not synonymous," yet the way in which the concept of Black Power has been applied in the present social and economic context has led inevitably to a form of Black Separatism. It can be argued whether Black Power became Black Separatism out of choice or because of a foreclosure of other possibilities. My own thinking tends to the former interpretation since, as I pointed out in my essay, there are other possibilities, and the choice was made, I feel, largely for reasons of psychology ^{and} ~~or~~ ideology.

For example, Mr. Tollett admits that Forman's Black Manifesto may simply be a form of emotional release, and that in the absence of real victories, symbolic victories become a means to ward off "stultifying defeatism." Thus, Mr. Tollett does not disagree with my analysis of origins of this kind of political behavior, only with my evaluation of it. I find inadequate a form of politics the main functions of which is not to promote radical social and economic change, but only to prevent "radical, mental despair and depression," as Mr. Tollett puts it. I doubt that it can even achieve this psychological goal since despair and depression derive from the absence of concrete

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accomplishment, something which a politics of emotional release is, by definition, not designed to bring about. As I explained in my essay, such politics actually promotes conservatism and, therefore, should increase psychological depression as it contributes to an ever-worsening social and economic environment.

I think also that black separatism has been the ideological choice of some people, and for this reason I think it is important that there be a vigorous and stimulating debate over the theoretical issues involved. Such debate is an encouraging sign since it indicates that the political movement in question is vibrantly searching for an effective strategy and for an increasingly refined perspective that can illuminate difficult questions of tactics and philosophy. I think Mr. Tollett is seriously mistaken in being "saddened" by the prevalence of such debate, for the implication is that black Americans are or should be of a different political species from other human beings, immune to disagreement and above criticism.

Such a view is both illusory and elitist, and I am happy to see that Mr. Tollett does not adhere to it in practice since he takes me up on several points. One point in particular

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is worth commentating on. According to Mr. Tollett, "Efforts toward political solidarity in black communities are motivated by similar factors which gave rise to historical efforts toward labor solidarity." (emphasis added) I question this assumption since it confuses two categories that are fundamentally distinct--namely, race and class. The attempt to achieve solidarity on the basis of race leads economically to various forms of ghetto development and politically to an alignment of black against white--the very things President Nixon is trying to accomplish in his efforts to build a conservative, anti-Negro Republican majority.

This will hardly bring us closer to the achievement of genuine Black Power, defined by Mr. Ofari as "better housing, schools, jobs and so on." Mr. Ofari and I have nondisagreement over this definition, though I would caution him that there are more radical and comprehensive ways to achieve Black Power than reparations and breakfast programs.

With Mr. Crohn I have a more fundamental disagreement. It is difficult to argue against his point of view since it is characterized

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by moral totalism--things are totally good or totally bad. This state of mind explains the frequency with which the word "system" appears in his letter. There can be no shades of ambiguity or complexity, even though reality is rich with these qualities; no possibility of compromise, even though the essence of democratic politics involves procedures by means of which competing groups can non-violently resolve their differences. It is the whole system that is bad, and it must be "abandoned," "replaced," struck down."

There is a curious dynamic at work here between power and responsibility, or better, between powerlessness and irresponsibility. By his own admission, Mr. Crohn feels "alienated and disenfranchised." Having thus disengaged himself from the complexities of social and political existence, and being in a position where his judgments are not tested empirically against a reality of common experience, he can give free rein to his moralistic impulses for he is not responsible for the consequences of his thought. Literally anything goes in this unreal world in which there is no relation between conception and execution or between the act and

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its consequences.

My quarrel with Mr. Crohn simply is that he is not serious. His dismissal in one breath of the entire "system" is more a whim than an analysis, and certainly something that he is not committed to politically or philosophically. After all, the new politics to which he professes adherence is hardly about to overturn the system. An ironic note is that Mr. Crohn incorporates into his "revolutionary" position the economic perspective of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, i.e., wage increases are the sole cause of inflation.

There is a great deal more substance in Miss Carter's letter, although I think she too is mistaken by talking of "Establishment bloc politics." "Establishment" is a loaded word since I am not sure what non-Establishment politics would consist of. There is simply politics, and this includes "bloc politics" with its manifold variations of Black Power, Brown Power, coalition politics, and also Mr. Nixon's Republican majority. The question is not whether bloc politics per se is legitimate, but which blocs one chooses to organize--minority groups, liberals, working class people, Southerners, corporation executives, etc.

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By not distinguishing between the different blocs, Miss Carter also fails to deal with the interests of each bloc and the issues around which it can be organized. For example, the working class has different interests from the corporations, and Negroes have different interests from Southern segregationists, and these interests come into conflict over such issues as taxation and the right to vote. It would be an error to confuse the somewhat prosaic tactic of political organizing with the social and economic objectives which such organizing can bring about.

Miss Carter writes as if labor leaders simply had to press a button and "the body count that forms their power base" responds according to their wishes. This is hardly the case, as almost any labor leader on the local or national level will testify. A great deal of education is required of the kind that was carried out against Wallace in 1968. Such intensive education, if it is successful, can hardly be called pushing buttons.

A national organization with thousands of local affiliates will inevitably have some locals which conform to Miss Carter's description. There is some truth to her remark that the labor movement "is more impressive at the national level than in

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many communities." But I submit that this tendency is true of all organizations where the national body deals primarily with ideological and programmatic issues while the locals have also to contend with the narrower problems of their membership. I should add, however, that at least in Miss Carter's own state of Texas, the labor movement represents the only strong counter-force to conservatism. It directed the recent successful campaign in which over a million Negroes, Mexican-Americans, and poor whites were registered to vote; it is pressing vigorously for election reform laws and for anti-pollution and anti-poverty legislation; it is deeply involved in the crucial Yarborough campaign for Senate; and it is actively organizing the unorganized.

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Bayard Rustin's Speech at Clark College, January, 1971

The college educated are an elite amongst black people, and as an elite they must bear certain responsibilities that go along with their privileges. There is a tendency to want to escape these responsibilities, to retreat into various forms of alienation, and it is this tendency to withdraw from responsibility that we must oppose with the same firmness and idealism with which we have fought for racial justice.

The dominant philosophical notion amongst the elite today is what I call a new tribalism. This consists in turning in on yourself in an alienated form rather than trying to solve an objective problem. A problem which is "out there." This tendency is world-wide. Thus, the French Canadians don't want to be a part of Canada. They want to do their French thing, which is of course an impossibility. The Walloons in Belgium do not want to be a part of Belgium. They want to get over in a corner and do their thing. It was most interesting when I was last there. They're talking about "Walloon food," just as some of us talk about "soul food." The Luo's in Kenya don't want to be a part of Kenya. They want to do their Luo thing. The Eriteans who joined into Ethiopia after the war don't want to be a part of Ethiopia. Anybody who wants to discuss black unity had better face the fact that there are sixteen African countries in which there is nothing but division, fighting going on. And the one between the Eriteans and the Ethiopians is one such conflict.

In other words, the feeling that "I want out" is part of a world-wide trend. Now this trend always proceeds from the same psychological syndrome. It proceeds from the syndrome of hope followed by disappointment followed by turning away from the reality into one's own bosom.

Alienation and withdrawal always proceed from hope, though this may seem surprising. No desire for social change is possible except where there is hope. But the fruit of hope unfulfilled is disappointment and internalization. Now that is why you have to be responsible, because it is the educated amongst blacks who have hope. There is very little hope in the slums. They cannot have hope because there is no way for them to leave.

But hope can also give rise to revolutionary feelings. Show me a black man who is in despair, who spends all his time talking about the blue-eyed white devil, and I will show you a man who will make absolutely no contribution, because he is in despair and change springs from hope.

Now I would like to show you how this works from our own black history. Hope, despair, internalization, black nationalism, and further despair. In World War I, there were 300,000 black American Soldiers in France. "After the war is over" they thought, "we're going to come back home and we'll have freedom." Great hope! But what happened after the war was that they came back to find that they were being driven off the farms in the South. They were terrorized by the Palmer raids and lynched by mobs, and of course there was unemployment. So their hope

turned to despair. And because of their despair, they turned their minds from reality, Thus, in the 1920s you got most black people thinking it was revolutionary to follow Marcus Garvey, who had no program whatsoever.

Marcus Garvey's movement was essentially a movement for the economic uplift of relatively well-off West Indians. It provided absolutely nothing for the average black man. Yet many followed because they had lost hope in everything else.

You have the same thing happening today, when Dr. King spoke in Washington in 1963, everybody had great hope that the problems would soon be solved. And infact, we got the '64 bill and the '65 bill. But what happened? Following Dr. King's speech unemployment amongst black people continued; the school system was worse than ever before; medical care got more expensive than ever for the great masses of blacks, so there was despair. And it is in this context of hope followed by despair, that you get a series of leaders who are essentially non-leaders. They shout slogans and before you know it they disappear, because the conditions today produce internalization. Despair leads to irresponsible leadership.

And so every year, with the help of the white press you will get a new leader. This year it will be Stokley Carmichael, who has absolutely no program. Next year it will be Rap Brown, who has no program. The year after that Robert Williams will be flying back from China to start the revolution, but it will not come. The next year it will be Huey Newton,

who comes out of jail to start the revolution which will never come. We will have one non-leader after another because they speak the deep alienation and despair of the people.

Then you get the internalization on the part of many people like ourselves. Instead of seeing that the problem is economic, social and political, we turn in on ourselves out of despair. Instead of seeing that the problem is adequate medical care, we substitute how long we grow our hair, which will solve absolutely no problem whatever. Or we substitute talking about "soul food." I was up at Yale University where the woman who teaches the soul course spent two hours teaching the youngsters there the proper way in which to cook pigs' feet. If one thinks it is important whether we call ourselves black, Negro or an Afro-American, we are only ignoring history.

The founder of the first black newspaper in this country spent the whole first page of that newspaper describing why one should call oneself a "colored" American. Fifty years later, W.E.B. Dubois wrote a letter to a young girl who asked him what she should call herself. And he said, "Obviously, the logical thing is to say, Negro." Malcolm X spent half of his adult political life telling people that they should call themselves Afro-Americans or black men. And that debate is not new. It goes on because black people have their backs against the wall economically. And it will disappear (For example, the Garvey movement was destroyed not because Garvey stole money. Maybe he did, maybe he didn't. Who cares? What destroyed it was that the CIO was formed and the trade union movement began

to take black people into it by the millions. The minute black people had faith again in America and were no longer alienated, they forgot Garvey.)

Now this is important, because if we're going to understand this syndrome we must understand what is false and what is not false. I maintain that the so-called alienation of black and white is unreal. Alienation of male and female is a false statement of the proposition. Alienation between young and old is a false statement of the proposition. For example, I maintain that there are greater differences between people under 30, than there are between people over 30 and people under 30. Illustration: George Wallace received his greatest support from people under 30. He got the lowest vote from those between 50 and 60.

The male-female alienation is also greatly misunderstood. What has happened is that the affluent women, who are alienated from themselves, have created the women's lib movement. The fact of the matter is, one of the chief reasons they made a black woman head of women's liberation was precisely because black women were not joining it. Not because black women don't have problems with black men; and not because they feel totally free; but because black women have always had more freedom than black men in this society. So they don't feel the need to demand women's liberation. Black women don't join women's lib because they know that the problem is at root economic. They have more freedom than black men largely because when black men

could not get jobs, black women always could. The basic alienation in all societies is between poor people and affluent people. That's where the problem is, and where it will always be. And it won't be easy to solve. I'm sometimes astounded at how absolutely unmindful so-called radical black people are. Anytime the man comes to you with any proposition, you should never swallow it right off; you know, like decentralization of schools. When did the man ever come to me and offer me power? He wants to give me control over my ghetto. Watch him, he's up to something. Or when he comes to you, talking about black capitalism. Now my friends, if white capitalists, manipulating billions of dollars, permit white poverty to exist in Appalachia, how is this half dozen Negroes you got in Atlanta with their little banks and insurance companies, going to end black poverty in the United States? It's impossible. When Mr. Brimmer tells them that these banks are charitable institutions which will have little or no effect upon the ghetto, they jump on him as if he's said something naughty, when he's merely told the truth.

To solve the problem of poverty requires not some small program or even a spiritual revolution, but a profound social revolution. Let me give you an illustration of what I mean because people can get all hung up on spiritual foolishness. Not that I don't want spirit in it, but take Thomas Jefferson for an example. He wakes up one night and decides slavery is wrong. So he feels guilty. He writes a note saying on his death his slaves shall be free. Now he's so relieved, he's no longer

the evil man that he once was. The fact of the matter is, Thomas Jefferson did us a profound disservice, and found himself a cop-out. What he should have done was to have seen that the solution to social evils cannot be found in the soul, but in the Congress of the United States. He should have gone into the House of Representatives and into the Senate and started getting a bill passed to do away with slavery itself. That's what he should have done, but he didn't.

Now what is alienation? It is the feeling that my mind and my hands are cut off from the production of goods and services or from any meaningful social function. Here again, if you really want to find out where the real alienation is in America, it's among the wealthy middle class. They are the ones who say America stinks; that you can't bring progress into the United States; that everything is wrong; that we're leaning toward fascism--that old foolishness. That's what they say. And so they give money to radical blacks to carry on their revolution for them by proxy. Of course, blacks are not going to do that. Not because they are unmindful or ungrateful, but because it cannot be done that way and they know it. We have to understand three basic dynamisms: (1) black rage; (2) white fear; and (3) affluent guilt.

Now I don't have to talk about black rage, you know about that. What you do not know about is white fear. Whites are going to be fearful in this society, and the talk about racism is not going to have a single thing to do with it.

White fear means whites are fearful of black people, but not in the terms of the Kerner Commission report. When the man writes up a report and says he's a racist, be careful. Don't do what he wants you to do which is to get the biggest kick on earth out of the fact that the government reports said all whites are racists. So what, the question is what you do about it. If you're not going to send them all to a psychiatrist, why make a psychological analysis of it? If however, the man had said the problem is jobs, free medical care, full employment, free education, it would be different. But he didn't say those things which are precisely the problem because he'd have to pay something for solving it. As long as he calls himself a racist, he can divert our attention from any solution to the problem.

I'll bet you there is not a class on this campus that hasn't discussed racism. Our fixation on racism, as important as the problem is, has ^{obscured} the effects of the technological revolution upon blacks. This is never discussed. It has obscured the tax policy of the United States, which is brutalizing blacks. This is also not discussed because we get such a kick out of calling people racists. It obscures the effect of the policy of the government in regard to land costs. It obscures what is happening to blacks being driven off farms because you can't say they're being driven ^{off} farms today merely because of racism. More basic factors are at work. Therefore, our fixation on racism harms us because it obscures many of the major problems we face.

At root the problem is not really racial. If I took every black in Chicago, in Detroit, in Philadelphia, in Washington and in Atlanta between the ages of 18 and 25 and turned them white tomorrow, they still will not get jobs. The problem is that Mr. Nixon has decided that unemployment is the answer to inflation. So he has created unemployment. And this produces racial division because whites are fearful that we will get their homes, and we are enraged because we do not have homes. What I am suggesting here is that alienation and divisiveness will not be overcome because we like one another. True reconciliation proceeds from effective economic and social programs.

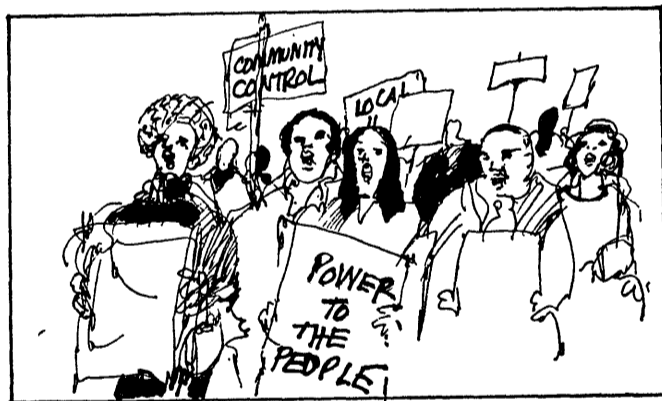
Let me give you another illustration from American history. The abolitionists had a spiritual mission cut off from any economic and social program. They said, "We are against slavery. We want the slaves freed." They helped in this, but when the slaves were freed and said, "We want 40 acres and a mule," the Abolitionists had gone home. The Abolitionists never created any social and economical program to back up real freedom for black people. What I am saying again here is that we may be able to get out of the problems we are in if we avoid certain traps.

If we are to have true reconciliation in America, if we are to overcome our alienation from one another, it will require a total commitment to solving the underlying problems of the society. This will not be done with words alone. It will not be done with escapist ideologies and token programs. It will be done with political commitment to building a majority movement for

change, and with social commitment to using newly gained political power for the cause of social justice.

Thinking Aloud SEPARATISM REPACKAGED

BY BAYARD RUSTIN



IN THE FEW short years since it was conceived as a theory of social and racial progress, community control has become an ingrained component of American political dogma for both liberals and conservatives. Liberals view it as a strategy enabling the poor and minorities to affect their common destinies. Conservatives, who see it as a means of forever laying to rest the social engineering theories developed and popularized during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, have a more realistic understanding of its consequences: They realize that community control, simply stated, is the right of any community—be it Harlem or Riverdale—to determine housing, land use, education, and law enforcement policies unfettered from the control of city hall, state government, or Washington.

The liberal supporters of community control, lacking such clearheadedness, are embroiled in contradictions. It was at the insistence of liberal Democrats, for instance, that such Federal efforts as the war on poverty, Head Start, Model Cities, and day care centers included

provisions requiring the "maximum feasible participation" of those affected by a program. Yet these very same proponents of community control are calling for assaults on school segregation that entail overriding the present system of school district boundaries, and they propose that communities be forced—despite what their zoning laws might say—to accept a housing quota for low- and moderate-income families in order to break up segregated residential housing patterns.

Here we have the essence of the contradictions blurring the liberal's image of community control: On the one hand, there is to be decentralization and freedom from bureaucracy; on the other, school district lines are to be redrawn at the direction of the Federal government and local zoning and housing regulations are to be thrown out, presumably by a Federal agency or court. Accordingly, community control would be the exclusive province of the poor, while middle class and affluent neighborhoods would be subject to decisions handed down from some "distant" agency in a state capital or Washington.

I do not believe that liberals who profess support for community control actually accept such a philosophy. Rather, it would appear that few of them really understand what the notion signifies as a strategy for social change when carried to its logical conclusion.

Stripped of the rhetoric that so often camouflages its true significance, community control emerges as a concept incompatible with a political program committed to social and racial justice. It derives not from liberal

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theory but from our heritage of conservatism. Indeed, it is the spiritual descendant of states' rights, the doctrine so often invoked to deny blacks their basic rights as citizens. If the Federal government or the courts had accepted the Southern states' rights argument, they would have prevented any substantive Negro advancement not only in the past but for years to come. Similarly, if community control becomes imbedded as a principle around which public policy is formulated, we shall soon discover that the progress made at a cost of no little suffering and sacrifice during the civil rights era has been blunted or blocked altogether.

It must be conceded that some responsible black leaders see community control as one means of taking over the institutions traditionally used by the larger society to exploit the ghetto and its inhabitants. This is not surprising, since the approach was conceived by liberals and sold as a way of giving black people some say over their destinies. But it can just as easily be applied to thwart the legitimate aspirations of blacks as to encourage their progress. Right now, for example, the most vigorous opponents of the controversial scatter-site housing project in Forest Hills justify their position on the grounds that they have the right to control their own neighborhood.

THOSE WHO support community control because they believe it will give minorities a measure of self-government, a "piece of the action," see only half the picture. For inherent in the concept is the surrender of the suburbs to white domination. Blacks, in other words, will have the ghetto, with its drug addiction, soaring crime rate, high unemployment, and deplorable housing. Whites will keep the suburbs, where job opportunities are expanding, the air is unpolluted, housing is decent, and schools provide superior education. Separatism, no matter what form it takes or how slickly it is packaged, has always worked to the detriment of the black man.

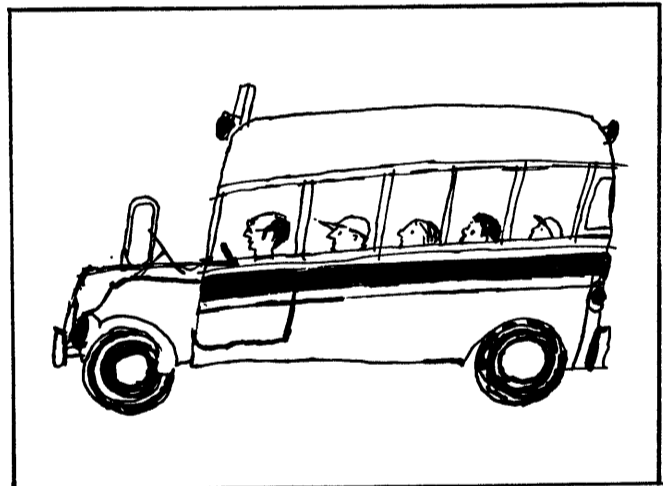
Environmentalists well understand the destructive ecological consequences of government fragmentation. They know that state and municipal officials are too vulnerable to the pressures of special interests—loggers, strip miners, utility companies, the billboard lobby—to be entrusted with land use decisions. Despite its shortcomings, the Federal government is recognized as the only institution with the strength and expertise to develop and implement a program to salvage the environment. And it is time we began to think of our cities in the same way. We must realize that a local planning board or zoning agency is no less susceptible to the pressures of special interests than a West Virginia community would be to a strip-mining firm.

It has become fashionable for the Left to question the ability of the Federal government to initiate social progress, but in fact virtually every major social or eco-

nomie reform in the country was initiated by Congress and the President. At the moment, we are confronted by seemingly insoluble socioeconomic problems—including housing, medical care and unemployment, to name only three—that are beyond the remedial capacity of states or municipalities. Only the Federal government has the resources, the planning facilities and the broad legislative powers to cope successfully with these ills.

This does not mean that individual communities should not be delegated advisory roles in the formulation and administration of public policy. They certainly should have this power. But the nature of the problems confronting us, and the political difficulties in implementing their solutions, preclude the complete local autonomy that the most ardent proponents of community control are calling for.

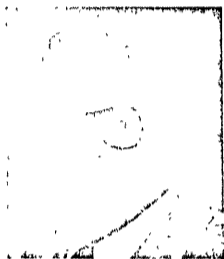
One of the most important challenges facing us today is making the integration of public schools and the



suburbs acceptable, or even desirable, to communities. Here again, states and localities lack the financial resources to provide compensatory programs to a community struggling with school desegregation, or to design a public housing complex that will enhance the surrounding neighborhood. We must look to the federal government to develop the strategies and implement the programs for the peaceful racial integration of our society.

The struggle for racial integration has been much more complex and painful than anyone in the civil rights movement foresaw. What progress we have made—and it is not insignificant—has been in large measure due to the legislative, administrative, judicial and enforcement initiatives of the Federal government, initiatives often opposed by states and local communities. If we abandon the liberal ideal of peaceful social change through government action, and revert back to community control, local autonomy, states' rights or whatever, we will do incalculable damage to the movement to create a society free of the stigma of racial inequality.

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12/13/72



MY TURN: Bayard Rustin

Black Power's Legacy

Born as it was, in bitterness and frustration, black power, never a significant force in the black man's struggle, has left us a powerful legacy of polarization, division and political nonsense.

We hear little from those who popularized black power and in turn became household names through the notoriety it generated. Stokely Carmichael lives in Africa—he has dismissed America as unreconstructably racist and from time to time issues statements of praise for one of Africa's most brutal dictators. H. Rap Brown is in jail. Eldridge Cleaver is in exile under house arrest in Algeria, a nation that, we were told, is the vanguard of Third World revolution. Floyd McKissick, the super-militant of CORE days, is today a real-estate entrepreneur and a militant Republican.

During the civil-rights movement's infancy—the time of marches, sit-ins and Freedom Rides—many of those who later rejected its integrationist goals were among the most committed and fearless of activists. This makes what has happened all the more tragic.

The militants drawn to black power created a fantasy view of society in which blacks—particularly workers and students—represented a reservoir of mass revolutionary potential lacking only a sharpening of their collective political consciousness. Similar daydreams distorted the visions of their ideological bedfellows of the SDS and Weathermen.

In practice, however, black power was much more likely to produce basically conservative answers to the problems of Negroes. Black capitalism, a favorite of

the Nixon Administration—and a scheme that has fallen significantly short of achieving even the modest goals of the Administration—is one example.

But perhaps the most fundamental shortcoming of the black-power advocates was their misconceptions about their fellow black Americans.

They failed, first, to recognize that the overwhelming majority of blacks oppose violence: what took place in Watts and Newark only reinforced the conviction that devastation and bloodshed produced by urban insurrection visits itself most severely on blacks, and, particularly, poor blacks. But in a more basic sense, black-power adherents did not understand that the black masses were much more likely to want what the white worker already has rather than what their ideologically sensitized brothers tell them they should want.

This is not to suggest that black power has not left its imprint on the course of our movement. For though black power itself may occupy no more than a turmoil-filled chapter in the history of our struggle, we are still suffering the consequences of its excesses.

One of the most serious results of its influence is the growing tendency to apply "black" solutions to social problems

that cut across racial lines. More than twenty separatist professional societies have been formed recently, not, as in the past, to counter the discriminatory policies of the American Medical Association and like groups, but to function as adversaries to their own professions. Their various manifestoes and agendas reflect a narrow vision of society in which racial awareness replaces political organization and life-style is a substitute for economic and social progress.

By drawing a shell of race sensitivity around blacks, black power has infected the rest of society with what might be described as a "new tribalism." In its cultural expression, the new tribalism has its positive aspects, for it imbues racial and ethnic minorities with an identity and sense of historical presence.

Its political consequences, however, represent a source of uneasiness for all progressives. For while ethnicity and racial consciousness can signify a pride in Italian cooking, or Puerto Rican folk dances, it also means that each of these groups, along with all the others, now feels a compelling need to protect its own turf from the encroachment of outsiders and to enlarge that turf at the expense of those who are no more privileged or better off.

Liberalism itself has been affected. What in the early 1960s gave promise of developing into a progressive movement committed to broad change and able to draw the support of a decisive majority has fragmented along racial, ethnic, sexual, age and psychological lines. What was, at the time of the 1963 March on Washington, a reflection of broad interracial cooperation is no longer a movement, but a series of causes, each vying with another for ascendancy. And it was black power, by its turning the struggle away from social and political realities, that stimulated this fragmentation.

BLAME AND RESPONSIBILITY

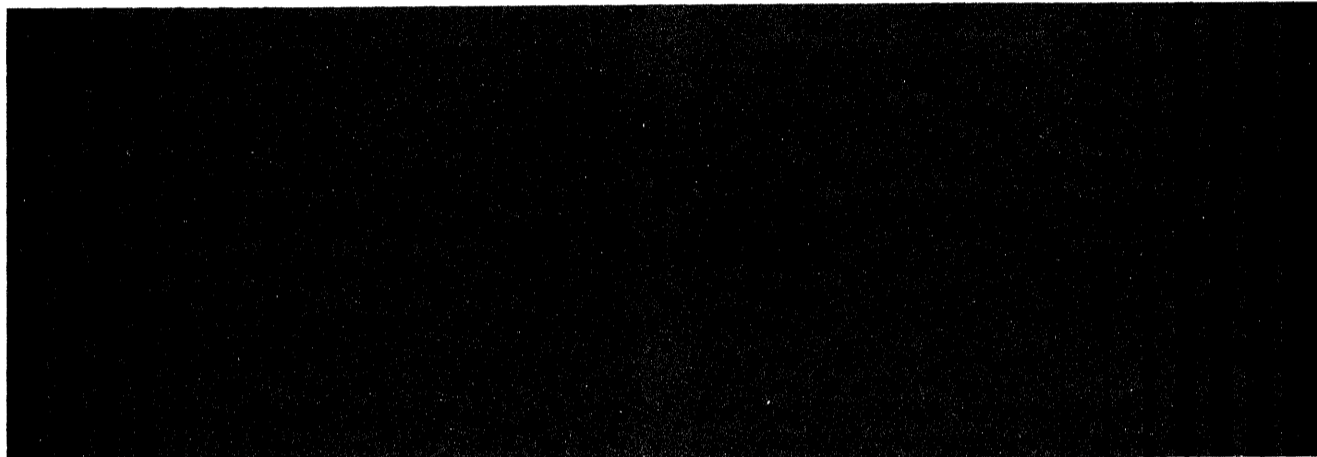
Much of the blame for this situation must be shared by those of us blacks who, through ignorance or cowardice, refused to challenge black power and its spokesmen. But our white allies—liberals, students and church leaders—also bear responsibility. Their commitment, when the movement was struggling against legally sanctioned segregation in the South, waned when economic issues replaced Jim Crow and the tactics of protest were supplanted by political organization. Only organized labor continued to press for those reforms that

served all of society's exploited and thus could bring about the basic changes impossible to realize through marches and demonstrations.

The American voter will not rally to a party or movement based on a narrow constituency. Liberalism cannot prosper by molding a coalition of the top—students and enlightened professionals—and the bottom—minorities and the poor.

The challenge we face is to rebuild a broad-based coalition which embraces intellectuals, organized labor, young people, minorities and liberals. There are numerous issues and strategies that can unify such an alliance; unfortunately, we must also deal with those issues which divide the coalition, splinter it, and turn natural allies into mutual antagonists. Perhaps the most destructive influence on the coalition has been black power and the new tribalism it engendered. Having recognized this, it is the job of those with a stake in the future of liberalism to actively and unapologetically resist political selfishness no matter who practices it.

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The role of ethnic consciousness in American society is one of the most discussed but least understood issues of our time. Racial or immigrant heritage, we are now being told, has replaced social class as the principal shaper of group consciousness and as the chief mechanism for the fulfillment of political aspirations. While we would vigorously reject such a thesis, we cannot argue with the premise that racial, ethnic, tribal and nationalistic feelings have become forces to be reckoned with, in domestic as well as international affairs.

Political brokering along racial, ethnic and sexual lines is now legitimized by the reformers who once despised the practice of ethnic ticket balancing. The resurgence of ethnic-style politics is, however, a benign development when compared with the raw group conflict—often ugly, occasionally violent—which has arisen over a series of relatively new social issues: community control of the schools, the leadership of anti-poverty agencies, school integration, employment quotas, affirmative action in university admissions, integration of the suburbs. Such names as Ocean Hill-Brownsville in New York City, Canarsie in Brooklyn and, more recently, Boston's South End, have come to symbolize an intensified competition pitting racial minorities who are at or near the lowest social and economic depth against immigrant ethnic groups who are often little better off than the blacks and Puerto Ricans they look on as rivals.

Faced by the mounting toll of the new group conflict and by the frightening potential for even more serious rivalry in this period of growing economic scarcity, one might hope that the tribalistic mentality would elicit unequivocal disapproval from social critics and politicians. But this is not the case. Whereas 10 years ago America seemed committed to the creation of a color blind society, today that objective has been minimized. Displacing it in national priority is a distorted concept of competitive pluralism, in which tribal de-

mands are encouraged, and the exploitation of ethnic feelings is sanctified by politicians of both the right and the left.

The "new ethnicity" would not be objectionable if its proponents saw the accelerating group consciousness simply as a means for gaining a sense of pride in one's heritage and for fostering in society a respect for the uniqueness of that heritage. To pay homage to the distinctive contributions of minority and immigrant cultures is important for the nation, as well as for the particular group. The enduring struggle of black people, the survival of the Jews, the political triumphs of the Irish, the successful campaigns of foreign-speaking immigrants for recognition of their unions—all bear witness to the pivotal role of minority groups in the forging of American democracy and in the creation of a more human social order.

We have learned, however, that a healthy expression of cultural identification can easily escalate into extravagant claims of group superiority. Thus we hear, for instance, that there is inherent in "blackness," "Jewishness" or "womanhood," special qualities that endow the group with a distinct right to moral and political leadership. And where groups who suffered discrimination used to demand equal opportunity, they now demand a guarantee of power.

These demands have significant ramifications. They present a challenge to the liberal principle that the most pressing concerns of social policy should be the needs of society's poorest—whatever their race, class or age. They also imply that representation in the political process be given rather than won. And they suggest that the concept of tribalism be institutionalized in government policy, instead of disavowed, as in the past.

The experiences of the past decade have taught us, however, that tribalism cuts two ways. If government appears to favor one group, a natural reaction will set in among all other groups who believe their needs and feelings are being ignored. The consequences of this reaction can be profound: if government does not treat its needs seriously, a group which believes itself to be the victim of "reverse discrimination" will invariably

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abandon the hope for positive action, withdraw into a tribal shell, and pin its expectations on demagogues and reactionaries.

But exacerbation of group competitiveness is not the only danger. Important social goals can be perverted—and promising programs destroyed—when tribal objectives are given precedence. Much of the turmoil which accompanied the effort to recruit greater numbers of black students into American universities could have been averted if students had been selected on the basis of their scholastic abilities and economic needs. Instead, many deserving black students with outstanding academic records were passed over for what black educator Thomas Sowell has characterized as "authentic ghetto militant" types. In his book *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies*, Sowell points out that the scholarship requests of many highly qualified black applicants were rejected, not because the students could afford to attend expensive universities—by any reasonable measurement the vast majority of black college students come from working class backgrounds—but because they displayed attitudes and traits which were adjudged to be "middle class." The fact that supposedly intelligent college admission officials could classify the offspring of postmen or clerks as middle class is in itself a powerful argument against the current fashion of "thinking ethnic." In this instance, educated men and women, acting in what they no doubt considered to be the best interests of minority students, seriously damaged an important social program by relying on a vulgar and unwarranted stereotype of what the "real" black student is. The consequences, of course, were devastating: able students who were hard working, serious and prepared to accept the discipline of academic life were denied the financial assistance they needed to attend the best universities, while students with poor academic backgrounds were thrown in an environment they found confusing, alien and hostile. Not only the students, but the universities and the whole project to make education more accessible to minority students suffered.

Just as the premise of the stereotype was bound to damage higher education programs for black students, so the notion that education should reinforce cultural separatism is currently jeopardizing programs designed to hasten the entry of Spanish-speaking children into a society where English is the dominant language. There is a desperate need to develop creative and

educationally sound approaches to the teaching of the non-English speaking. Ideally, bilingual education should be part of this effort, but the concept of bilingual teaching is all too often being advocated as a means of creating a separatist, alternative culture in which the speaking of English does not play a pivotal role. While we may agree that it can be important for immigrant children to retain familiarity with the language of their parents, at the same time we must recognize that the object of education is to help students cope with an increasingly complex society. Those who minimize this goal are doing inestimable harm to the very children who need quality education more than any other group. Instead of producing students who are fluent in two languages, the proponents of cultural isolation would produce bilingual illiteracy on a massive scale.

What we are confronting here is, in large part, the belief that the member of a given tribe can "relate" only to other members of that tribe. Once cultural isolation is accepted as a positive social goal, inevitably steps will quickly be taken to ensure the tribe's seclusion. Thus we are told that only Hispanic teachers can relate to Hispanic children, and, a little further down the line, that only Puerto Rican teachers can relate to Puerto Rican children, and ultimately, that only Puerto Rican teachers with rural backgrounds can teach Puerto Rican children who migrated from the island's countryside.

Having more blacks and Hispanic minorities as teachers, policemen, judges, social workers and the like is an important social goal. But to suggest that because a black child is taught by a black teacher he or she will receive a better education than if taught by a white, or that a Hispanic criminal defendant will be guaranteed a more just trial only if the judge is Puerto Rican is sheer nonsense: it has no basis in fact and furthermore it entails some dangerous implications. No one would deny that some teachers perform poorly or that they are a factor—among many others—for the failures of minority children. But no single group—blacks included—has a monopoly on teaching skills, idealism, creativity, or the ability to relate to school children, including minority children. The schools in Washington, D.C., have a black superintendent and a majority of black teachers, yet their problems are every bit as serious as the problems afflicting other urban schools with substantial numbers of black students. The failures of the Washington system are not the result of the racial composition of its teachers and administrators; they are, primarily, a function of the widespread poverty and the dislocation and despair that were generated in the society at large. If blacks or any other group insist on confusing class problems with racial considerations, they will only succeed in worsening those problems while inevitably inviting the rest of society to conclude that they, as a group, bear sole responsibility for the failure.

The importance of having greater minority representation in education, law enforcement and other