

institutions or power bases. Clearly, the implications of this shift reach far beyond Mississippi. What began as a protest movement is being challenged to translate itself into a political movement. Is this the right course? And if it is, can the transformation be accomplished?

II

THE VERY decade which has witnessed the decline of legal Jim Crow has also seen the rise of *de facto* segregation in our most fundamental socio-economic institutions. More Negroes are unemployed today than in 1954, and the unemployment gap between the races is wider. The median income of Negroes has dropped from 57 per cent to 54 per cent of that of whites. A higher percentage of Negro workers is now concentrated in jobs vulnerable to automation than was the case ten years ago. More Negroes attend *de facto* segregated schools today than when the Supreme Court handed down its famous decision; while school integration proceeds at a snail's pace in the South, the number of Northern schools with an excessive proportion of minority youth proliferates. And behind this is the continuing growth of racial slums, spreading over our central cities and trapping Negro youth in a milieu which, whatever its legal definition, sows an unimaginable demoralization. Again, legal niceties aside, a resident of a racial ghetto lives in segregated housing, and more Negroes fall into this category than ever before.

These are the facts of life which generate frustration in the Negro community and challenge the civil rights movement. At issue, after all, is not *civil rights*, strictly speaking, but social and economic conditions. Last summer's riots were not race riots; they were outbursts of class aggression in a society where class and color definitions are converging disastrously. How can the (perhaps misnamed) civil rights movement deal with this problem?

Before trying to answer, let me first insist that the task of the movement is vastly complicated by the failure of many whites of good will to understand the nature of our problem. There is a widespread assumption that the removal of artificial racial barriers should result in the automatic integration of the Negro into all aspects of American life. This myth is fostered by facile analogies with the experience of various ethnic immigrant groups, particularly the Jews. But the analogies with the Jews do not hold for three simple but profound reasons. First, Jews have a long history as a literate people, a resource which has afforded them opportunities to advance in the academic and professional worlds, to achieve intellectual status even in the midst of economic hardship, and to evolve sustaining value systems in the context of ghetto life. Negroes, for the greater part of their

presence in this country, were forbidden by law to read or write. Second, Jews have a long history of family stability, the importance of which in terms of aspiration and self-image is obvious. The Negro family structure was totally destroyed by slavery and with it the possibility of cultural transmission (the right of Negroes to marry and rear children is barely a century old). Third, Jews are white and have the *option* of relinquishing their cultural-religious identity, intermarrying, passing, etc. Negroes, or at least the overwhelming majority of them, do not have this option. There is also a fourth, vulgar reason. If the Jewish and Negro communities are not comparable in terms of education, family structure, and color, it is also true that their respective economic roles bear little resemblance.

This matter of economic role brings us to the greater problem—the fact that we are moving into an era in which the natural functioning of the market does not by itself ensure every man with will and ambition a place in the productive process. The immigrant who came to this country during the late 19th and early 20th centuries entered a society which was expanding territorially and/or economically. It was then possible to start at the bottom, as an unskilled or semi-skilled worker, and move up the ladder, acquiring new skills along the way. Especially was this true when industrial unionism was burgeoning, giving new dignity and higher wages to organized workers. Today the situation has changed. We are not expanding territorially, the western frontier is settled, labor organizing has leveled off, our rate of economic growth has been stagnant for a decade. And we are in the midst of a technological revolution which is altering the fundamental structure of the labor force, destroying unskilled and semi-skilled jobs—jobs in which Negroes are disproportionately concentrated.

Whatever the pace of this technological revolution may be, the *direction* is clear: the lower rungs of the economic ladder are being lopped off. This means that an individual will no longer be able to start at the bottom and work his way up; he will have to start in the middle or on top, and hold on tight. It will not even be enough to have certain specific skills, for many skilled jobs are also vulnerable to automation. A broad educational background, permitting vocational adaptability and flexibility, seems more imperative than ever. We live in a society where, as Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz puts it, machines have the equivalent of a high school diploma. Yet the average educational attainment of American Negroes is 8.2 years.

Negroes, of course, are not the only people being affected by these developments. It is reported that there are now 50 per cent fewer unskilled and semi-skilled jobs than there are

high school dropouts. Almost one-third of the 26 million young people entering the labor market in the 1960's will be dropouts. But the percentage of Negro dropouts nationally is 57 per cent, and in New York City, among Negroes 25 years of age or over, it is 68 per cent. They are without a future.

To what extent can the kind of self-help campaign recently prescribed by Eric Hoffer in the *New York Times Magazine* cope with such a situation? I would advise those who think that self-help is the answer to familiarize themselves with the long history of such efforts in the Negro community, and to consider why so many foundered on the shoals of ghetto life. It goes without saying that any effort to combat demoralization and apathy is desirable, but we must understand that demoralization in the Negro community is largely a common-sense response to an objective reality. Negro youths have no need of statistics to perceive, fairly accurately, what their odds are in American society. Indeed, from the point of view of motivation, some of the healthiest Negro youngsters I know are juvenile delinquents: vigorously pursuing the American Dream of material acquisition and status, yet finding the conventional means of attaining it blocked off, they do not yield to defeatism but resort to illegal (and often ingenious) methods. They are not alien to American culture. They are, in Gunnar Myrdal's phrase, "exaggerated Americans." To want a Cadillac is not un-American; to push a cart in the garment center is. If Negroes are to be persuaded that the conventional path (school, work, etc.) is superior, we had better provide evidence which is now sorely lacking. It is a double cruelty to harangue Negro youth about education and training when we do not know what jobs will be available for them. When a Negro youth can reasonably foresee a future free of slums, when the prospect of gainful employment is realistic, we will see motivation and self-help in abundant enough quantities.

Meanwhile, there is an ironic similarity between the self-help advocated by many liberals and the doctrines of the Black Muslims. Professional sociologists, psychiatrists, and social workers have expressed amazement at the Muslims' success in transforming prostitutes and dope addicts into respectable citizens. But every prostitute the Muslims convert to a model of Calvinist virtue is replaced by the ghetto with two more. Dedicated as they are to maintenance of the ghetto, the Muslims are powerless to affect substantial moral reform. So too with every other group or program which is not aimed at the destruction of slums, their causes and effects. Self-help efforts, directly or indirectly, must be geared to mobilizing people into power units capable of effecting social change. That is, their goal must be genuine self-help, not merely

self-improvement. Obviously, where self-improvement activities succeed in imparting to their participants a feeling of some control over their environment, those involved may find their appetites for change whetted; they may move into the political arena.

III

LET ME sum up what I have thus far been trying to say: the civil rights movement is evolving from a protest movement into a full-fledged *social movement*--an evolution calling its very name into question. It is now concerned not merely with removing the barriers to full *opportunity* but with achieving the fact of *equality*. From sit-ins and freedom rides we have gone into rent strikes, boycotts, community organization, and political action. As a consequence of this natural evolution, the Negro today finds himself stymied by obstacles of far greater magnitude than the legal barriers he was attacking before: automation, urban decay, *de facto* school segregation. These are problems which, while conditioned by Jim Crow, do not vanish upon its demise. They are more deeply rooted in our socio-economic order; they are the result of the total society's failure to meet not only the Negro's needs, but human needs generally.

These propositions have won increasing recognition and acceptance, but with a curious twist. They have formed the common premise of two apparently contradictory lines of thought which simultaneously nourish and antagonize each other. On the one hand, there is the reasoning of the *New York Times* moderate who says that the problems are so enormous and complicated that Negro militancy is a futile irritation, and that the need is for "intelligent moderation." Thus, during the first New York school boycott, the *Times* editorialized that Negro demands, while abstractly just, would necessitate massive reforms, the funds for which could not realistically be anticipated; therefore the just demands were also foolish demands and would only antagonize white people. Moderates of this stripe are often correct in perceiving the difficulty or impossibility of racial progress in the context of present social and economic policies. But they accept the context as fixed. They ignore (or perhaps see all too well) the potentialities inherent in linking Negro demands to broader pressures for radical revision of existing policies. They apparently see nothing strange in the fact that in the last twenty-five years we have spent nearly a trillion dollars fighting or preparing for wars, yet throw up our hands before the need for overhauling our schools, clearing the slums, and really abolishing poverty. My quarrel with these moderates is that they do not even envision radical changes; their admonitions of moderation are, for all practical purposes, admonitions to the

Negro to adjust to the status quo, and are therefore immoral.

The more effectively the moderates argue their case, the more they convince Negroes that American society will not or cannot be reorganized for full racial equality. Michael Harrington has said that a successful war on poverty might well require the expenditure of a \$100 billion. Where, the Negro wonders, are the forces now in motion to compel such a commitment? If the voices of the moderates were raised in an insistence upon a reallocation of national resources at levels that could not be confused with tokenism (that is, if the moderates stopped being moderates), Negroes would have greater grounds for hope. Meanwhile, the Negro movement cannot escape a sense of isolation.

It is precisely this sense of isolation that gives rise to the second line of thought I want to examine—the tendency within the civil rights movement which, despite its militancy, pursues what I call a “no-win” policy. Sharing with many moderates a recognition of the magnitude of the obstacles to freedom, spokesmen for this tendency survey the American scene and find no forces prepared to move toward radical solutions. From this they conclude that the only viable strategy is shock, above all, the hypocrisy of white liberals must be exposed. These spokesmen are often described as the radicals of the movement, but they are really its moralists. They seek to change white hearts—by traumatizing them. Frequently abetted by white self-flagellants, they may gleefully applaud (though not really agreeing with) Malcolm X because, while they admit he has no program, they think he can frighten white people into doing the right thing. To believe this, of course, you must be convinced, even if unconsciously, that at the core of the white man's heart lies a buried affection for Negroes—a proposition one may be permitted to doubt. But in any case, hearts are not relevant to the issue; neither racial affinities nor racial hostilities are rooted there. It is institutions—social, political, and economic institutions—which are the ultimate molders of collective sentiments. Let these institutions be reconstructed *today*, and let the ineluctable gradualism of history govern the formation of a new psychology.

My quarrel with the “no-win” tendency in the civil rights movement (and the reason I have so designated it) parallels my quarrel with the moderates outside the movement. As the latter lack the vision or will for fundamental change, the former lack a realistic strategy for achieving it. For such a strategy they substitute militancy. But militancy is a matter of posture and volume and not of effect.

I BELIEVE that the Negro's struggle for equality in America is essentially revolutionary. While most Negroes—in their hearts—unquestionably

seek only to enjoy the fruits of American society as it now exists, their quest cannot *objectively* be satisfied within the framework of existing political and economic relations. The young Negro who would demonstrate his way into the labor market may be motivated by a thoroughly bourgeois ambition and thoroughly “capitalist” considerations, but he will end up having to favor a great expansion of the public sector of the economy. At any rate, that is the position the movement will be forced to take as it looks at the number of jobs being generated by the private economy, and if it is to remain true to the masses of Negroes.

The revolutionary character of the Negro's struggle is manifest in the fact that this struggle may have done more to democratize life for whites than for Negroes. Clearly, it was the sit-in movement of young Southern Negroes which, as it galvanized white students, banished the ugliest features of McCarthyism from the American campus and resurrected political debate. It was not until Negroes assaulted *de facto* school segregation in the urban centers that the issue of quality education for *all* children stirred into motion. Finally, it seems reasonably clear that the civil rights movement, directly and through the resurgence of social conscience it kindled, did more to initiate the war on poverty than any other single force.

It will be—it has been—argued that these by-products of the Negro struggle are not revolutionary. But the term revolutionary, as I am using it, does not connote violence; it refers to the qualitative transformation of fundamental institutions, more or less rapidly, to the point where the social and economic structure which they comprised can no longer be said to be the same. The Negro struggle has hardly run its course; and it will not stop moving until it has been utterly defeated or won substantial equality. But I fail to see how the movement can be victorious in the absence of radical programs for full employment, abolition of slums, the reconstruction of our educational system, new definitions of work and leisure. Adding up the cost of such programs, we can only conclude that we are talking about a refashioning of our political economy. It has been estimated, for example, that the price of replacing New York City's slums with public housing would be \$17 billion. Again, a multi-billion dollar federal public-works program, dwarfing the currently proposed \$2 billion program, is required to reabsorb unskilled and semi-skilled workers into the labor market—and this must be done if Negro workers in these categories are to be employed. “Preferential treatment” cannot help them.

I am not trying here to delineate a total program, only to suggest the scope of economic reforms which are most immediately related to the plight of the Negro community. One could

speculate on their political implications--whether, for example, they do not indicate the obsolescence of state government and the superiority of regional structures as viable units of planning. Such speculations aside, it is clear that Negro needs cannot be satisfied unless we go beyond what has so far been placed on the agenda. How are these radical objectives to be achieved? The answer is simple, deceptively so: *through political power.*

There is a strong moralistic strain in the civil rights movement which would remind us that power corrupts, forgetting that the absence of power also corrupts. But this is not the view I want to debate here, for it is waning. Our problem is posed by those who accept the need for political power but do not understand the nature of the object and therefore lack sound strategies for achieving it; they tend to confuse political institutions with lunch counters.

A handful of Negroes, acting alone, could integrate a lunch counter by strategically locating their bodies so as *directly* to interrupt the operation of the proprietor's will; their numbers were relatively unimportant. In politics, however, such a confrontation is difficult because the interests involved are merely *represented*. In the execution of a political decision a direct confrontation may ensue (as when federal marshals escorted James Meredith into the University of Mississippi--to turn from an example of non-violent coercion to one of force backed up with the threat of violence). But in arriving at a political decision, numbers and organizations are crucial, especially for the economically disenfranchised. (Needless to say, I am assuming that the forms of political democracy exist in America, however imperfectly, that they are valued, and that elitist or putschist conceptions of exercising power are beyond the pale of discussion for the civil rights movement.)

Neither that movement nor the country's twenty million black people can win political power alone. We need allies. The future of the Negro struggle depends on whether the contradictions of this society can be resolved by a coalition of progressive forces which becomes the *effective* political majority in the United States. I speak of the coalition which staged the March on Washington, passed the Civil Rights Act, and laid the basis for the Johnson landslide--Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups.

THERE ARE those who argue that a coalition strategy would force the Negro to surrender his political independence to white liberals, that he would be neutralized, deprived of his cutting edge, absorbed into the Establishment. Some who take this position urged last year that votes be withheld from the Johnson-Humphrey ticket as a demonstration of the Negro's political power. Curiously enough, these people who sought to

demonstrate power through the non-exercise of it, also point to the Negro "swing vote" in crucial urban areas as the source of the Negro's independent political power. But here they are closer to being right: the urban Negro vote will grow in importance in the coming years. If there is anything positive in the spread of the ghetto, it is the potential political power base thus created, and to realize this potential is one of the most challenging and urgent tasks before the civil rights movement. If the movement can wrest leadership of the ghetto vote from the machines, it will have acquired an organized constituency such as other major groups in our society now have.

But we must also remember that the effectiveness of a swing vote depends solely on "other" votes. It derives its power from them. In that sense, it can never be "independent," but must opt for one candidate or the other, even if by default. Thus coalitions are inescapable, however tentative they may be. And this is the case in all but those few situations in which Negroes running on an independent ticket might conceivably win. "Independence," in other words, is not a value in itself. The issue is which coalition to join and how to make it responsive to your program. Necessarily there will be compromise. But the difference between expediency and morality in politics is the difference between selling out a principle and making smaller concessions to win larger ones. The leader who shrinks from this task reveals not his purity but his lack of political sense.

The task of molding a political movement out of the March on Washington coalition is not simple, but no alternatives have been advanced. We need to choose our allies on the basis of common political objectives. It has become fashionable in some no-win Negro circles to decry the white liberal as the main enemy (his hypocrisy is what sustains racism); by virtue of this reverse recitation of the reactionary's litany (liberalism leads to socialism, which leads to Communism) the Negro is left in majestic isolation, except for a tiny band of fervent white initiates. But the objective fact is that *Eastland* and *Goldwater* are the main enemies--they and the opponents of civil rights, of the war on poverty, of medicare, of social security, of federal aid to education, of unions, and so forth. The labor movement, despite its obvious faults, has been the largest single organized force in this country pushing for progressive social legislation. And where the Negro-labor-liberal axis is weak, as in the farm belt, it was the religious groups that were most influential in rallying support for the Civil Rights Bill.

The durability of the coalition was interestingly tested during the election. I do not believe that the Johnson landslide proved the "white backlash" to be a myth. It proved, rather, that

economic interests are more fundamental than prejudice: the backslashers decided that loss of social security was, after all, too high a price to pay for a slap at the Negro. This lesson was a valuable first step in re-educating such people, and it must be kept alive, for the civil rights movement will be advanced only to the degree that social and economic welfare gets to be inextricably entangled with civil rights.

The 1964 elections marked a turning point in American politics. The Democratic landslide was not merely the result of a negative reaction to Goldwaterism; it was also the expression of a majority liberal consensus. The near unanimity with which Negro voters joined in that expression was, I am convinced, a vindication of the July 25th statement by Negro leaders calling for a strategic turn toward political action and a temporary curtailment of mass demonstrations. Despite the controversy surrounding the statement, the instinctive response it met with in the community is suggested by the fact that demonstrations were down 75 per cent as compared with the same period in 1963. But should so high a percentage of Negro voters have gone to Johnson, or should they have held back to narrow his margin of victory and thus give greater visibility to our swing vote? How has our loyalty changed things? Certainly the Negro vote had higher visibility in 1960, when a switch of only 7 per cent from the Republican column of 1956 elected President Kennedy. But the slimness of Kennedy's victory—of his "mandate"—dictated a go-slow approach on civil rights, at least until the Birmingham upheaval.

Although Johnson's popular majority was so large that he could have won without such overwhelming Negro support, that support was important from several angles. Beyond adding to Johnson's total national margin, it was specifically responsible for his victories in Virginia, Florida, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Goldwater took only those states where fewer than 45 per cent of eligible Negroes were registered. That Johnson would have won those states had Negro voting rights been enforced is a lesson not likely to be lost on a man who would have been happy with a unanimous electoral college. In any case, the 1.6 million Southern Negroes who voted have had a shattering impact on the Southern political party structure, as illustrated in the changed composition of the Southern congressional delegation. The "backlash" gave the Republicans five House seats in Alabama, one in Georgia, and one in Mississippi. But on the Democratic side, seven segregationists were defeated while all nine Southerners who voted for the Civil Rights Act were re-elected. It may be premature to predict a Southern Democratic party of Negroes and white moderates and a Republican Party of refugee racists and economic conservatives, but there certainly is a strong

tendency toward such a realignment; and an additional 3.6 million Negroes of voting age in the eleven Southern states are still to be heard from. Even the *tendency* toward disintegration of the Democratic party's racist wing defines a new context for Presidential and liberal strategy in the congressional battles ahead. Thus the Negro vote (North as well as South), while not *decisive* in the Presidential race, was enormously effective. It was a dramatic element of a historic mandate which contains vast possibilities and dangers that will fundamentally affect the future course of the civil rights movement.

The liberal congressional sweep raises hope for an assault on the seniority system, Rule Twenty-two, and other citadels of Dixiecrat-Republican power. The overwhelming of this conservative coalition should also mean progress on much bottlenecked legislation of profound interest to the movement (e.g., bills by Senators Clark and Nelson on planning, manpower, and employment). Moreover, the irrelevance of the South to Johnson's victory gives the President more freedom to act than his predecessor had and more leverage to the movement to pressure for executive action in Mississippi and other racist strongholds.

NONE OF this *guarantees* vigorous executive or legislative action, for the other side of the Johnson landslide is that it has a Gaullist quality. Goldwater's capture of the Republican party forced into the Democratic camp many disparate elements which do not belong there, Big Business being the major example. Johnson, who wants to be President "of all people," may try to keep his new coalition together by sticking close to the political center. But if he decides to do this, it is unlikely that even his political genius will be able to hold together a coalition so inherently unstable and rife with contradictions. It must come apart. Should it do so while Johnson is pursuing a centrist course, then the mandate will have been wastefully dissipated. However, if the mandate is seized upon to set fundamental changes in motion, then the basis can be laid for a new mandate, a new coalition including hitherto inert and dispossessed strata of the population.

Here is where the cutting edge of the civil rights movement can be applied. We must see to it that the reorganization of the "consensus party" proceeds along lines which will make it an effective vehicle for social reconstruction, a role it cannot play so long as it furnishes Southern racism with its national political power. (One of Barry Goldwater's few attractive ideas was that the Dixiecrats belong with him in the same party.) And nowhere has the civil rights movement's political cutting edge been more magnificently demonstrated than at Atlantic City, where the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party not

only secured recognition as a bona fide component of the national party, but in the process routed the representatives of the most rabid racists—the white Mississippi and Alabama delegations. While I still believe that the FDP made a tactical error in spurning the compromise, there is no question that they launched a political revolution whose logic is the displacement of Dixiecrat power. They launched that revolution within a major political institution and as part of a coalitional effort.

The role of the civil rights movement in the reorganization of American political life is programmatic as well as strategic. We are challenged now to broaden our social vision, to develop functional programs with concrete objectives. We need to propose alternatives to technological unemployment, urban decay, and

the rest. We need to be calling for public works and training, for national economic planning, for federal aid to education, for attractive public housing—all this on a sufficiently massive scale to make a difference. We need to protest the notion that our integration into American life, so long delayed, must now proceed in an atmosphere of competitive scarcity instead of in the security of abundance which technology makes possible. We cannot claim to have answers to all the complex problems of modern society. That is too much to ask of a movement still battling barbarism in Mississippi. But we can agitate the right questions by probing at the contradictions which still stand in the way of the "Great Society." The questions having been asked, motion must begin in the larger society, for there is a limit to what Negroes can do alone.

Reprinted from COMMENTARY September 1966

For a complete list of Commentary Reports write to COMMENTARY, 165 E. 56th St., New York, N. Y. 10022

"BLACK POWER" AND COALITION POLITICS

BAYARD RUSTIN

THERE are two Americas—black and white—and nothing has more clearly revealed the divisions between them than the debate currently raging around the slogan of "black power." Despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that this slogan lacks any clear definition, it has succeeded in galvanizing emotions on all sides, with many whites seeing it as the expression of a new racism and many Negroes taking it as a warning to white people that Negroes will no longer tolerate brutality and violence. But even within the Negro community itself, "black power" has touched off a major debate—the most bitter the community has experienced since the days of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, and one which threatens to ravage the entire civil-rights movement. Indeed, a serious split has already developed between advocates of "black power" like Floyd McKissick of CORE and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC on the one hand, and Dr. Martin Luther King of SCLC, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and Whitney Young of the Urban League on the other.

There is no question, then, that great passions are involved in the debate over the idea of "black power"; nor, as we shall see, is there any question that these passions have their roots in the psychological and political frustrations of the Negro community. Nevertheless, I would contend that "black power" not only lacks any real value for the civil-rights movement, but that its propagation is positively harmful. It diverts the movement from a meaningful debate over strategy and tactics, it isolates the Negro community, and it encourages the growth of anti-Negro forces.

In its simplest and most innocent guise, "black power" merely means the effort to elect Negroes to office in proportion to Negro strength within the population. There is, of course, nothing wrong with such an objective in itself, and nothing inherently radical in the idea of pursuing it. But in Stokely Carmichael's extravagant rhetoric about "taking over" in districts of the South where Negroes are in the majority, it is important to recognize that Southern Negroes are only in a po-

sition to win a maximum of two congressional seats and control of eighty local counties.* (Carmichael, incidentally, is in the paradoxical position of screaming at liberals—wanting only to "get whitey off my back"—and simultaneously needing their support: after all, he can talk about Negroes taking over Lowndes County only because there is a fairly liberal federal government to protect him should Governor Wallace decide to eliminate this pocket of black power.) Now there might be a certain value in having two Negro congressmen from the South, but obviously they could do nothing by themselves to reconstruct the face of America. Eighty sheriffs, eighty tax assessors, and eighty school-board members might ease the tension for a while in their communities, but they alone could not create jobs and build low-cost housing; they alone could not supply quality integrated education.

The relevant question, moreover, is not whether a politician is black or white, but what forces he represents. Manhattan has had a succession of Negro borough presidents, and yet the schools are increasingly segregated. Adam Clayton Powell and William Dawson have both been in Congress for many years; the former is responsible for a rider on school intergration that never gets passed, and the latter is responsible for keeping the Negroes of Chicago tied to a mayor who had to see riots and death before he would put eight-dollar sprinklers on water hydrants in the summer. I am not for one minute arguing that Powell, Dawson, and Mrs. Motley should be impeached. What I am saying is that if a politician is elected because he is black and is deemed to be entitled to a "slice of the pie," he will behave in one way; if he is elected by a constituency pressing for social reform, he will, whether he is white or black, behave in another way.

SOUTHERN Negroes, despite exhortations from SNCC to organize themselves into a Black Panther party, are going to stay in the Democratic party—to them it is the party of progress, the New Deal, the New Frontier, and the Great Society—and they are right to stay. For SNCC's Black Panther perspective is simultaneously utopian and re-

BAYARD RUSTIN is executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute. His previous contributions to COMMENTARY include the now famous article, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement" (February 1965).

*See "The Negroes Enter Southern Politics" by Pat Waters, *Dissent*, July-August 1966.

actionary—the former for the by now obvious reason that one-tenth of the population cannot accomplish much by itself, the latter because such a party would remove Negroes from the main area of political struggle in this country (particularly in the one-party South, where the decisive battles are fought out in Democratic primaries), and would give priority to the issue of race precisely at a time when the fundamental questions facing the Negro and American society alike are economic and social. It is no accident that the two main proponents of “black power,” Carmichael and McKissick, should now be co-sponsoring a conference with Adam Clayton Powell and Elijah Muhammad, and that the leaders of New York CORE should recently have supported the machine candidate for Surrogate—because he was the choice of a Negro boss—rather than the candidate of the reform movement. By contrast, Martin Luther King is working in Chicago with the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO and with religious groups in a coalition which, if successful, will mean the end or at least the weakening of the Daley-Dawson machine.

The winning of the right of Negroes to vote in the South insures the eventual transformation of the Democratic party, now controlled primarily by Northern machine politicians and Southern Dixiecrats. The Negro vote will eliminate the Dixiecrats from the party and from Congress, which means that the crucial question facing us today is who will replace them in the South. Unless civil-rights leaders (in such towns as Jackson, Mississippi; Birmingham, Alabama; and even to a certain extent Atlanta) can organize grass-roots clubs whose members will have a genuine political voice, the Dixiecrats might well be succeeded by black moderates and black Southern-style machine politicians, who would do little to push for needed legislation in Congress and little to improve local conditions in the South. While I myself would prefer Negro machines to a situation in which Negroes have no power at all, it seems to me that there is a better alternative today—a liberal-labor-civil rights coalition which would work to make the Democratic party truly responsive to the aspirations of the poor, and which would develop support for programs (specifically those outlined in A. Philip Randolph's \$100 billion Freedom Budget) aimed at the reconstruction of American society in the interests of greater social justice. The advocates of “black power” have no such programs in mind; what they are in fact arguing for (perhaps unconsciously) is the creation of a *new black establishment*.

Nor, it might be added, are they leading the Negro people along the same road which they imagine immigrant groups traveled so successfully in the past. Proponents of “black power”—accepting a historical myth perpetrated by moderates—like to say that the Irish and the Jews and the Italians, by sticking together and demanding

their share, finally won enough power to overcome their initial disabilities. But the truth is that it was through alliances with other groups (in political machines or as part of the trade-union movement) that the Irish and the Jews and the Italians acquired the power to win their rightful place in American society. They did not “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps”—no group in American society has ever done so; and they most certainly did not make isolation their primary tactic.

IN SOME quarters, “black power” connotes not an effort to increase the number of Negroes in elective office but rather a repudiation of non-violence in favor of Negro “self-defense.” Actually this is a false issue, since no one has ever argued that Negroes should not defend themselves as individuals from attack.* Non-violence has been advocated as a *tactic* for organized demonstrations in a society where Negroes are a minority and where the majority controls the police. Proponents of non-violence do not, for example, deny that James Meredith has the right to carry a gun for protection when he visits his mother in Mississippi; what they question is the wisdom of his carrying a gun while participating in a demonstration.

There is, as well, a tactical side to the new emphasis on “self-defense” and the suggestion that non-violence be abandoned. The reasoning here is that turning the other cheek is not the way to win respect, and that only if the Negro succeeds in frightening the white man will the white man begin taking him seriously. The trouble with this reasoning is that it fails to recognize that fear is more likely to bring hostility to the surface than respect; and far from prodding the “white power structure” into action, the new militant leadership, by raising the slogan of black power and lowering the banner of non-violence, has obscured the moral issue facing this nation, and permitted the President and Vice President to lecture us about “racism in reverse” instead of proposing more meaningful programs for dealing with the problems of unemployment, housing, and education.

“Black power” is, of course, a somewhat nationalistic slogan and its sudden rise to popularity among Negroes signifies a concomitant rise in nationalist sentiment (Malcolm X's autobiography is quoted nowadays in Grenada, Mississippi as well as in Harlem). We have seen such nationalistic turns and withdrawals back into the ghetto before, and when we look at the conditions which brought them about, we find that they have much in common with the conditions of Negro

*As far back as 1934, A. Philip Randolph, Walter White, then executive secretary of the NAACP, Lester Granger, then executive director of the Urban League, and I joined a committee to try to save the life of Odell Waller. Waller, a sharecropper, had murdered his white boss in self-defense.

life at the present moment: conditions which lead to despair over the goal of integration and to the belief that the ghetto will last forever.

It may, in the light of the many juridical and legislative victories which have been achieved in the past few years, seem strange that despair should be so widespread among Negroes today. But anyone to whom it seems strange should reflect on the fact that despite these victories *Negroes today are in worse economic shape, live in worse slums, and attend more highly segregated schools than in 1954.* Thus—to recite the appalling, and appallingly familiar, statistical litany once again—more Negroes are unemployed today than in 1954; the gap between the wages of the Negro worker and the white worker is wider; while the unemployment rate among white youths is decreasing, the rate among Negro youths has increased to 32 per cent (and among Negro girls the rise is even more startling). Even the one gain which has been registered, a decrease in the unemployment rate among Negro adults, is deceptive, for it represents men who have been called back to work after a period of being laid off. In any event, unemployment among Negro men is still twice that of whites, and no new jobs have been created.

So too with housing, which is deteriorating in the North (and yet the housing provisions of the 1966 civil-rights bill are weaker than the anti-discrimination laws in several states which contain the worst ghettos even with these laws on their books). And so too with schools: according to figures issued recently by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 65 per cent of first-grade Negro students in this country attend schools that are from 90 to 100 per cent black. (If in 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down the desegregation decision, you had been the Negro parent of a first-grade child, the chances are that this past June you would have attended that child's graduation from a segregated high school.)

To put all this in the simplest and most concrete terms: the day-to-day lot of the ghetto Negro has not been improved by the various judicial and legislative measures of the past decade.

NEGROES are thus in a situation similar to that of the turn of the century, when Booker T. Washington advised them to "cast down their buckets" (that is to say, accommodate to segregation and disenfranchisement) and when even his leading opponent, W. E. B. Du Bois, was forced to advocate the development of a group economy in place of the direct-action boycotts, general strikes, and protest techniques which had been used in the 1880's, before the enactment of the Jim-Crow laws. For all their differences, both Washington and Du Bois then found it impossible to believe that Negroes could ever be integrated into American society, and each in his own way therefore

counseled withdrawal into the ghetto, self-help, and economic self-determination.

World War I aroused new hope in Negroes that the rights removed at the turn of the century would be restored. More than 360,000 Negroes entered military service and went overseas; many left the South seeking the good life in the North and hoping to share in the temporary prosperity created by the war. But all these hopes were quickly smashed at the end of the fighting. In the first year following the war, more than seventy Negroes were lynched, and during the last six months of that year, there were some twenty-four riots throughout America. White mobs took over whole cities, flogging, burning, shooting, and torturing at will, and when Negroes tried to defend themselves, the violence only increased. Along with this, Negroes were excluded from unions and pushed out of jobs they had won during the war, including federal jobs.

In the course of this period of dashed hope and spreading segregation—the same period, incidentally, when a reorganized Ku Klux Klan was achieving a membership which was to reach into the millions—the largest mass movement ever to take root among working-class Negroes, Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement, was born. "Buy Black" became a slogan in the ghettos; faith in integration was virtually snuffed out in the Negro community until the 1930's when the cio reawakened the old dream of a Negro-labor alliance by announcing a policy of non-discrimination and when the New Deal admitted Negroes into relief programs, WPA jobs, and public housing. No sooner did jobs begin to open up and Negroes begin to be welcomed into mainstream organizations than "Buy Black" campaigns gave way to "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" movements. A. Philip Randolph was able to organize a massive March on Washington demanding a wartime FEPC; CORE was born and with it the non-violent sit-in technique; the NAACP succeeded in putting an end to the white primaries in 1944. Altogether, World War II was a period of hope for Negroes, and the economic progress they made through wartime industry continued steadily until about 1948 and remained stable for a time. Meanwhile, the non-violent movement of the 1950's and 60's achieved the desegregation of public accommodations and established the right to vote.

Yet at the end of this long fight, the Southern Negro is too poor to use those integrated facilities and too intimidated and disorganized to use the vote to maximum advantage, while the economic position of the Northern Negro deteriorates rapidly.

The promise of meaningful work and decent wages once held out by the anti-poverty programs has not been fulfilled. Because there has been a lack of the necessary funds, the program has in many cases been reduced to wrangling for posi-

tions on boards or for lucrative staff jobs. Negro professionals working for the program have earned handsome salaries—ranging from \$14- to \$25,000—while young boys have been asked to plant trees at \$1.25 an hour. Nor have the Job Corps camps made a significant dent in unemployment among Negro youths; indeed, the main beneficiaries of this program seem to be the private companies who are contracted to set up the camps.

THEN there is the war in Vietnam, which poses many ironies for the Negro community. On the one hand, Negroes are bitterly aware of the fact that more and more money is being spent on the war, while the anti-poverty program is being cut; on the other hand, Negro youths are enlisting in great numbers, as though to say that it is worth the risk of being killed to learn a trade, to leave a dead-end situation, and to join the only institution in this society which seems really to be integrated.

The youths who rioted in Watts, Cleveland, Omaha, Chicago, and Portland are the members of a truly hopeless and lost generation. They can see the alien world of affluence unfold before them on the TV screen. But they have already failed in their inferior segregated schools. Their grandfathers were sharecroppers, their grandmothers were domestics, and their mothers are domestics too. Many have never met their fathers. Mistreated by the local storekeeper, suspected by the policeman on the beat, disliked by their teachers, they cannot stand more failures and would rather retreat into the world of heroin than risk looking for a job downtown or having their friends see them push a rack in the garment district. Floyd McKissick and Stokely Carmichael may accuse Roy Wilkins of being out of touch with the Negro ghetto, but nothing more clearly demonstrates their own alienation from ghetto youth than their repeated exhortations to these young men to oppose the Vietnam war when so many of them tragically see it as their only way out. Yet there is no need to labor the significance of the fact that the rice fields of Vietnam and the Green Berets have more to offer a Negro boy than the streets of Mississippi or the towns of Alabama or 125th Street in New York.

The Vietnam war is also partly responsible for the growing disillusion with non-violence among Negroes. The ghetto Negro does not in general ask whether the United States is right or wrong to be in Southeast Asia. He does, however, wonder why he is exhorted to non-violence when the United States has been waging a fantastically brutal war, and it puzzles him to be told that he must turn the other cheek in our own South while we must fight for freedom in South Vietnam.

Thus, as in roughly similar circumstances in the past—circumstances, I repeat, which in the aggregate foster the belief that the ghetto is destined to last forever—Negroes are once again turning to

nationalistic slogans, with "black power" affording the same emotional release as "Back to Africa" and "Buy Black" did in earlier periods of frustration and hopelessness. This is not only the case with the ordinary Negro in the ghetto; it is also the case with leaders like McKissick and Carmichael, neither of whom began as a nationalist or was at first cynical about the possibilities of integration.* It took countless beatings and 24 jailings—that, and the absence of strong and continual support from the liberal community—to persuade Carmichael that his earlier faith in coalition politics was mistaken, that nothing was to be gained from working with whites, and that an alliance with the black nationalists was desirable. In the areas of the South where SNCC has been working so nobly, implementation of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 has been slow and ineffective. Negroes in many rural areas cannot walk into the courthouse and register to vote. Despite the voting-rights bill, they must file complaints and the Justice Department must be called to send federal registrars. Nor do children attend integrated schools as a matter of course. There, too, complaints must be filed and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare must be notified. Neither department has been doing an effective job of enforcing the bills. The feeling of isolation increases among SNCC workers as each legislative victory turns out to be only a token victory—significant on the national level, but not affecting the day-to-day lives of Negroes. Carmichael and his colleagues are wrong in refusing to support the 1966 bill, but one can understand why they feel as they do.

It is, in short, the growing conviction that the Negroes cannot win—a conviction with much grounding in experience—which accounts for the new popularity of "black power." So far as the ghetto Negro is concerned, this conviction expresses itself in hostility first toward the people closest to him who have held out the most promise and failed to deliver (Martin Luther King, Roy Wilkins, etc.), then toward those who have proclaimed themselves his friends (the liberals and the labor movement), and finally toward the only oppressors he can see (the local storekeeper and the policeman on the corner). On the leadership level, the conviction that the Negroes cannot win takes other forms, principally the adoption of what I have called a "no-win" policy. Why bother with programs when their enactment results only in "sham"? Why concern ourselves with the image of the movement when nothing significant has been gained for all the sacrifices made by SNCC and CORE? Why compromise with reluctant white allies when nothing of consequence can be achieved anyway? Why indeed have anything to do with whites at all?

*On Carmichael's background, see "Two for SNCC" by Robert Penn Warren in the April 1965 COMMENTARY—ED.

ON THIS last point, it is extremely important for white liberals to understand—as, one gathers from their references to “racism in reverse,” the President and the Vice President of the United States do not—that there is all the difference in the world between saying, “If you don’t want me, I don’t want you” (which is what some proponents of “black power” have in effect been saying) and the statement, “Whatever you do, I don’t want you” (which is what racism declares). It is, in other words, both absurd and immoral to equate the despairing response of the victim with the contemptuous assertion of the oppressor. It would, moreover, be tragic if white liberals allowed verbal hostility on the part of Negroes to drive them out of the movement or to curtail their support for civil rights. The issue was injustice before “black power” became popular, and the issue is still injustice.

In any event, even if “black power” had not emerged as a slogan, problems would have arisen in the relation between whites and Negroes in the civil-rights movement. In the North, it was inevitable that Negroes would eventually wish to run their own movement and would rebel against the presence of whites in positions of leadership as yet another sign of white supremacy. In the South, the well-intentioned white volunteer had the cards stacked against him from the beginning. Not only could he leave the struggle any time he chose to do so, but a higher value was set on his safety by the press and the government—apparent in the differing degrees of excitement generated by the imprisonment or murder of whites and Negroes. The white person’s importance to the movement in the South was thus an ironic outgrowth of racism and was therefore bound to create resentment.

But again: however understandable all this may be as a response to objective conditions and to the seeming irrelevance of so many hard-won victories to the day-to-day life of the mass of Negroes, the fact remains that the quasi-nationalist sentiments and “no-win” policy lying behind the slogan of “black power” do no service to the Negro. Some nationalist emotion is, of course, inevitable, and “black power” must be seen as part of the psychological rejection of white supremacy, part of the rebellion against the stereotypes which have been ascribed to Negroes for three hundred years. Nevertheless, pride, confidence, and a new identity cannot be won by glorifying blackness or attacking whites; they can only come from meaningful action, from good jobs, and from real victories such as were achieved on the streets of Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma. When SNCC and CORE went into the South, they awakened the country, but now they emerge isolated and demoralized, shouting a slogan that may afford a momentary satisfaction but that is calculated to destroy them and their movement. Already their frustrated call is being answered with counter-

demands for law and order and with opposition to police-review boards. Already they have diverted the entire civil-rights movement from the hard task of developing strategies to realign the major parties of this country, and embroiled it in a debate that can only lead more and more to politics by frustration.

On the other side, however—the more important side, let it be said—it is the business of those who reject the negative aspects of “black power” not to preach but to act. Some weeks ago President Johnson, speaking at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, asserted that riots impeded reform, created fear, and antagonized the Negro’s traditional friends. Mr. Johnson, according to the *New York Times*, expressed sympathy for the plight of the poor, the jobless, and the ill-housed. The government, he noted, has been working to relieve their circumstances, but “all this takes time.”

One cannot argue with the President’s position that riots are destructive or that they frighten away allies. Nor can one find fault with his sympathy for the plight of the poor; surely the poor need sympathy. But one can question whether the government has been working seriously enough to eliminate the conditions which lead to frustration-politics and riots. The President’s very words, “all this takes time,” will be understood by the poor for precisely what they are—an excuse instead of a real program, a cover-up for the failure to establish real priorities, and an indication that the administration has no real commitment to create new jobs, better housing, and integrated schools.

For the truth is that it need only take ten years to eliminate poverty—ten years and the \$100 billion Freedom Budget recently proposed by A. Philip Randolph. In his introduction to the budget (which was drawn up in consultation with the nation’s leading economists, and which will be published later this month), Mr. Randolph points out: “The programs urged in the Freedom Budget attack all of the major causes of poverty—unemployment and underemployment, substandard pay, inadequate social insurance and welfare payments to those who cannot or should not be employed; bad housing; deficiencies in health services, education, and training; and fiscal and monetary policies which tend to redistribute income regressively rather than progressively. The Freedom Budget leaves no room for discrimination in any form because its programs are addressed to all who need more opportunity and improved incomes and living standards, not to just some of them.”

The legislative precedent Mr. Randolph has in mind is the 1945 Full Employment bill. This bill—conceived in its original form by Roosevelt to prevent a postwar depression—would have made it public policy for the government to step in if the private economy could not provide enough em-

ployment. As passed finally by Congress in 1946, with many of its teeth removed, the bill had the result of preventing the Negro worker, who had finally reached a pay level about 55 per cent that of the white wage, from making any further progress in closing that discriminatory gap; and instead, he was pushed back by the chronically high unemployment rates of the 50's. Had the original bill been passed, the public sector of our economy would have been able to insure fair and full employment. Today, with the spiralling thrust of automation, it is even more imperative that we have a legally binding commitment to this goal.

Let me interject a word here to those who say that Negroes are asking for another handout and are refusing to help themselves. From the end of the 19th century up to the last generation, the United States absorbed and provided economic opportunity for tens of millions of immigrants. These people were usually uneducated and a good many could not speak English. They had nothing but their hard work to offer and they labored long hours, often in miserable sweatshops and unsafe mines. Yet in a burgeoning economy with a need for unskilled labor, they were able to find jobs, and as industrialization proceeded, they were gradually able to move up the ladder to greater skills. Negroes who have been driven off the farm into a city life for which they are not prepared and who have entered an economy in which there is less and less need for unskilled labor, cannot be compared with these immigrants of old. The tenements which were jammed by newcomers were way-stations of hope; the ghettos of today have become dead-ends of despair. Yet just as the older generation of immigrants—in its most decisive act of self-help—organized the trade-union movement and then in alliance with many middle-class elements went on to improve its own lot and the condition of American society generally, so the Negro of today is struggling to go beyond the gains of the past and, in alliance with liberals and labor, to guarantee full and fair employment to all Americans.

Mr. Randolph's Freedom Budget not only rests on the Employment Act of 1946, but on a precedent set by Harry Truman when he believed freedom was threatened in Europe. In 1947, the Marshall Plan was put into effect and 3 per cent of the gross national product was spent in foreign aid. If we were to allocate a similar proportion of our GNP to destroy the economic and social conse-

quences of racism and poverty at home today, it might mean spending more than 20 billion dollars a year, although I think it quite possible that we can fulfill these goals with a much smaller sum. It would be intolerable, however, if our plan for domestic social reform were less audacious and less far-reaching than our international programs of a generation ago.

We must see, therefore, in the current debate over "black power," a fantastic challenge to American society to live up to its proclaimed principles in the area of race by transforming itself so that all men may live equally and under justice. We must see to it that in rejecting "black power," we do not also reject the principle of Negro equality. Those people who would use the current debate and/or the riots to abandon the civil-rights movement leave us no choice but to question their original motivation.

If anything, the next period will be more serious and difficult than the preceding ones. It is much easier to establish the Negro's right to sit at a Woolworth's counter than to fight for an integrated community. It takes very little imagination to understand that the Negro should have the right to vote, but it demands much creativity, patience, and political stamina to plan, develop, and implement programs and priorities. It is one thing to organize sentiment behind laws that do not disturb consensus politics, and quite another to win battles for the redistribution of wealth. Many people who marched in Selma are not prepared to support a bill for a \$2.00 minimum wage, to say nothing of supporting a redefinition of work or a guaranteed annual income.

It is here that we who advocate coalitions and integration and who object to the "black-power" concept have a massive job to do. We must see to it that the liberal-labor-civil rights coalition is maintained and, indeed, strengthened so that it can fight effectively for a Freedom Budget. We are responsible for the growth of the "black-power" concept because we have not used our own power to insure the full implementation of the bills whose passage we were strong enough to win, and we have not mounted the necessary campaign for winning a decent minimum wage and extended benefits. "Black power" is a slogan directed primarily against liberals by those who once counted liberals among their closest friends. It is up to the liberal movement to prove that coalition and integration are better alternatives.

FEAR FRUSTRATION BACKLASH



The New Crisis in Civil Rights
by **BAYARD RUSTIN**

Introduction

The Jewish Labor Committee is making available the text of this speech by Bayard Rustin because we believe that it has special significance at this moment of crisis for the civil rights movement. Delivered at the December, 1966, meeting of the JLC's National Executive Committee, the address emphasizes the need for continuing unity in our struggle for equality of opportunity and equal rights for all of our people. We agree with this emphasis. It has always seemed obvious to us that unity is essential if progress toward our goals is to be accelerated.

Mr. Rustin states that equality of opportunity and equal rights can be achieved only with the eradication of the gross inequities now present in our economic system. This is, of course, the historic position of the labor movement, with which we are proud to associate ourselves. The American labor movement, since its formation, has been motivated by the belief that men, no matter what their race, religion or nationality, are crippled by poverty—that it subverts their dignity and cruelly limits their aspirations.

Of special interest to the Jewish Labor Committee is the unmistakable evidence that poverty breeds racism and other forms of bigotry, and that it contributes significantly to the social evils that now plague our cities.

For all of these reasons, the JLC believes, with Mr. Rustin, that the energies and idealism of the civil rights movement must now be channelled into a major effort to support the kind of wide-ranging program of economic and social reform embodied in the "Freedom Budget for All Americans."

We believe that only through such a program can freedom, dignity and security become the shared experience of all the American people. It is to this end that we in JLC have dedicated ourselves.

CHARLES S. ZIMMERMAN
Chairman, Administrative Committee
Jewish Labor Committee

This edited version of Bayard Rustin's address
first appeared in the March-April issue of *DISSENT*
Magazine, and is reprinted with permission.
Cover Design: Eugene Glaberman

Bayard Rustin

FEAR, FRUSTRATION, BACKLASH THE NEW CRISIS IN CIVIL RIGHTS

Let us recall the early days of our struggle when, in 1954, the Supreme Court made its historic decision. A great psychological ferment began to take place, which, as you know, was followed by a period of intense direct action.

It was a time of many sacrifices. People were killed. People were brutally mistreated and beaten. Girls had their hair chopped off and burning cigarettes put into their breasts and down their backs. There was a bombing in Birmingham. Millions of dollars are still tied up in fines and bail, some of which we will get back one day.

Although this was a period of great travail, it involved the simplest kind of social action. It was simple for a very good reason: the whole nation was stirred up about the least fundamental, though the highly important, issue of dignity. I say least fundamental because dignity cannot spring from civil rights bills. They will help; but finally it is the economic and social nature of our institutions which determines how much dignity people have, how much money they can control, and whether or not they share equitably in the national wealth.

This period of direct action was simple also because attention was focused basically on the desegregation of public accommodations—swimming pools, restaurants, hotels, buses, libraries. And direct action was possible without a single penny being spent by the federal government. Without a single penny being spent, without an act of Congress, it was possible to create sufficient dislocation around these institutions. And a few Negroes demonstrating could both destroy the old institutions and create new ones overnight.

If enough people rode and rode in the buses, finally the bus companies would capitulate. If enough people sat at counters and went back and were arrested again and again, then, finally, restaurants—long before the Civil Rights Bill was passed—would have to begin to integrate. Libraries were closed. So were swimming pools. Sooner or later the people—even white people in the South—became disgusted with not having

Bayard Rustin, organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, is executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

these institutions, and they were opened up. You will remember the irony of opening up the libraries, at first without chairs, so that everybody had to stand, and then, finally, bringing in the chairs.

So it was possible to destroy the old institutions and public accommodations and to build up new ones simultaneously. In Birmingham, even Dr. King himself did not quite know what he was doing when he called for an across-the-board settlement in housing, schools, jobs, police behavior, etc. But after Birmingham we were thrust by the successes of the civil rights movement into an extremely difficult period.

About two and a half years ago, I wrote an article in *Commentary* called "From Protest to Politics." I meant to point out that the movement was now faced with totally different problems, problems we had never been faced with before. Where demonstrations had destroyed and created new institutions, demonstrations now could only do one thing. They could merely call attention to the fact that something is wrong. You cannot demonstrate yourself into a new school system, full employment, or the destruction of slums. That is a *political* job, requiring allies, priorities, and an educational job among the masses of the American people.

But in the new period, for a time, "frustration politics" was to be the order of the day. Now one can dislike this, but to rail against it is not the way to do away with it. Ever since 1954 the great masses of Negroes in the North have found that all the legislation that was being passed was not helpful to them; they discovered, rather, that as the legislation was piled up, their situation did not become fundamentally altered. Since 1954 Negro unemployment has doubled. Unemployment among Negro youth is now three times as high as that of white youth. Unemployment among Negro young women and teen-age girls is several times what it is among whites. The ghettos are larger, with more rats, more roaches, more despair. More people are being driven off the farms in the South by machinery, piling into Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant. And the educational system has increasingly failed to prepare poor Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and other minority people to make a living in a society where automation and cybernation affect most grievously the poor, the unskilled, and the uneducated—breeding disillusionment and hopelessness.

This hopelessness has led to a series of unfortunate conditions, all of which can be labeled "frustration politics." Now this is about the way it goes—and I want to be very graphic here, because if we don't understand this, we understand nothing about what is happening. The young Negro says, "Obviously, as Stokely Carmichael says, if I have been beaten fifteen times, if I have been jailed twenty-eight times, if my

buddies were murdered in Mississippi, if I have paid fines of over \$8,000, if I have bail on me of over \$10,000, and we have made all these sacrifices, but the situation in housing, schools, and jobs gets worse and worse, then there is something wrong with our tactics. The hell with Dr. King and his nonviolence. It's wrong; it's not working."

And then he attacks these people *precisely in the order in which he depended upon them, in which he had faith in them*. To many young people, Dr. King is no longer the Moses. He is the man who promised, with whom they stood when they were treated brutally. And now they turn on him, because the objective situation gets worse.

Next, they say, "What's the matter with Phil Randolph? He's old now. Roy Wilkins is backward. Whitney Young is grabbing money." Who is right? Nobody can be right, because the objective situation is so bad. So they turn on the Jews. And that is precisely because they had faith that the Jews, who had known persecution, would continue to stand with them as they had from the beginning in this fight.

They say, "The Jews have power. They control the unions. They own the banks. They've got power. If they meant business, we wouldn't be in this condition. The hell with them too." Then they turn on the trade union movement. "If they really meant business," they say, "conditions wouldn't be this way." And then come the white liberals.

II

But let's remember that all whites except the police and the Jews have deserted the Negro ghetto. What can you expect, when the general attitude is to say, "The hell with all the white people! These conditions get worse and worse and they do nothing about it. They have the power, we do not. We need power." And so Negroes end up with the eloquent frustration called Black Power. Meaningless? No doubt; yet it answers a need. Stokely Carmichael knows the advantage he enjoys, knows he doesn't have to offer a social, economic or political program to get applause. He need only give vent to the despairing anger of the ghetto, and "triumph" over those of us who see no value in anger except as it inspires mobilization for change.

Now when everybody's deserted the ghetto except the Jewish merchants and the police—even if the police behaved like angels and if the Jewish merchants behaved like angels—they would automatically be turned on, for the very simple reason that you can always turn on those who are near you and with whom you do business and about whom you care. The young Negroes are not jumping on Wallace. They don't care about him. But they have a relationship with the police and the Jewish merchants. And the Jews and the police, for the next few years, are

going to take all the pressure, all the emotional confusion that many ghetto people feel about whites.

Is the answer, then, that Jews should desert the movement? Isaiah and Jeremiah made it very clear long ago that one is not a Jew because he declines to mix milk and meat in the same pot, or because he's circumcised, or because he follows the law of the Torah. One is a Jew because he stands for social righteousness, is opposed to injustice wherever it is, first of all in himself. That is what we blacks have learned from the Hebrew prophets.

Let's look at anti-Semitism in Russia, which I've discussed in several cities in this country. Even if every Jew in the country told me he didn't need my help, that he hated me, I would have to go on helping just the same. If I was told, "Get out of my way, roll over; this is the day of great Jewish power"—my answer would be simply, "You go straight to hell. I am not going to get out of the movement which I am dedicated to, the movement against injustice, just because right now you are behaving in a frustrated manner." And if every Jew told me to get out, I would still accept every invitation to go and speak about this. And if I didn't get invited, I would speak to people in buses and trains.

The frustration of the Negro community is almost impossible to describe. If we had a graph comparing and measuring the Negroes' aspirations in 1936 and 1966, you would discover that in 1936 Negroes wanted *this* much and the society was prepared to give them *that* much. In 1936 the distance between what Negroes wanted and what society was giving was very non-revolutionary—because there was a very short distance between aspirations and conditions.

Now I know that what this society, in 1966, is prepared to give has risen. And there *has* been great progress over the last thirty years. But that progress is meaningless to those who are trapped in the ghettos, simply because their aspirations have risen higher, up to the ceiling, making the gulf between real conditions and aspirations so vast as to be extremely radical, extremely dangerous.

To the question, "Has there been progress?" my answer is, "Yes, much progress." But this progress has absolutely no meaning for people who in their day-to-day lives are still overwhelmed by enormous problems, who find unemployment doubling and tripling, find the ghettos growing, the educational system not able to meet the needs of their children. That is the basic social and psychological problem we face.

Our society today aids and abets the frustration of a Stokely Carmichael and his followers. And these are not really radical young Negroes. Basically, to judge by their behavior, they belong to the most

conservative elements in this country. Because of their despair over not playing a role in real politics, they end up making an unconscious alliance with some of the worst elements in the country, those which helped elect Ronald Reagan Governor of California.

Their position in Chicago was, "Negroes, stay away from the polls. Senators Douglas and Percy both stink. Don't vote for either." They did not know they were forming political alliances with the forces that wanted to destroy the man who has done more than any other American to enact social legislation; but that's what they did. They went into California wearing "Boycott, Baby, Boycott" buttons all over the state, with hundreds of young Negroes dissuading people from getting to the polls. If I had turned to Stokely Carmichael and said to him, "What are you doing in alliance with these forces that represent the Birch Society and the conservative wing of the Republican party?" he would have said, "I am not in alliance with them. I detest them." But by keeping Negroes from the polls—out of his desperation and absence of hope that there can be movement in this society—he was in fact cooperating with the right-wing movie star and helping to elect him.

In Maryland, the same thing happened. There we were fighting against a man whose slogan was, "Your home is your castle," by which he meant, "Your home is your castle which Negroes are about to storm. Live in fear." In this situation we have a compounding factor to Negro frustration, and that is white economic fear.

The Freedom Budget for all Americans takes account of both these phenomena. It is addressed not merely to the Negro community, but equally to Negro frustration and white fear. In the United States any strategy and tactic that is not addressed both to Negroes and whites in their most desperate as well as in their most creative areas is a useless strategy, for we Negroes are only one tenth of the population.

Let us, therefore, examine the benighted people who attack King, who threw urine on nuns and called them "whores for niggers" as they marched in Chicago. Who are these people? It would be very simple to describe them as bigots and let it go at that. But it should be more profitable to analyze what I call white economic fear.

These people are buying homes in Cicero that cost \$25,000 but are only one-third paid for. Yesterday, they were Poles, Hungarians, and Italians who were in ghettos themselves. Now they are trying to leapfrog out. They are saving money to send two children to college, but the burden is great, and therefore the wife goes to work. The minute the wife goes to work, they find themselves not economically better off but worse, because now she must buy a car. So they are paying for two

cars. And they fear—if the husband were out of work for a few weeks, the whole economic structure they have built up would be laid waste. And with this fear, you get *the socialization and politicalization of prejudice*.

We will not get rid of prejudice by being nice or by merely passing legislation—but by re-organizing the social and economic order so that we reduce to an irreducible minimum both black frustration and white fear. For this we need an economic program. It is not enough to put up posters telling people to be nice. People will not be nice in situations that encourage being unnice. All of God's children would be charming people if we could contain them within a social order that would make it possible for the best to be brought out of them.

But our economic order makes it possible for the worst to be brought out of people. I'll give you two illustrations. Three days ago, a Negro boy with no talent whatever came to see me for a job. I called one of my friends at the ILGWU who almost always will try to find work for these boys.

Now this young fellow came in and he said to me, "Mr. Rustin, what kind of work is this you're getting me?" I told him, "I don't know; but you are just going to have to go to work. You don't have any skills, and if you stay there for three or four months, maybe I can get you something later where there's some possibility of being upgraded." The teacher's union has taken in about eight or ten boys; they've given them skills to run office machines and once one is graduated, I try to put another one in his place.

I told the boy about this. He looked at me and he said, "No. I will not take a nigger job. I would rather shoot pool in the poolroom and sell numbers on the street before ever again I'll take a nigger job." Now you may say to me, "That's a terrible situation." But part of the revolt of the Negro masses has been the rejection of jobs which this society has for 250 years said are jobs for Negroes only—cleaning toilets, waiting on table, pushing carts through the garment district. More and more, these youngsters will not do that kind of work.

Now if somebody wanted to give me a million dollars to set up classes for these boys, I wouldn't do it, because it would be wasting their money. We have to find young Negroes, who are in the throes of discovering who they are, work that is well paid, and work that has a future. Otherwise many of them will do nothing.

The Freedom Budget attempts to do for the poor today what this society did in the past for the poor who came from Europe to America. That the Jews and the Hungarians and the poor Irish and the Italians

lifted themselves up by their bootstraps is sheer mythology. God knows, they had to work long, hard hours in sweatshops, and under terrible conditions. But since the dawn of American history this society has provided steps along which the poor could move, if they wanted to move. But now most of those steps no longer exist and are not accessible to the American Negro. What the Freedom Budget does is to try to establish a new series of steps for our time.

III

Once there was free land, and millions of poor got a start in this country because this society provided them with free land. It will never do that for the poor today. Once this society provided for the poor, no matter how bestially it treated them, because it was prepared and eager to buy their muscle power. I maintain that an East European Jew who came here in 1900 was not half so prepared to make it in this society as the average uneducated, illiterate Negro out of Mississippi. This Negro, after all, knows something of American culture, and the language of the land is his own.

Then what is the difference? The difference is, the minute that East European Jew got off Ellis Island, this society was ready to buy his muscle power. No head start was needed for him, no special training, no talk of upgrading. Society just bought his muscle power. Today the situation is different for the great masses of Negroes and poor whites. This society is buying less and less muscle power, and people must have a high degree of skill to find work.

Once society was prepared to help the great masses of poor immigrants if only by purchasing their muscle power. And the trade union movement was growing and developing. It therefore could act as an umbrella against extreme capitalism and government, protecting the rights of the workers and uplifting them economically. Today, the trade union movement is not growing at a comparable rate in this country.

The trade unions today cannot afford economically to organize many of the people who need most to be organized. In the old days, it was not merely that Jews were intelligent and had a family life. I maintain that many Jews got from the lower East Side to West End Avenue precisely because the Hatters were being formed and the Amalgamated and the ILGWU, and that the union movement offered the immigrants tremendous protection and possibility of growth.

Another step is no longer available. Somebody's always telling me about how his grandfather had a little shop, and he sold candy and cigars, and the kids lived with the mother in the back. Then, a few

years later, he moved upstairs, and then he could have the shop downstairs and the two rooms for the family upstairs; and this goes on and on until he owns Macy's!

But today the failure rate of small businesses is astronomical. Small family retail stores are being squeezed out by the big chain stores, by big business. The corner grocer cannot compete, in the quality or prices of his goods, with A & P. He ends up, ironically, exploiting the people in his own neighborhood. And to get into the larger establishments, you must already have managerial or sales skills.

Today Mr. Randolph is asking this country to provide a series of steps over which people can move out of poverty. It is all there for you to see in the Freedom Budget: full employment, a \$2.00 minimum wage, redefinition of work, guaranteed income for those who cannot or should not work, and a new kind of public work—in the building of things that are needed for us all.

The Budget suggests the examination and expansion of the whole area of public services and redefinition of our concept of "work." The Freedom Budget wants to make very clear, we are not taking the position which some people have taken. We call for a guaranteed annual income as a supplement to full employment, not as a substitute for it. We do not see the abolition of work on the immediate horizon. Indeed, we believe that if this nation seriously undertakes to meet our vast unmet social needs, we will find that there is plenty of work to be done. Millions of new jobs would be created. Instead of sending the unemployed slum dweller a check every month, why not give him a job rebuilding his neighborhood?

In Western society a man's dignity springs, fundamentally, from his part in the production of goods and services. Man's work must relate him to the production of goods and services, and therefore we need a redefinition of the concept of work, to make full employment possible.

The Freedom Budget will affect us all, because it calls for putting millions of people back to work, for cleaning up the rivers which are filthy, and cleaning the air which is filthy. There is a need for new schools, new homes. People can be put to work tearing down slums and building new homes. Men could be put to work, without great skills, doing these things. And these things would not merely benefit the poor but would benefit all of us.

These economic steps will alleviate both white fear and Negro frustration. They will make this nation a more beautiful place to live in, with justice in our streets.

JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE

ATRAN CENTER FOR JEWISH CULTURE
25 East 78th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021

ADOLPH HELD <i>President</i>	CHARLES S. ZIMMERMAN <i>Chairman,</i>
JACOB T. ZUKERMAN <i>1st Vice President</i>	<i>Administrative Committee</i>
JACOB CLAYMAN <i>2nd Vice President</i>	CHARLES COGEN <i>Secretary</i>
DAVID DUBINSKY <i>Treasurer</i>	BENJAMIN TABACHINSKY <i>Executive Secretary</i>
	EMANUEL MURAVCHIK <i>National Director</i>

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

IRVING ABRAMS	JOSEPH GUTGOLD	GEORGE RUBIN
JACK ACKIRON	PEARL HALPERN	MICHAEL RUBINSTEIN
MAX ALEXANDER	LOUIS HENDIN	ELEANOR SCHACHNER
SHELLEY APPLETON	JULIUS HOCHMAN	DAVID SCHACTER
KALMAN ARANOWITZ	MANUEL L. HOFFMAN	LEON SCHACHTER
DAVID ASHE	LOUIS HOLLANDER	ARTHUR SCHECHTER
ISIDORE AXELROD	DANIEL IFSHIN	EMANUEL SCHERER
BERNARD BACKER	MORRIS IUSHEWITZ	EMIL SCHLESINGER
ALEX BAIL	JOEL JACOBSON	JOSEPH SCHLOSSBERG
IRVING BARSHOP	EPHIM JESHURIN	EDWARD SCHNEIDER
HYMAN BASS	HYMAN KAPLAN	MATTHEW SCHOENWALD
HAROLD BAUMAN	KALMAN KAPLANSKY	JACOB SCHLITT
BORIS BELL	JOSEPH KESSLER	HAROLD SCHWARTZ
W. B. BELL	WALTER KIRSCHENBAUM	HENRY SCHWARTZ
HARRY BERGER	SHMARYA KLEINMAN	JOSEPH SCHWARTZ
PAUL BERNICK	SOPHIE KOSACK	ROBERT SEGAL
MORRIS BIALIS	MORRIS KOVLER	BERNARD SHANE
MAX BLOOM	ED KRAMER	JOSEPH SHANE
MORRIS BLUMENREICH	PHILIP KRAMER	ALBERT SHANKER
JULIUS BORENSTEIN	CHARLES KREINDLER	PHILIP SHAPIRO
SOL BRANDZEL	ISRAEL KUGLER	JACOB SHEINKMAN
ISRAEL BRESLOW	AL LANDSMAN	EDWIN SHIFRIN
MAY BROMBERG	HARRY LAUTMAN	MAURICE SILCOFF
IRVING BYKOFKY	ARTHUR LERMER	SAMUEL SILVERBERG
JULIUS A. CHERNIACK	ABRAHAM LEFF	HARRY SIMON
JACOB CELEMENSKY	LEON LEVENSON	DONALD SLAIMAN
HERSCHEL CHANIN	AARON LEVENSTEIN	ALFRED SMOKE
ALVIN CHENKIN	JAMES LIPSIG	BEN STAHL
MARTIN L. COHEN	AL LOEWENTHAL	WILLIAM STARK
GILBERT CORNFELD	PHILIP LUBLINER	ISIDORE STENZOR
HARRY DENERSTEIN	MICHAEL MANN	LEON STERN
JOSEPH DORFMAN	PAUL MASLOW	WILLIAM STERN
JACK DUBNO	VLADKA MEED	SOL STETIN
DOROTHY DWORKIN	TOVYA MEISEL	ABRAM STOLAR
ECHEAL EBERIL	HENOCH MENDELSUND	LOUIS STULBERG
JACOB J. EDELMAN	JOSEPH MERANZE	IRWIN SUALL
MOE FALIKMAN	MICHEL J. MERLIN	BESSIE THOMASHOW
MAX FEDERMAN	JACK MERMELL	BESS TOPOLSKY
MURRAY FINLEY	SAMUEL MILMAN	JOSEPH TUVIM
HARRY FISHER	ISAIAH MINKOFF	JUDAH TYBERG
JOSHUA FOGEL	NATHANIEL M. MINKOFF	GUS TYLER
BENJAMIN GEBINER	JOSEPH MLOTEK	EUGENE VICTOR
MARTIN GERBER	BEN NAUMOFF	SIMON WEBER
HARRY GERSH	ARTHUR NUNBERG	MEYER WEINTRAUB
HARRY GIDANSKY	HAROLD OSTROFF	SAMUEL WEISS
DAVID GINGOLD	SAMUEL OTTO	SAM WEISBERG
MAX GLEIBERMAN	BEN PARKER	LOUIS WEITZ
IKE GOLD	SAM PAULL	MARY LEVIN WEXLER
I. H. GOLDBERG	NAT PESKIN	NAT WINDMAN
PAUL L. GOODMAN	NATHAN POGAN	MAX WOHL
MORRIS GOLDOWSKY	MORRIS POLIN	JOSEPH WOLMAN
IRVING GORDON	EDITH POTTER	WILLIAM WOLPERT
VICTOR GOTBAUM	JACK RADER	JERRY WURF
JOSEPH B. GREENFIELD	ALEX ROSE	JOSEPH ZACHARIAS
MOSHE GRINBAUM	J. MENACHEM ROSEN	HARRY ZBGAS
MURRAY GROSS	WILLIAM ROSS	LOUIS ZINDERMAN
HERSHELL GRUNSTEIN	EDWARD ROVNER	NORMAN ZUKOWSKY
	JACK RUBENSTEIN	

About JLC...

The Jewish Labor Committee is a social action organization representing 500,000 Jewish trade unionists and liberals. Since its founding in 1934, JLC has fought all forms of bigotry and inequality. Whether the battle has been against anti-Semitism, against urban and rural poverty and the degrading quality of life in our urban centers, for health care for aged citizens, or against discrimination North and South, JLC has been an important force for 30 years in the continuing struggle for social justice and economic democracy. JLC has regional offices in fourteen cities in the United States and Canada. Through its National Trade Union Council for Human Rights, JLC works with labor to build and strengthen the liberal-labor-minorities coalition.

JLC members receive the bi-monthly *JLC News* and an opportunity to participate in our action, education, and cultural programs.

Clip and mail to: JLC, 25 East 78 Street, New York, N.Y. 10021.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State..... Zip Code.....

☐ Please send me more information about JLC.

☐ I would like to join JLC; enclosed is my \$5 annual membership fee.

(Note: All contributions to JLC are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to Jewish Labor Committee.)



Civil Rights at the Crossroads

by Bayard Rustin

The nation has come through the first phase of a peaceful, democratic revolution. There is no other way to describe the sweeping changes won by the civil rights movement on the American scene in the last decade.

But now, having made historic progress, "the move-

BAYARD RUSTIN, a strategist of the civil rights movement and an organizer of the March on Washington, is on the Board of Directors of the League for Industrial Democracy. He also is Executive Director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the research foundation.



ment" is at a crossroads. One road leads to the fulfillment of our national ideals—the achievement of complete racial equality and justice in every aspect of our common life. The other road leads to failure and despair, frustration and strife. For at this very time, before the battle is half over, there are voices in Cicero—and even in the U.S. Senate—that call upon us to re-examine our fundamental commitments to equality; and there are other voices—in Watts and Harlem—proclaiming that these commitments were false and hypocritical to begin with. Where do we go from here—forward or backward?

Society rarely goes backward. It may fail to move forward, leaving problems unsolved and festering, courting new perils in the future. But once lived, the past cannot be relived.

With dignity and determination, Negroes and their white allies have left a permanent mark on the nation's landscape. Thanks to the courage of thousands of young people, acting in the best American tradition, the barriers of segregation were smashed in lunchcounters, hotels, restaurants and other public accommodations. Thanks to the Freedom Riders, and responsive legislative action, the ban on segregation in interstate travel became the practice as well as the law of the land. And, thanks to a multiplicity of pressures and actions, laws have been passed against discrimination in employment, against federal aid to segregated institutions and, perhaps most important, against disfranchisement of Negroes at the voting polls.

Throughout all of this, the Negro learned what the trade unions had learned before—that it takes mass action to get Congress, the Executive and other instruments of lawful power to act. And precisely because our gains have been won by supreme sacrifice, perseverance, sweat and tears, the overwhelming majority of the Negro community is proud of them—just as good trade unionists are proud of the unions they have built, brick by brick, and the advances they have made through countless struggles.

And when a small minority denounces our victories as empty and meaningless, we react the same way a good labor man would to the worker who stands up at a union meeting and says: "The union hasn't done

enough for me! What good is it?" The answer is: "Sure, not enough has been done—far from it. But we don't get to the roof by tearing down the foundation. We don't make further progress by destroying what we have built."

Take, for example, the Voting Rights Act of 1965. With all of its inadequacies in enforcement—and many improvements are necessary—the fact is that since the passage of this Act, 1,874,000 Negroes have been added to the voting rolls in the southern states covered by the Act, for a total at present of 2,969,392. True, hundreds of thousands of Negroes of voting age have yet to be enrolled and many still face harassment and intimidation; but these problems are neither clarified nor overcome by pooh-poohing the positive results of the Act, which have begun to be felt in Atlanta, Birmingham and other parts of the South. This is a step toward what President Johnson has called "democratic power"—which by definition means the realization of the Negro's full participation in the political process.

Yet, if such substantial progress has been made, why are our cities torn by riots, why the violent rhetoric of "black power"; why the ugly "white backlash"?

To explain this apparent contradiction, we must remember that the Negro has suffered discrimination and exploitation on two counts: color and class. Negroes are not only dark-skinned (hence a more visible target for persistent discrimination than other minority groups); they are also poor. About 50 percent of all the Negro families in America have incomes of less than \$4,000 a year! They are poor not only in income but in housing, education, medical care and other social services enjoyed by most Americans.

Like the AFL-CIO, many of us foresaw that the removal of color barriers was not enough, that unless the fundamental social and economic problems besetting the Negro were solved, our movement, and the nation, would be in deep trouble. In early 1964, I wrote:

"The very decade which has witnessed the decline of legal Jim Crow has also seen the rise of de facto segregation in our most fundamental socio-economic institutions. More Negroes are unemployed today than



in 1954 and the unemployment gap between the races is wider. The median income of Negroes has dropped from 57 percent to 54 percent of whites. . . . More Negroes attend de facto segregated schools today than when the Supreme Court handed down its famous decision. . . . And behind this is the continuing growth of racial slums, spreading over our central cities and trapping Negro youth in an unimaginable demoralization . . . these are the facts of life which generate frustration in the Negro community and challenge the civil rights movement."

The facts of life have not basically changed since these words were written. Government statistics show, for example, that despite the overall drop in unemployment, joblessness among Negro youth (male) has actually risen in the last year. Their unemployment rate in Watts, Harlem and other ghettos is at depression levels and worse.

To anticipate, as so many young Negroes have, that the civil rights revolution would usher in a new day of dignity and status, a place in the sun, only to find that the daily conditions of life in the ghetto remain cruelly the same—this is a bitter experience. It gives rise to a desperate politics of frustration, whose ultimate expression is the slogan "black power."

Behind "black power" is the belief that cooperation between Negroes and white liberals has failed, that whites cannot be trusted, that integration is either meaningless or a dilution of the Negro's potential militancy. Negroes, the advocates of this philosophy argue, must look only to themselves for their own salvation.

Now, of course, every group of people, to win freedom, must fight for itself. The Negro can no more expect his rights to be handed to him than the labor movement could rely on the paternal benevolence of management. But, in struggling for its rights against management, the labor movement sought the support of other segments of society, including government, from which it won protective legislation.

To anyone who knows history, it is clear that "black power," for all its verbal militancy and violent rhetoric, is a step toward conservatism, a retreat from

the battle. It goes back to the nadir of the Negro's struggle, to the days of Booker T. Washington, who advised Negroes to forget political and social equality and to "cast down your bucket where you are." It is a withdrawal back into the ghettos, wounded and bitter, there to develop isolated enclaves of Negro power.

It is not surprising that "black power" has been endorsed by such rightwing luminaries as Barry Goldwater and William Buckley. For they understand, perhaps better than its Negro spokesmen, that this strategy makes no real demand on the rest of society. It lets white people off the hook; it poses no challenge to corporate wealth; it requires no changes of our political institutions; it leaves segregated housing intact; it demands no massive social investments in schools, hospitals and so forth.

Thus "black power," the politics of frustration, is not a program but a slogan, not a step forward but a retreat, not a confrontation but a "cop-out." Unfortunately, it must be said, this cop-out is duplicated by many white liberals who felt comfortable in the civil rights movement in the earlier days, when simple color barriers were the target and the moral issues seemed clear-cut, but who are now confused or overwhelmed by the complex social and economic problems that block the road to full equality. *Their* retreat is all the more tragic because it comes in the midst of a growing white backlash, intensified by the riots and the rhetoric of black power and encompassing many working class and lower-middle class whites who are ensnared in many of the same problems that face the Negro.

It is difficult for a Negro to have any sympathy for those white people of Cicero who, their faces filled with hate, attacked peaceful Negroes demonstrating for open housing. Yet these whites have only barely made it themselves; they are only a few years removed from the hard struggle for a decent home, in an economy where decent, modestly-priced housing is hard to come by. It is a sad commentary upon our society that their struggle against want and scarcity has brought out the ugliest traits of selfishness, tenacious greed and fanatical survivalism.

But this is an old story in our "melting pot" society. Those who have just "made it" the hard way, desper-



ately fearful of sliding back, step on the fingers of those struggling up the ladder beneath them. Haunted by insecurity, the haves made scapegoats of the have-nots.

And so, a vicious cycle is set in motion. Failing to deal with the social and economic roadblocks to equality, we stoke the fires of frustration in the ghettos; violent riots and cries of "black power" in turn feed a white backlash, which makes constructive solutions to the problems of blacks *and* whites more difficult. Finally, the backlash only confirms Negro isolationists' hostility to white America.

We are indeed at the crossroad. For if this cycle is not broken, it will propel us all into a racial nightmare. How do we break it?

On June 2nd, 1966, at the White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights," AFL-CIO Vice-President A. Philip Randolph, who was honorary chairman of the event, announced that he would meet with prominent economists, social scientists and other experts to draw up a "Freedom Budget for All Americans." Now completed, this historic proposal calls upon the federal government, in cooperation with the private sector of the economy, to carry out a massive \$100 billion program to abolish poverty by 1975.

This Budget is not for the Negro alone. It is for all the poor—75 percent of whom are white. And, in the largest sense, it is for all Americans because all of us are affected—by the persistence of poverty—in the conditions of our neighborhoods and schools, in our tax rates and public services, in the quality of our lives. The Freedom Budget recognizes that the Negro can make the most progress when society as a whole is advancing toward economic democracy.

Recognizing that fully 40 percent of U.S. poverty results from excessive unemployment, the Freedom Budget sets top priority upon achieving full employment and full production by early 1968. And, since an additional 20 percent of our poverty problem is due to low wages, the Budget demands rapid advance toward a federal minimum wage of \$2 an hour.

Toward these ends, the federal government—which alone has the resources—must sponsor massive job-creating activities. This is an enormous task, for it is estimated that achieving full employment may en-

tail creation of a gross total of 22 to 27 million new jobs by 1975.

But the Freedom Budget demonstrates that these jobs can be created if the nation will turn not only its attention but its tremendous resources to its crying social needs. Foremost among these is the removal of the slum ghettos which infect our cities. It is estimated that in our metropolitan centers, 60 percent of renting families with income under \$3,000 live in unsound housing. Indeed, throughout the country, at least 20 percent of all Americans are ill-housed.

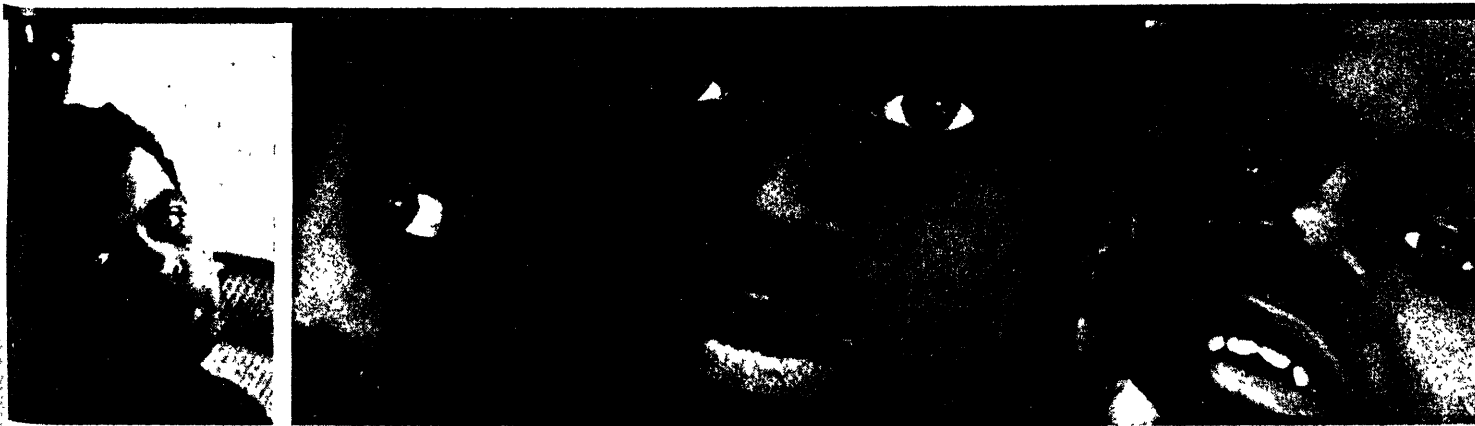
Replacing slums is an *end* in itself because substandard housing is both a cause and by-product of poverty. But it is also a *means* toward full employment, for a rapid expansion of home construction can contribute perhaps half of the 22 to 27 million new jobs we need by 1975.

We have other pressing needs as well. In the field of education, we need a hundred thousand new classrooms a year for the next six years and an equal number of new teachers. There are now at least 200,000 young people who are ready for college but lack the means; and our institutions of higher learning lack the facilities and personnel to absorb the doubling of the student enrollment between 1963 and 1975.

Outlays for hospital construction must be doubled in the next ten years merely to keep pace with the population growth. By 1975 we must increase the number of physician graduates by 50 percent and double the number of dentist graduates—just to maintain present unsatisfactory ratios of health personnel to population.

These are but a sampling of our needs. They cannot be met in a piecemeal, harum-scarum way. They cannot be left to the market system or to the private sector. The federal government must take the lead in formulating a coherent national economic policy which quantifies our needs and the resources to meet them, and which matches both in a system of priorities.

There are those who will argue that, because of the war in Viet Nam, we cannot afford to pursue this investment in social justice at home. These backsliders and reactionaries in patriotic dress hope we will



forget that they opposed such a program even before the escalation of the war. In any case, the fact is that the war accounts for less than 3 percent of our gross national product.

If the principles of the Freedom Budget are put into effect, then, as a consequence of the resulting full employment and full production, we can expect the gross national product to rise from \$663 billion in 1965 to about \$1,120 billion by 1975.

This, the wealthiest nation in human history, poised on the threshold of still greater abundance, has not lacked the resources for the abolition of poverty and social injustice. We have lacked the will, the sense of urgency. We have let our economy drift rather than harness it to humane purposes. We have viewed poverty as an isolated phenomenon and focused on the personal characteristics of its victims. We have, above all, sought to solve the problem through uncoordinated, piecemeal programs aimed at this or that head of the many-headed monster; chop one off and another appears in its place.

Of all the institutions in America, the labor movement has been foremost in recognizing the limitations of this approach. While supporting the specialized anti-poverty programs, it has continued to insist upon the federal government's responsibility to live up to the Employment Act of 1946, to raise minimum wages and expand coverage to the working poor, to build new housing, to sponsor public works, to outlaw "right-to-work" laws. It did so even though many of these demands were of immediate benefit less to union members than to the unorganized working poor.

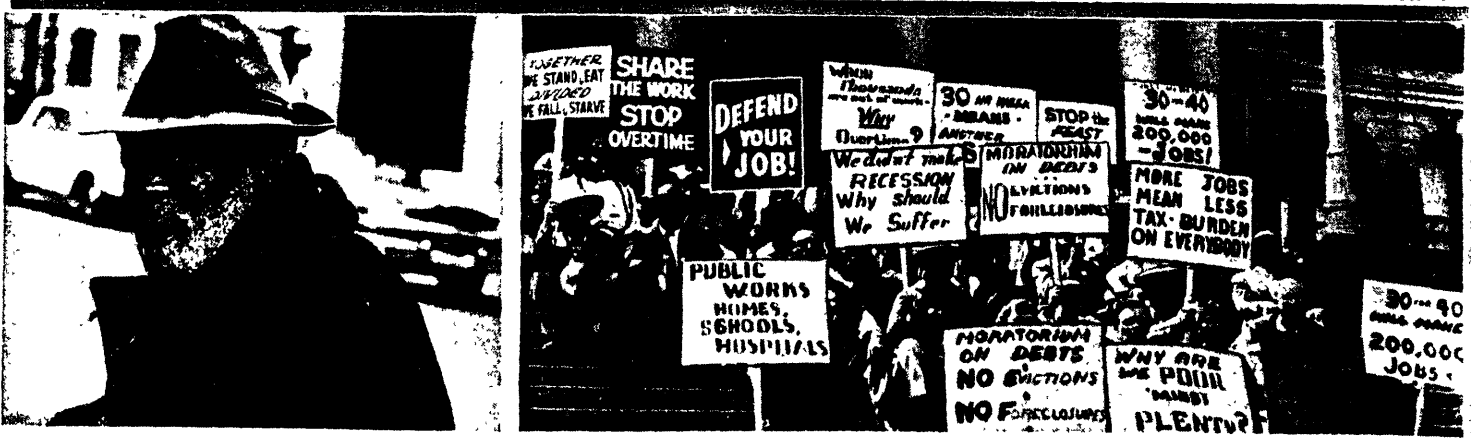
The Negro has come to a similar recognition. He has seen how difficult it is to integrate schools when our housing is segregated. He sees how difficult it is to escape the racial ghetto when decent housing is in short supply and when his income is inadequate to purchase what is available. And he sees how difficult it is for his children to hope for better jobs and income in a technologically advancing economy when they come from inferior, segregated schools. Here again, a vicious cycle. Here again, the crossroads.

Having knocked their heads against brick walls, some Negroes will decide they have had it; they will

go the road of "black power," comforted by its militant rhetoric, untroubled by its emptiness of program.

But the great majority of the civil rights movement will press forward, seeking allies against great odds. In their search, they will remember the support of the AFL-CIO in winning the civil rights legislative victories of the last few years. And when they contemplate the obstacles ahead, they will remember that both the repeal of Taft-Hartley's Section 14(b) and the 1966 civil rights bill, though backed by majorities in the Senate, were defeated by filibusters launched by the reactionary coalition of southern Democrats and conservative Republicans. Against that coalition, our common enemy, we need to strengthen the coalition of Negroes, labor and liberals in the interest of a new social program for America.

The alternative is social chaos.



THE CHALLENGE FACING AMERICA

By BAYARD RUSTIN

IT IS THE END of that season in American life again when many people, mostly whites, seem suddenly aware that they live in a country plagued by racial tensions. It wouldn't be true to say they were not aware of it all along, since it would be impossible for anyone to spend a week, let alone a lifetime, in this society and not be. But they certainly act as if it were a surprising discovery, as if racial tension were a nuisance created exclusively by lawless Negroes, without reason or justification.

One might as well make some obvious points right away. Though Negroes may be the chief barometers of race tension in our society, they are not the chief authors of it, and they certainly are not the ones who have done most to nourish it. The credit for that belongs to white Americans. It is they who sowed the seed of bitterness during slavery and it is they who have refused ever since to restore the full human rights and dignity of Negroes.

I am not ignoring the millions of white Americans who have strongly and consistently supported the restoration of full dignity for black Americans. But they have been, and remain, a small minority. And in spite of their efforts, and in spite of our own, the essential quality of American life, so far as Negroes are concerned, remains one of injustice and indignity.

The majority of white Americans do not seem aware of how deep a responsibility they share in the making and the future breaking of these tensions. One has only to look at the way they respond when the centuries of Negro frustration boils over occasionally into one form of violent behavior or another. From Reconstruction, up through the modern protest movement, right up to the current period of urban disorder, white society has been more quick to invoke the police power than the remedy of social program.

The most recent example of this was the derision and laughter with which our congressmen greeted proposals for a rat eradication program in our ghettos. While they were laughing, the rats were still biting Negro babies and the anger of the black ghettos was still mounting. This reflected a sickness of spirit and an appalling insensitivity to the degrading conditions in which people live. On the other hand, our lawmakers rushed vigorously to the support of a riot bill aimed specifically at suppressing Negroes.

Nor do the majority of Amer-

icans seem aware of how high a place violence occupies in the American spirit. It is the same spirit that raped Africa and brought millions of humans here in chains; that took land away from the Indians by subterfuge, force, and treaties that were not honored; that made the gunman a hero of the national ethos and the national virility; that eradicated the beautiful old animals from the plains; that tolerated gangsterism as a national way of life; that gave birth to organizations like the KKK—a white protestant group dedicated to God and country but which perpetrated the most unspeakable atrocities against human beings with black skins. While, in the context, this was a destructive statement, this is precisely what Rap Brown meant when he reminded the country that violence was as American as cherry pie.

Not only is the society built on violence, but it also, for those purposes it deems to be in the white interest, tolerates violence. This is one of the distinctive marks of the national character. Further, in the face of the unjust social conditions that prevail among Negroes, it has established a framework within which a number of young Negroes respond violently to frustration. This is something the society should not ignore in judging the behavior of young Negroes.

But it does. The tendency is still to condemn Negro violence while ignoring the conditions that lead to Negro violence and while ignoring, as well, the essential violence of the American spirit. A response of this nature implies clearly that in the eyes of the majority of the society Negroes are the villains rather than the victims, by and large, of American race tensions. It is a response, in other words, that rejects a belief both in the Negro's humanity and in his rights of equal citizenship. It denies white American complicity in the degrading conditions in which Negroes live, and it implies an unwillingness to join in any meaningful attack upon these problems.

Of course, particularly when criticizing the role of the national government in all of this, no one as closely associated with civil rights activities as I have been can ignore the fact that especially over the last six or seven years the executive branch of the federal government has moved with vigor and concern against some of the historic roadblocks to Negro freedom. Yet, as commendable as have been the efforts of President Kennedy and those of President Johnson (before he gave highest priority to the

problems of the Vietnamese), no assault has yet been made on the economic problems of Negro life massive enough to make a crucial difference. Not a small part of the reason for this is that, in the area of domestic social legislation, there has been a gap between the will of the Chief Executive and the will of the Congress.

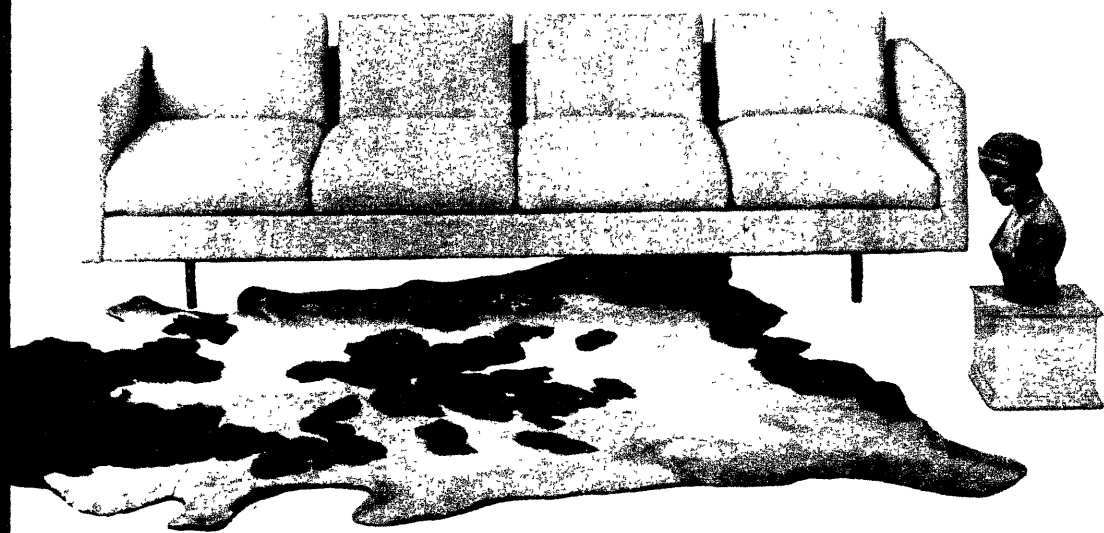
In any event, after more than a century of promise, Negroes

Continued on page 7



This article by civil rights leader Bayard Rustin (above) is the fourth in a series by prominent Americans on the Condition of the American Spirit. In future issues, the Sunday Herald Traveler Magazine will carry articles on the subject by historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and novelist Saul Bellow.

ALPERT thinks sitting should be a comfortable experience.



soft-sitting designs by Milo Baughman constructed for carefree usage!

AND bedrooms should be both attractive and functional

NOW

is your chance
to "pick up"
many "finds"
from these
world-mix
collections

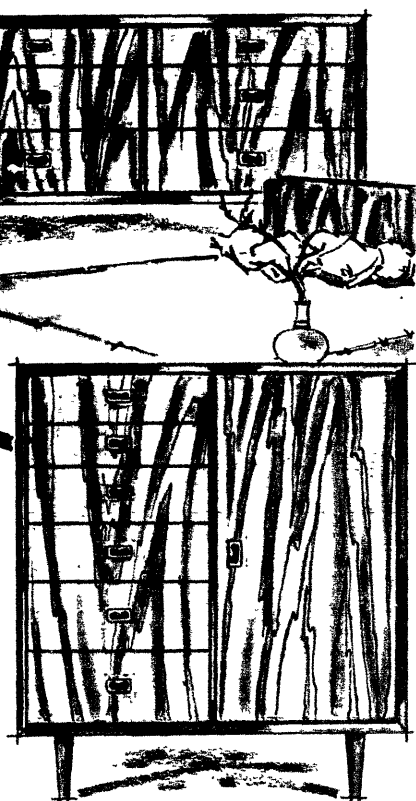
PRE-INVENTORY
Reductions of
10% to **30%** to 60%

Alpert

NATICK on Rte. 9 . . . 625 Worcester Pike
Open Every Evening Till 9 . . . (Sat. Till 6)
and . . .
JAMAICA PLAIN at 301 Centre St.
Mon., Wed., Fri. till 9, Tues., Thurs., Sat. till 6
Revolving Charge Accts. and Budget

TEAK and
ROSEWOOD
BEDROOMS
(and Dining
Rooms, too)
made in
DENMARK

finest of
designs,
craft-work,
built-in
utility



Continued from page 15

are still not free, and therefore one can reasonably and rightfully indict a century of indifference and injustice without detracting from the efforts of two of the more progressive and socially concerned presidencies in this century.

And yet, though it is not a pleasure to admit it, America itself has been lucky in the insistency of the Negro's assault upon racial prejudice and tension. This assault, from Reconstruction to the present time, has been enormously more beneficial to America than to the Negro himself.

Especially since the turn of the century, the Negro, in constant and often lonely political motion, has kept American democracy alert and flexible. By his challenge of racial codes throughout the country, segregated education and public facilities, and jim crow voting practices, etc., the Negro has not only kept our democracy from settling down into smugness and atrophying into racist and other kinds of reaction, but has also given it another chance to realize itself more justly in the lives of its citizens and more attractively in the eyes of the world. This revolutionary process goes on, and it is one that I have no doubt will be ultimately successful.

But that is not all. The Negro struggle awakened and energized a whole new generation of American students, creating in them a new sense of idealism, a new awareness of their relationship to the politics of their time, and a new concern for the state of their republic. These young people threw themselves vigorously into the civil rights struggle in the North and in the South, helped abolish the last vestiges of McCarthyism on the American campus, strengthened the peace movement, and brought critical intelligence to bear on the conduct of American foreign policy.

Our struggle went on to revitalize the American liberal conscience, providing it with a resonant domestic issue at a time when foreign policy seemed to offer it the only meaningful arena for the expression of its civilized concerns. The renewed concern with the problems of poverty was a direct result of the sustained Negro drive for a decent life, and therefore the war on poverty, for blacks and for whites, as inadequate as it is, must be counted as one of the genuine contributions of the Negro struggle to the broader American social revolution.

By no means least, the Negro struggle exposed a variety of political and racial bigotries which for a long time had remained hidden behind the facade of our pious democratic rhetoric. By showing them up, the Negro movement left no doubt as to which of our groupings were working firmly within the tradition of democratic principles, and which of them were simply exploiting, for their own dark designs, the protection offered by these principles.

As we must see, many of

these efforts deeply affected and, in some respects, even changed the face of American life. But much of the good that America derived from the black struggle has not been translated proportionately in Negro life, particularly the lives of those Negroes left out of the civil rights gains, those left in the slums of our big cities, those stranded without money and without food in the rural areas, and those left behind by the technological and automotive revolution. Even now, while the country is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a day for each Vietnam killed, it is spending no more than \$50 a year per person in the war on poverty.

So the stark conditions of the Negro underclass remain virtually unchanged. Unemployment among Negro teenagers is triple that of whites; unemployment among Negro adults is double that of whites; the median income gap between Negro and white has widened; there are more Negroes in segregated classrooms now than there were before 1954; the slums have grown more intolerable, and show no immediate signs of improving.

All of this increases the tensions in American life. Indeed, it is scarcely surprising that today more and more young Negroes in the urban underclass are becoming convinced that a violent confrontation with white society is both necessary and inevitable. After doing more in recent years than any other native American group to make American democracy realize itself, many young Negroes are now on the verge of losing all faith in democracy.

It is at this point that we begin to see some of the negative effects that the Negro's response to injustice can have upon the society. I am speaking, of course, of the supermilitancy, looting, rioting, and burning in which black despair is now being expressed. Given the peculiar way in which the white society tends to respond to Negro violence, activities such as we witnessed last summer could well push the races further apart and risk the possibility of a militant racial confrontation in America. Specifically, these activities could create a climate in which the fears and passions of whites and blacks could be organized and politicalized by demagogues and opportunists; and a situation could well come about in which the whites opt once and for all out of any responsibility for social progress and redress for the society's non-whites.

Ultimately, the present situation could well set the country upon a course of political and racial repression that could end for many years to come the American dream of a civilized multi-racial relationship.

But the opportunities for avoiding such a future are equal to the dangers that such a future poses. The current circumstances present a challenge to the growth of a courageous national leadership and

the development of a national will dedicated to the eradication of the conditions that threaten to tear society apart. The development of this leadership and this will depends upon a number of things. But chiefly it depends on the understanding and acceptance of the uses of social planning and that there is nothing necessarily un-American in such planning.

In any event, the continued degradation of the Negro's social and economic life is not going to be reversed without conscious social planning. The health and education of Negro children are not going to be radically improved without social planning. And millions of unskilled, unemployed, and under-employed men are not going to be put back to work or assured of a steady income without social planning.

Such planning, of course, must be democratic in nature. It must also be one of the objectives of such planning to recognize the need for public programs and guaranteed incomes, for it is no longer possible for private enterprise to, on its own, put the vast majority of workers in this country back to work: the government will have to serve as what has

been called "the employer of last resort."

But none of this will be possible without the leadership and the will. And the leadership and the will will not be possible as long as our society continues to be plagued with the self-delusion of security. This is perhaps one of the greatest dangers we face as people, for pursuit of individual security, while ignoring the need of it in the lives of other people, can lead to the death both of social concern and the soul of leadership.

Moreover, I believe there is only one kind of genuine security, and that is the realistic confrontation of insecurity both within and around us. Our society as it exists today is profoundly insecure, for whites as well as for blacks, and there will be no exit for any of us until we voluntarily confront the fact of its existence and develop out of that confrontation a census of will and determination to create a mutual security for all.

It is not as difficult a job as it might seem. It requires only the courage to concede each man's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

(C) 1967, Newsday, Inc.

MINIATURES
1240 BOYLSTON ST.
CHESTNUT HILL
Opposite Shopping Center



Going South?

Woven damask rayon and cotton Tropical print, A-line dress with six tiny velvet bows. Pink or green. 6 to 18.

not included **\$30**

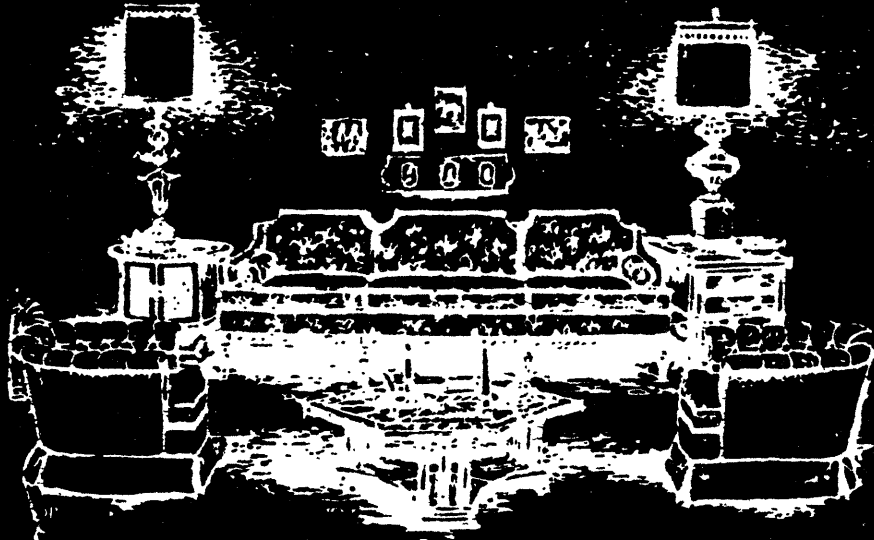
Mail order or call RE 4-5888

Open Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri.
nights till 9:30 P.M.

Hillside DESIGNS

CUSTOM DESIGNED
FURNITURE

ELEGANCE... ECONOMY... DESIGN
IMAGINATION



Enjoy some of the finest home furnishings
on display in New England today
tastefully designed and executed furniture,
lamps, wall decor and accessories which will
increase the charm and warmth in your home.

Please drop in, browse and join us for coffee.

Complete Decorating
Service

Wed. & Fri. till 9
Daily till 5

277 BOSTON AVE., MEDFORD

Near Tufts University

395-7750

The John LaFarge Institute

106 West 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 (212) 581-4640

A CALL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, 1966

1. Racial justice means something different this year of 1966. The basic values of brotherhood and dignity of men remain, as always. But this year men are challenged once and for all to put principle into practice. Individual men can no longer believe that racial justice is good in some other neighborhood, on some other job, in somebody else's school or place of worship. Racial justice is no longer something just to believe in; racial justice is now for every man to live.
2. In other years such a challenge came from the prophets to society. But today the nation has laws which demand performance. The laws reflect the nation's good intent. There is resistance to them, though, and some men are reluctant to apply the laws now, to all, everywhere.
3. Such resistance is undeserving in people who could do more than merely what the laws demand. It points to a sickness in the society, a sickness which deprives other citizens of their basic human dignity, and often their very chance to live. It is a sickness of the moral order, and needs to be ministered to by people willing to face and deal with the moral ills in society. '

4. Over the past several months a group of men concerned about this sickness in society tried to think of remedies. They conferred at the Institute named after John LaFarge, a revered pioneer in race relations. They recognized that there are laws to be enforced, jobs to be created, schools to be opened, homes to be built, poverty to be eliminated from society. They realized that to accomplish these things men must know that racial justice today is different from the past. So the people who agreed on this statement agreed also to share it with the nation.

5. In so doing they ask that today's redefinition of racial justice be used in a new examination of conscience throughout the nation - in a Call for Racial Justice, 1966.

6. 1. Racial Justice Means Economic Justice

The irony of prosperity strikes to the conscience when one out of six citizens continues to exist in poverty. Without economic justice there is little chance for interracial justice. Low wages, scarce jobs, lack of security and the effects of all these conditions plague U.S. Negroes and other minority groups. Still there is little understanding or compassion toward them. Nor will there be until the rest of men burn these facts into their consciences:

- 7. * The poor, in large measure, are not poor because of their own fault. They have for years been systematically shared out of the benefits of a prosperous society.
- 8. * Statistics on full employment are misleading. Negro teenagers available for work, for example, are 25% unemployed. They live in a world where jobs are as hard to find as in Depression days. There are older men, never trained to use anything but their hands and backs, whose jobs no longer exist.
- 9. * The breakup of poor families is an evil in society. But it is the result, and not a cause, of economic insecurity.

10. 2. Racial Justice Means the End of Racism

Racism is not dead in this land. It may be outlawed in its familiar forms. But there is a new kind of racism dividing society as sharply as the color line. The new racism is also blasphemy against God. It separates man from man by the indifference of one and the helplessness of the other. It denies the fundamental unity which God gave to the world and all its people. God made men, simply, to live together and to work for one another's welfare. So men today must oppose all that pulls them apart.

- 11. * The irresponsibles are the racists of today. Responsible for achieving so much as men, they belittle the work of God. Setting themselves up as gods, they turn other humans into objects without souls; thereby they diminish the divine work.
- 12. * The new racism pervades the nation's efforts to assist the poor. The help is not offered from one brother to another out of love. The laws for equal opportunity are interpreted as challenges for deprived men to compete on equal terms.
- 13. * Equal opportunity becomes a mockery and a torment to the man who never had the school, home, health care, job security or other incentives so long available to his fellow citizens.
- 14. * While injustice is harshly applied to U.S. Negroes, the new racism bears down equally hard on other minority groups, the Spanish speaking, the migrant farm workers, the chronically poor of rural areas and cities alike.
- 15. * The struggle of the poor is made even harsher by the indifference of men who could make things different. It is forgotten that men are all brothers under God and deserve to be treated like His sons.

16. 3. Racial Justice Means Correcting Past Injustice

Americans have long enjoyed special privilege at the expense of the nation's minorities. The conviction that American society now owes a debt of reparation to any minority group meets resistance from many sides. People object to "special privilege" or "discrimination in reverse." There is alienation and distrust of people who ask for it.

17. * Too many Americans, immigrants or sons of immigrants, believe that "We helped ourselves and made it the hard way; everybody else should do the same." The fact is that no immigrant group, Irish, Poles, Italians or any other, "made it" entirely on their own.

18. * Immigrants were welcomed to a growing nation that needed strong hands to build it. There were jobs in factories for people who never went to high school or didn't even speak English. There were unions and political organizations and churches and clubs for immigrants only, denied to Negroes.

19. * Negroes and other minorities in the U.S. have never been afforded opportunities parallel to those enjoyed by immigrants and do not, in fact, have such opportunities today.

20. *He may be taking you from the ghetto for selling dope or numbers or women not only prevents crime. He must unfortunately stop that young man from earning his living. He also takes from the unfortunate.*

21. *He must be the only job society.*

The men responsible for the laws must also be responsible enough to cure society's sickness. It is still possible to create decent, integrated neighborhoods in which all men might make their homes. In such environment every man's potential for brotherhood, reason and cooperation will be developed from firsthand experience. Then the laws will make sense again.

22. 4. Racial Justice Means Action Now

Yesterday's standards of tolerance do not match today's needs to build a whole and healthy society. The actions needed today may not be welcomed. They may even be shunned by some who think of themselves as tolerant people.

23. Concerned men, no matter what their religion, race or origin will see the need to implement such moral imperatives as these:

- 24. * To begin at once to remedy today's burden of disadvantage caused by yesterday's special privilege.
- 25. * To support public and private programs which provide training for jobs and jobs that make use of the training.
- 26. * To legislate and to pay wages that permit men to lift their families out of poverty, even the millions not covered now by minimum wage laws.
- 27. * To provide quality education as the common avenue of improvement for every man's child.
- 28. * To augment existing school programs with special instruction for adults who cannot read or write. In the age of technology the employable is the educated. It is the burden of society to rescue men from illiteracy and the personal disasters that it creates.
- 29. * To open the doors of religious groups to men of all races. It is not enough to desegregate as a matter of policy. Open churches must go forth and invite other people to join in their worship.
- 30. * To demand open housing, in fact as well as law, even in their own neighborhoods. Religious men must particularly support open housing, since it will be difficult to integrate congregations until open housing becomes a fact.
- 31. * To join together with other men in groups that promote the fulfillment of rights for all men.

32. The signers of this document express great confidence in the underlying goodness and sense of fairness found in citizens of the United States. To the good and fair people they wish to hold up the injustices of race that are so readily ignored. With respect for each other as sons of God, men can create a social order based on dignity.

Where is the Negro Movement Now?

A Conversation with Bayard Rustin

The following conversation was taped toward the end of August, 1968. In addition to BAYARD RUSTIN, the well-known civil rights leader and Executive Secretary of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the participants included IRVING HOWE, editor of *Dissent*; TOM KAHN, executive secretary of the League for Industrial Democracy; and PAUL FELDMAN, editor of *New America*.

IRVING HOWE: One of the things that strike people not directly involved in the Negro movement is the tremendous difference between the way it looked in 1963 or '64 and the way it looks now. In 1963 the movement had a coherent structure, there were a number of national organizations; whereas today there seems to be considerable disintegration of the main groups. What would you say are some of the main reasons for the change from '63 to today? Let me add that the reason usually given—that Negroes were made promises and the promises were not delivered—while it has some truth, doesn't seem a sufficient explanation.

BAYARD RUSTIN: The major factor is a psychological one: not being able to achieve what Negroes consider—this is over and above the question of whether there was progress—their objectives. I mean objectives that can make their block on 122nd Street look and feel different. They can no longer endure the struggle outside, and turn the struggle inward; and thus, instead of being interested in NAACP or Urban League, they begin to be interested in their block associations, their tiny little teachers' and parents' groups. They turn to whether you call yourself Negro or black. They turn toward how you wear your hair—and not to whether you are prepared to join some group such as NAACP in integrating schools. I believe that a good deal of this is a substitute for failure on the outside . . .

HOWE: A kind of compensation?

RUSTIN: . . . not the first time this has happened. The Booker T. Washington movement was up against a situation where there could not be victories in voting. There could not be real economic integration. So Washington said, "Turn in on yourselves. Become nice people. Cast down your buckets where you are." And I think that another period in our history when this happened was after World War I, when the Negro had expectations, came back and found lynching and unemployment. The Garvey movement was tailored for this situation. "What is a black man? Associate yourself with the Africans. Go back to Africa." In times of frustration, there is a turning inward.

HOWE: The comparison you made between the Booker T. Washington period and the present one seems to me to hold, but only up to a point. I think of Washington as a leader of a defeated people. He knew that defeat was unavoidable, there was nothing you could do about it. But the difference between then and the present period is, I think, that he set himself a series of very limited, practical goals. He got a little bit of patronage from Teddy Roosevelt. He set up schools for occupational training. He, in effect, said, "We have to behave like a subjugated people, but nevertheless, within those limits, to improve our conditions." Well, whether that was right or wrong . . .

RUSTIN: What some of the "militants" are saying is very similar, really. We are never

A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

going to make it in *that* world, or in *that* part of New York. Therefore, let's concentrate on building new black schools with a black culture within. Let us concentrate on building a black capitalist structure within the ghetto. To that extent, they are very much like Booker T. Washington.

HOWE: Your point is that while they use a very extremist or "revolutionary" vocabulary, their real idea is that of trying to make the best of what they inwardly look upon as a defeat.

RUSTIN: Right. And you have to separate their rhetoric from their behavior. The rhetoric is very "radical," but their behavior just the opposite. They are now adopting the worst concepts of capitalism and attempting to apply them to the ghetto, a sort of petty-bourgeois small-business entrepreneurship that is presumably not affected by capitalist society as a whole.

HOWE: But there's one new factor—violence. Though the demands of some "militants" may finally not be very different from those of Booker T. Washington—you know, having a Negro finance company, setting up little cooperative dry goods stores, just the kind of thing that Washington would have favored . . . nevertheless there's also the element of riots and even now the beginnings of something resembling guerrilla action.

RUSTIN: I think you've pointed out the essential difference between the Booker T. Washington period and this period. In the Washington period Negroes felt so utterly defeated, they could not even allow themselves to think in terms of violence. In this new period, where our aspirations are very high precisely because there has been some progress, Negroes can now see themselves as utilizing violence. Also, in the Booker T. Washington period, you had about 90 per cent of the Negroes in the country living in the South, while now the violence is made possible by urbanization and industrialization, which throws them into large black communities in Northern cities. Whereas in the South they were spread out and the Ku Klux

Klan could ride at night with sheets over their heads, and economically they could be frightened because they were sharecroppers.

HOWE: The mere fact of geographical concentration and physical concentration . . .

RUSTIN: That's what makes the violence . . .

HOWE: . . . much more possible. You know, you were, just before, describing the idea of Negroes turning inward. Instead of thinking in grandiose terms about transforming America—"I have a dream" and all that—a fellow on 122nd Street decides at least he's going to transform his school.

RUSTIN: Right.

HOWE: That has been justified by some people (apart from the rhetoric of local democracy) as realism. You know, it seems reasonable: if you can't transform America, at least do something about your own school.

RUSTIN: Well, my feeling is simple. I don't want to choose between these two things. I believe that if for 5, 10, 15 years there are going to be schools which are predominantly Negro, then they should be improved. Where I disagree with some "militants" is with their abandoning the ultimate solution, which is integration. So I say that the slogan ought to be "Integration where possible, and improvement where integration is not immediately possible."

HOWE: Or improvement in any case.

One of the justifications that I hear—which is a very tricky thing, because it involves both realistic social observation and a new kind of liberal condescension toward Negroes—is this: "Look, we know that many of the things that are going on, or that CORE says are nonsense. We know that teaching Negro kids Swahili, who don't even know where Africa is, that that's nonsense. We know that much of the rhetoric of Rap Brown is nonsense. But if you have a situation of a people that has been so very long subjugated, and suffered the indignities the Negroes have, then you can't expect that the process of self-liberation is going to be purely rational, or that it's going to conform

WHERE IS THE NEGRO MOVEMENT NOW?

to all your humane or humanistic preconceptions. You have to understand there will be emotional outbursts and excesses, and acting-out and self-dramatization. Some of the things many of these people say, probably, if you get them alone, they laugh about and realize it's not really serious. In other words, "there has to be some kind of emotional wildness, which you rational social democrats, socialists, liberals, etc., don't appreciate."

RUSTIN: Oh, I fully appreciate this, and I think that a good deal of what appears to be irrational is not really so irrational. Where I become disturbed is when they attempt to use the frustration methodology as a means for social change. That's the problem.

If a group of Negroes were sitting in a room with white people 10, 15 years ago, having been taught to be fearful, taught that they weren't equal, they tended always to play games and understate what they felt. Now comes what A. Philip Randolph rightly describes as the "cultural revolt," asserting the Negro's sense of manhood. Yet, sadly the situation is that if you talk with them now, they *still* cannot tell you the truth. The pendulum has swung from understatement to overstatement. And I believe that there's no need to decry that; it is a part, psychologically, of the maturation process. Perhaps, 10 years from now, for the first time they will be able to tell you honestly what they think without overstatement. Another way to put it is that if Negroes had been taught over 300 years that we were "children" and somewhat believed it . . . I can remember the time when I was a young man who went from city to city. I would go up and down the main street of the city, looking in every restaurant, and I didn't go in until I saw another Negro there, because it was too painful continuously to face insult. Thank God I got over that.

What I am trying to point out here is that, socially speaking, we sometimes "believed" we were children. Now what is happening in the Negro community is that we have become a bit like social teen-agers. The teen-ager is caught in a maturation process. He

must do certain things; he must reject those on whom he's dependent; he must overstate his case. So that the Negro is really in the middle of a maturation process, moving as a group toward social manhood. Now the one thing you know about the maturation process is that as many things will be done that are stupid, frustrated, and dangerous, as things that are creative and imaginative.

HOWE: The problem is the one you touched on earlier. It depends which hat you wear. If you are the detached social psychologist or cultural historian, the kind of approach you've just outlined makes sense and you can have a certain amount of detachment and understanding and sympathy. But if you're involved, say, as you, Rustin, are in day-to-day politics, then there is, I would guess, a tremendous conflict between your understanding and impatience or despair at what may be the unhappy political consequences.

RUSTIN: Right. And I can give you a good illustration. Suppose you turn to young Negroes now, saying, "Your problems are political. We have now got to get a Congress that will really bring about the kinds of social change, the redistribution of wealth, that is necessary to improve the ghetto. You've got to get money for that. Money isn't everything, but you can't do anything without it." This won't get you very far right now. Many of them are much more concerned with debating whether you should be called Negro, Afro-American, or black; and many of the organizations, including CORE and SNCC, are encouraging that kind of debate as against doing the real job. This becomes very heart-rending to me. Nevertheless, I have an obligation to understand why it happens.

Another illustration is in regard to the schools. I am for the community having a strong voice in the schools. But I am not for certain plans which have been devised, because they give the Negro a voice *but no money with which to work* and therefore, I think the result of that kind of decentralization is going to be the *deterioration* of the

A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

ghetto school. Now, there are all kinds of people who want to fight for "decentralization" but who do not see the need to fight for money. I fear what's going to happen in most of these cases is that whoever screams the loudest, regardless of his qualifications, is going to be put on the Boards to run the schools. And the reverse is also true—that people who are really able to help run the schools are going to abandon them because they know they cannot win in this setup and they do not want to become targets.

•
HOWE: Let's stay with the school issue for a few minutes. I think the present mood of the whites—and this seems to me probably to run a very considerable gamut, all the way from liberals to reactionaries—is this: since the blacks are making trouble, we'll buy them off, let them have their mess, do what the hell they want with the schools . . . we don't care whether they teach Swahili or post-Russell symbolic logic, or whether they can spell or can't spell, they can do anything they want as long as they stay on their own turf. *As long as they don't come on my block!*—that seems to be, at the present time, the essential view of whites. And this is where I wonder whether what you said might not require some modification. It even seems to me possible that there *will* be money. I mean, just as, for example, foundations are willing to give money to all kinds of projects within the ghetto, I think there will be money, too, for some of the schools, even though we may wonder what the quality of education is going to be in those schools.

The tacit precondition is to end the drive toward integration. So there may be a very curious alliance—in fact you already see the beginnings of it politically—between the Negro nationalists who say "we want our own schools, we want to control the police," and the conservative whites. And to go a step further, it's conceivable that even if the educational levels drop, nevertheless, kids who come out of these schools will be admitted into colleges—even if they haven't been very well taught. This would be part

of the view that says we have to, in effect, "carry along" Negro students, whether they have been properly taught or not, and this is part of the social cost of a major transformation. But meanwhile, goes the message, "*stay away from my suburbs . . .*"

RUSTIN: Look, I agree with everything you've said, and I think this is the basic danger, in a multiracial society, of attempting anything which has as its ultimate objective racial separation. The white liberal opts out of the struggle and ends in the same camp with the reactionary, both of them saying: "Let them have their own schools, let them do with them what they will." And why? Because they simply don't want any longer to be bothered with all the problems involved in attempting to integrate our schools.

•
TOM KAHN: I think the problem is not just that this approach is morally objectionable, but that it's simply not going to work—and for two reasons. There will be private money available, but not enough money. There won't be enough resources made available to change these institutions basically. There's enough money around to provide some Negro professionals with \$18,000 a year salaries as school supervisors. But there's not enough money to overhaul the school system and provide quality education—not from *private* sources. So what you'll get is not a solution of the problem, but a postponement of it, and thereby a worsening. The attitude of liberal condescension that you're talking about simply sets the stage later-on for a worse racial conflict in the country, because among the majority of white people there'll be a growing resentment toward the young Negro admitted to college whether he has the grades or not . . .

HOWE: It also lays the basis for a pseudoconfirmation of the idea of Negro inferiority.

RUSTIN: Yes, and it does something else too. It is going to deepen the class conflict *within* the Negro community. Now if you will look at who it is that is leading the fight for the Negro to completely take over the schools

WHERE IS THE NEGRO MOVEMENT NOW?

in the ghetto, it is not the working poor, it is not the proletariat, it is not those who have decent jobs because they're organized in labor unions. It is the well educated Negro middle class, more interested in the fact that if there are jobs for principals, Negroes get them; if there are jobs for supervisors, Negroes get them. This is a fight on the part of the educated Negro middle class to take over the schools, and I maintain that by and large they want to take them over not in the interest of black children, or a better educational system, but in their own interest, because they have nowhere to go economically. To be more precise, I am not saying that they have no ideals, that they are indifferent to the children and the need for better education. Rather, they tend to identify these social concerns with *their own* economic advancement and mobility, with their own professional careers. These issues provide an outlet for their status needs. Of course, all this rarely takes place on a conscious level.

HOWE: But suppose somebody said, "All right, let's assume everything you say is true. Nevertheless, whether for good or for bad, at least in *some* places Negroes are going to be running the schools. Maybe they're not the best educators and maybe they want to use this for propaganda rather than education, but still, Negroes will be running the schools. And instead of white teachers and white principals the kids will be seeing black teachers and black principals, who'll be set up for them as models. And it's possible that the less well-trained, Negro teacher, because he has a strong incentive, will be able to arouse the kids to learn in a way that the better trained whites may not be able to arouse them. That at least will raise morale."

Now I'll give you an equivalent. If you remember, Bayard, you used to say all the time, "A movement needs something—victories—that's one of the reasons we're going to do this and we're going to do that, we need to inspire the people to continue the struggle." Couldn't it be argued that taking over some of the schools, even if in the short

run it means suspending integration, would at any rate have the desirable effect of increasing pride? I mean, do we have to assume that any place, like 201, or Brownsville, has to be a fiasco or a disaster? Why can't it, after all, end up with a lot of Negro mothers chipping in and helping out the devoted Negro teachers, inspiring the kids, and maybe making a good school out of it?

RUSTIN: Oh, sure, this is possible in certain circumstances. But I'm less interested in this or that example than in how you achieve social goals—as against immediate victories which may plague you.

HOWE: Why should the immediate victories plague you?

RUSTIN: Because I believe that the effort on the part of liberals as well as conservatives now, merely to turn over the schools and let Negroes handle them themselves, really means that whites are going to abandon the city with its bad tax structure and with less and less money for these schools. Whereas if we were really mixing the thing up and getting some Negroes into the suburbs and their schools, I think you'd have a better tax base. We ought to be approaching the matter another way. We ought to be fighting so that more qualified Negroes be made principals and supervisors *wherever* there are openings. Because, you see, I think the white children need examples of Negro teachers and principals . . .

KAHN: At least as much as the black.

RUSTIN: Right. Furthermore, the black child is going to have to live in an interracial society and he needs not just black teachers but black and white teachers. Both sides need to be trained for the kind of society they're going to live in.

KAHN: That's a very important point. The most authentic and impressive manifestations of pride came during the early sit-ins and the Montgomery bus protest. With the movement now turning inward, I think that what we are seeing in many places is not a genuine self-confident pride, but a defensive, compensatory, and abrasively insecure imita-

A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

tion of pride. I suspect that some sense of achievement and hope is a prerequisite for pride, and when these ingredients are supplanted by cynicism and frustration, pride is transformed into the kind of pathetic arrogance that has recently become so familiar in the ghettos. Many of the leaders of groups like SNCC and CORE cast their programs in terms of hope, but if you talk to young Negroes on the street, the underlying emotion is *disappointment*, and the pride they try to assert . . . it's extremely defensive. I was talking last night to a young fellow whom Bayard knows, who was saying, "Well, look what happened to Martin Luther King. When you try to get into the larger world, look what happens to you." He wasn't talking in terms of hope. He had a basic feeling of disappointment, a desire to pull back.

RUSTIN: I think that's right.

KAHN: In every movement, there's a mixture of hope and despair. It wasn't all despair in the days of Booker T. Washington, and it is not all despair today. It's a mixture, and the important thing is to find out what the blend is. In the days of Washington, for example, there was hope among certain Negroes, because there was a group of white industrialists and philanthropists who had made it pretty clear that if "you go along this road there is going to be success at the end of it." Other roads had been closed off. Now it's the same today, but now the underlying feeling is one of withdrawal.

HOWE: Let's not move too fast. Let's stay with the point Tom raised. Suppose a lot of Negro militants or young Negroes feel something like this, "Well, we tried. Martin Luther King, he represented symbolically the whole push for integration. It didn't work. We were pushed back. Unless we're to suffer total demoralization, what else can we do except try to build our own enclave in our own world and even if we know it's a little artificial to look to African languages, to which we have no real organic connections, still we've got to try to find symbols by which to express this ghetto culture."

PAUL FELDMAN: This is based on the assumption that the Negro movement has suffered a total defeat over the last eight years, that there's a feeling of total hopelessness. But I wonder if that's really the mood that exists. The defeat hasn't been total. From some of the polls I've seen, there's a feeling among a large section of the Negro community that progress in some areas is being made. So the ambivalence of some of the militants might rest on something more complicated than a recognition of defeat. Maybe it's a problem of responding to a new situation.

HOWE: Recently I heard that the rebelliousness among the French students was among those who were in the humanities and the social sciences, that is, in the "vague" disciplines. But the students in the professions where there was hard, concrete knowledge, discipline and mastery required—science, engineering—were not involved in these rebellions, because they feel that they have an assured future in the increasingly technological society of France. I wonder whether part of what is happening in the Negro community may be a similar phenomenon. A small section of the middle-class Negroes clearly is improving its position in the society, getting jobs in corporations, in universities, etc. At the same time, there is appearing a generation of young Negroes who are bright, articulate, enraged, intelligent, but who don't really have a way into the society. Is it like the kids in the Sorbonne?

RUSTIN: This is one of the ambivalences of the situation. Often those Negroes who are best off spout the most extreme rhetoric, and I think this has to do with their being ashamed of having "made it," when others haven't. While they hold onto their sports cars and split-level homes, they go on with the extreme rhetoric. Stokely Carmichael, I suspect, is going to have to get a little more militant now that he's bought a \$70,000 house. He's got to do something to offset that.

HOWE: The premise behind all you've been saying, Bayard, is that somehow the drive toward integration, with whatever difficulties,

WHERE IS THE NEGRO MOVEMENT NOW?

is virtually inevitable, inherent in the situation . . . That finally, screaming, yelling, bitching, the white society is going to be made to accept it . . .

RUSTIN: Well, I'm all in favor of Negroes opening co-op stores and shoe shops and groceries in Harlem. I'm for this because Negro youngsters should see Negroes owning business. That's good for psychological reasons. But if you're talking about the economic emancipation of the ghetto, it cannot be around little grocery stores, where an A & P can move in the next day and put them out of business, or in a situation where everybody knows that one of the economic trends of this nation is that small businesses are forced out and large combines taking over.

Now, you talk about black capitalism, which makes everybody feel good. Nixon picked it up, CORE's picked it up, but in regard to basic economic construction, steel, automobiles, etc., what is there that the Negro community as such can invest in and make go? Henry Kaiser, when he was free, white, 21, and a millionaire, at the end of World War II tried to break into making cars, but he soon realized that it was too late, the boys had the thing under control and could squeeze him out. So I'd say I understand the entrepreneurial urge, I feel it must be done because it's psychologically necessary, but it can't be the economic salvation of the Negro, or a way to clean up the ghetto. What the Negro community is going to discover is that the Negro businessman will ultimately be a businessman before he is a Negro, just as white businessmen are businessmen before they are white.

KAHN: You're getting all kinds of proposals to set up corporations in the ghetto. You set up a couple of profit-making enterprises, and the profits are supposed to support various social services in the community, like day care centers, etc. So what you end up with is a social rationale for increasing your profits. You've got to accumulate as

large a surplus as possible in the interests of supporting these various social services.

RUSTIN: Which the government should be doing anyhow.

KAHN: How do you accumulate that kind of surplus? Only through exploiting black workers.

HOWE: To use an old-fashioned vocabulary, this may even intensify the class struggle within the Negro community.

KAHN: Yes, the problem is one of accumulation of capital. And I think here of the argument that the authoritarian process of accumulating capital is justified on the grounds that a surplus is needed for social development. The same argument's going to be used in the ghetto. There have already been some instances, along these lines, of an exacerbated conflict on economic grounds within Harlem.

FELDMAN: Norman Hill gave an example when he was working for the UAW community unions. He went in to organize rent strikes, and some of the buildings were owned by black landlords. Among the tenants were black nationalists, but some of the black landlords were also black nationalists. Norman said that the landlord appealed to the tenants not to join a rent strike because it was a white honky union coming in to disrupt the black community.

KAHN: Where was this?

FELDMAN: In Chicago.

HOWE: The same kind of thing happened 50 years ago, when the Jewish garment unions were first formed. The employers made the same kind of ethnic appeal: "We have something in common, and don't get mixed up with the gentile trade unions, we'll work it out, we'll go to the rabbi and adjust it peacefully, but don't organize a trade union."

RUSTIN: Another illustration: For seven weeks the *Amsterdam News* was on strike. On two occasions, I joined the workers in marching on the picket lines, whereupon one day, a man in Harlem who has a substantial business pulled me aside and said, "Mr. Rustin, I don't think you ought to picket the

A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

Amsterdam News, which is owned by a Negro." He said, "Sooner or later, they'll be picketing and trying to organize my building." And he made a great appeal to me on the basis that he didn't have the capital people had downtown, he couldn't afford a labor union coming into his place.

HOWE: That's exactly what Jewish employers always said.

RUSTIN: Not CORE nor any of the black nationalist groups, who would have been out there by the dozen if a white man owned the *Amsterdam News*, not one of them showed up on that line to support that strike.

KAHN: Most of the employees on the *Amsterdam News* are Negro.

RUSTIN: They have two white employees, out of what must be a hundred.

KAHN: The other limitation is that there's no way to escape the consequences of decisions made by the white corporate power structure. A simple decision, for example, by U.S. Steel, to raise steel prices 5 per cent can have a much greater impact on the value of the dollar in the Negro community than a hundred neighborhood corporations employing thousands of people (if it ever got that far) trying to improve community services. Ghetto enterprises are all, or practically all, retail outlets. They have to purchase their goods and equipment from white companies at the latter's prices. All that the Negro entrepreneur can determine is how large a profit margin he wants to make. And this need for investment capital will encourage him to expand that profit margin, not reduce it. There's no reason to believe that black capitalism will bring lower prices or better wages to the ghetto.

RUSTIN: Just so there's no misunderstanding: we all agree that for psychological reasons, Negroes certainly should try to own businesses in the ghetto. What we are saying is that those who propose black capitalism as an economic way out for the Negro community as a whole are mistaken.

HOWE: Yes, and the argument seems to apply even to Negro co-ops, which I'm sure

we all would favor far more than Negro small businesses. For while the internal life of a Negro co-op might be better than that of a business owned by an individual Negro, the co-op, as a unit in relation to the economy as a whole, has to function pretty much in the same way as a capitalist company. It is subject to the same economic pressures.

On the political side, there's a real danger of the appearance of a new elite in the Negro community, an elite which will be based not on a tradition of struggle, such as, for better or worse, say the people around Martin Luther King were, but an elite which would consist of the guys who will set themselves up as the self-appointed spokesmen, and the guys who can deliver a certain amount of social peace and maybe votes, and who in turn will be decidedly well rewarded. And you can begin to see this, I think, in relation to certain Negro leaders and the foundations, in the political parties and the more progressive city administrations. There is now a new kind of patronage which was not available in the traditional political machines. It's a patronage which is very different, say, from that which Negroes could get from Mayor Daley or through Tammany Hall.

RUSTIN: Well, Negroes already know this, and among the most despised Negroes in the ghettos are the people who work for the government, O.E.O. and Haryou Act, making \$18,000, \$20,000, \$25,000. By contrast, the proposals we make should be to get the money down to the people through public works and guaranteed income of some kind. These are things which we, as radicals, must be fighting for—not this black capitalist stuff, which essentially is going to benefit only a small class within the Negro community.

KAHN: For a long time, militants have labelled as Uncle Toms those Negroes who played the role of a broker, those who go out to get something from white people. But I think that, from one extreme to the other, all Negro leadership has that characteristic. It's probably inevitable. So long as Negroes are an oppressed, segregated minority, which

WHERE IS THE NEGRO MOVEMENT NOW?

depends on what's happening in the larger society, any Negro leader is going to have to play the broker role.

HOWE: Unless he's totally powerless . . .

KAHN: Unless he's totally powerless. And the black power people today play that role even more than the Uncle Toms did, because their role depends almost exclusively on their ability to scare white liberals and white moderates into granting concessions. Their leadership depends much more on the white television and the white newspapers than was ever true of Booker T. Washington or DuBois, or Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, for that matter. So I think the question is not whether a Negro leader has relations with white people, or whether he tries to get something for the community from white people. It's a question of *what* he is trying to get. Charles Evers in Mississippi is an entrepreneur. He owns stores and a hotel and . . .

RUSTIN: A filling station, I think.

KAHN: He's got a bunch of businesses, and there's no doubt that when boycotts of white stores are called in Mississippi, he gains. But that's not an argument against the kind of leadership he's provided. He has a business and Stokely Carmichael does not have a business. But even if Stokely does not talk to a single white person (and of course he does), his effectiveness lies in his ability to frighten the white moderates into granting certain kinds of concessions.

RUSTIN: Certain elements of the Negro community are not unaware of the problem which you have mentioned. What they want to know is—Did you get it by being nice, or by calling him a son of a bitch? They are happy if you got it by frightening whitey, cursing him and threatening him. Right now, if you were to get even more through persuasion, political education and political action they'd reject it. And this goes right back to what I called the maturation process.

HOWE: This is a good transition point, maybe, to come to some description of what is the current position of the Negro movement. For example, does CORE still re-

present a significant movement, to the extent that it once did, or is it down to a tiny minority of black nationalists? What's happened to SNCC? Why does NAACP, which still has over 400,000 members, maintain the image in the white community as still the most adaptive Negro organization? What's the significance of the rebellion within NAACP? Why did Whitney Young come out at the CORE convention with something that sounded like black power?

RUSTIN: Well, the first thing you have to understand is that if you talk about Negroes organized in movements, there are probably many more than ever before; but as I said earlier, they're organized around committees in the local community, sometimes a block group. They're organizing around health facilities, education, all kinds of committees set up trying to find jobs, housing committees, improvement committees, people cleaning up the neighborhood, making vest-pocket parks. Organization has moved to the grass-roots level. Many of these organizations know what they're doing, many of them don't. Many are in existence for some time, many for a few months. It usually depends on whether there's a key person around who can keep the thing going.

Now let's take the major organizations. There are several significant points about the NAACP. It is now the *only* national organization with a considerable membership. It has 1600 branches. It has some 450,000 members, and it is the only organization in the Negro community which raises anything in the millions *from Negroes*. The Urban League is not a mass Negro organization, it does not have a substantial membership. SNCC and CORE are very small. SCLC is not an organization, it's a collection of ministers who raise money and do projects. So that the NAACP, no matter what anyone says, is the one solid, basic organization in the Negro community. Without it we would be in serious trouble.

Both the Urban League and the NAACP have within them elements reacting to the

A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

black-power movement; and I really believe that Whitney Young's program for "going into the ghetto" is not substantially different from what Whitney Young has in fact been doing all along. Whitney is trying to wrap his basic program in black-power Christmas paper, hoping that it will sell better. Now, when it comes to the conflict within the NAACP . . .

HOWE: Wait, before you go ahead. Essentially, Young's program has always been to try to get jobs for Negroes in white industry, things of that sort . . .

RUSTIN: That's right.

KAHN: But there is a new twist. Young made a statement recently suggesting that corporations supporting the Urban League had pushed the Urban League in the black-power direction, and he turned around and said, "You are the guys who pushed us in this direction. Now we want the money to carry out the program." A number of the black-power conferences have been financed by the large corporations like the Bell Telephone Company. A lot of the New Left have denounced corporate liberals, people like Tom Hayden, for example—I wonder what their reaction is to this latest development. If ever there was a form of corporate liberalism, this is exactly it. Corporations moving into the social arena to encourage a form of black power—that's a form of intervention the New Leftists themselves have deplored.

RUSTIN: The businessman would prefer to engage the energies of the black-power elements in all kinds of propositions where he can get tax rebates, tax guarantees and write-offs—as against what is really radical, the kind of changes in priorities and basic social change, as in the Freedom Budget.

HOWE: You were beginning to talk about the NAACP and the Urban League. You see, what Tom is suggesting is interesting, that Young may be pulling a double switch, first to establish a connection with the black-power people, and then to use it with his own clientele in the industrial community.

Do you see the revolt within the NAACP as another version of what you were speaking of earlier, namely a turn toward a kind of rhetorical excess, an impatience with traditional forms of protest?

RUSTIN: I think it's also personalities; there are some people in there who think Roy Wilkins speaks too softly. They would do the same things he does, except in a more militant style. I think it's also the fact that there's a genuine feeling that the NAACP board has too much power, and they want to cut that down.

KAHN: Wouldn't you say it's also that in many of the areas they come from they're under constant attack from the CORE and SNCC people?

RUSTIN: Right. But I think you have to see what really happens at the NAACP. Almost all the Southern delegates supported Wilkins, and where you got revolt was out of such places as St. Louis, New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and the troubled ghettos. Where people feel, as in the South, that they are making some political or economic progress, you get one sort of an attitude. In the ghettos, where things don't seem to be changing, they have all these pressures on them that Tom and I were just talking about.

HOWE: What's likely to come of this revolt in the NAACP?

RUSTIN: Well, my own view is that sufficient concessions will be made to contain it.

KAHN: The NAACP, by virtue of its size and structure, is able to make internal concessions, without having to undergo an upheaval in the national office. The other organizations can't do that. Every time CORE decides on a policy change, a new executive director has to be brought in.

HOWE: CORE functions more like a left-wing ideological sect.

FELDMAN: What is the significance of the split in CORE?

RUSTIN: Well, the two groups which got out of CORE are led by very strong-willed men, Carson and Lynch. And they have been

WHERE IS THE NEGRO MOVEMENT NOW?

calling for some time for a more militant expression even than Innis and McKissick.

HOWE: What would that mean?

RUSTIN: I don't think what they have concretely in mind is very important. Lynch can call for a still more militant stance—yet work for the Urban Coalition, which is establishment if there ever was one.

HOWE: That seems a classical example of political schizophrenia.

RUSTIN: Right. And they also were asking that McKissick's and Innis's desire for a more centralized structure be rejected. In other words, they want to be free to act out their role before the television cameras in the way that they want to act it out. They don't want any centralized control over what they say or do.

HOWE: Would you say that in any major urban communities CORE represents a significant force in the Negro world? Is there any place where it resembles a mass movement?

RUSTIN: No, I don't think CORE is a mass movement anywhere.

HOWE: You mean it's become pretty much, for better or worse, the home of a range of black nationalists?

KAHN: One of the problems they have in an organization like CORE is that once you take it over and you're running it for a couple of years, your ambition grows. You want a larger outlet, something with more impact. In part this explains the quick turnover in the CORE leadership. Just about every one of CORE's executives, no matter what his political position, has gone out into the larger white world and tried to get a position there. CORE seems to be the organization to which the liberal white establishment is most responsive. The Panthers, they're too far-out. The NAACP is looked on with a kind of contempt. But in its ideology and verbal militancy and the kind of people it puts forward, CORE just fits the present mood of the foundations, city establishments, and the like.

HOWE: If we look for an analogy, it

might really be with the socialist movement in its earlier phases when it became in part a training school which prepared a large section of the Jewish intelligentsia for roles in trade unions, the academy and government, and middle-class institutions. This doesn't at all impugn the sincerity of the people who are involved any more than we're trying to impugn the sincerity of the people in CORE. But as you look back upon it, the Jewish socialist movement served as a kind of way-station through which people could move into the established society.

I have three or four more questions which I think are important. First, I wish you'd say something, Bayard, about one of the arguments I encounter over and over again in the academic world, and I'm sure you find equivalents of it everywhere. That's in regard to riots, violence, etc. The argument is: "We know in principle that it's not a good thing. We don't approve of it. But when you have a society that is not susceptible to pressure or moral appeals, the only way you can get them to pay attention is through an equivalent of guerrilla warfare. That is, through raising hell."

KAHN: Are you saying that people who riot in ghettos have this as a conscious purpose?

RUSTIN: Some do.

HOWE: Somewhere very deep down in their feelings there must be some sense that they just have to raise hell to the point where attention will be paid and concessions offered. Now, this is a very tricky argument, because it really justifies quasi-revolutionary or quasi-nihilist violence in the name of a reformist objective. What they're saying is, I'm not in favor of revolution, none of that nonsense, but in order even to achieve what you or the reformists or liberals want, the only way to do it is through violence.

RUSTIN: There are two tragedies here. One is that to some extent if you look at the situation objectively they're right. You don't get concessions until there's been trouble. I always give the example of Randolph setting

A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

up a committee to get a Negro policeman appointed to captain over the Harlem district. Four or five years of agitation about this, and nothing happens. The minute there's a riot they appoint him. Same thing in Watts. No hospital, no transportation system. King and I go out to Watts and they're falling all over themselves talking about a transportation system—not before the riot even though the need was there, but after. I was in on the planning of the Urban Coalition but I can assure you the only reason it was founded was because of the rioting.

The second tragedy is that although we will receive minor concessions from the establishment, once the rioting reaches a certain point there will be repression against the entire Negro community.

HOWE: Raising the ante indefinitely isn't going to work . . .

RUSTIN: Right, equally important, to repress one-tenth of the population will require an assault on the civil liberties of everyone. And in an atmosphere where everyone's civil liberties decline; where no genuine progress in the redistribution of wealth, no putting people back in school and getting them educated can take place. You will have created a political atmosphere wherein the Right will increasingly take over.

The final tragedy is that while political action to achieve our goals, I would be the first to say, has not achieved enough, and while the coalition of forces required to achieve them has not been strong enough, that coalition will be completely decimated if the rioting continues to escalate.

HOWE: This seems so important, I want to see if I can repeat it in a more general way. You are saying there is, tactically speaking, a certain shrewd perception in the idea that if you want to get something, you can do it by force or the threat of making trouble or the reality of making trouble, and this would get certain things . . .

RUSTIN: Has gotten . . .

HOWE: . . . has gotten certain things, but that it is like playing with fire, something like

Russian roulette, because it raises in the minds of some Negroes the idea that if you can get a small concession with a small riot, maybe you can get a big concession with a big riot, or with more than a riot. Yet that is not true. At a certain point it boomerangs.

RUSTIN: There's another factor here, which is internal: sooner or later the degree, small as it is, of Negro unity in making demands on the whole society will be splintered, instead of congealing around a fight for political and economic objectives. Now when the riot began in Cleveland, the Negroes living up on the hill took the attitude: thank goodness our young people are not just going to take it lying down. But as the riots approached their \$25,000 homes, they . . .

FELDMAN: Whose \$25,000 homes?

RUSTIN: The wealthy Negroes who only the day before had been applauding the rioters. They then got out their shotguns to keep the rioters from near those \$25,000 homes.

HOWE: As a subpoint here, what do you make of these new things, both in Cleveland and Brooklyn, where there seems to be something beyond riots. It seems to have a semi-insurrectionary character. That is, the ambushing of cops in Brooklyn. We all understand why Negroes hate cops, but one possible consequence of this is that cops are going to stop heeding any calls in Negro neighborhoods and that the person who will then suffer most is some perfectly innocent Negro woman who has her purse snatched or some black storekeeper who's held up and has no protection.

RUSTIN: This is a process that's been going on for some time, and I'll give you two illustrations. The logic of the violent rhetoric and talk of future violence is destructive at two points. First of all it's destructive in terms of the ultimate protection of innocent Negroes. If in 1963 in a North Carolina college three Negroes had been shot and many wounded by the police, there would have been a hue and cry in this country. But this year neither the Negro community nor the Negroes' white allies could become excited

WHERE IS THE NEGRO MOVEMENT NOW?

for the reason that deep in their minds, *though erroneously*, they felt there had been so much talk of young Negroes using guns that some people thought maybe they did shoot at the police first. Now we're moving into a situation where the rhetoric means we're not even going to be able to defend innocent people.

The second tragedy is this: Let's say there're 15 of us who've been sitting around for a year now talking about how devilish the white man is and how he won't do anything unless you shoot him or kick him in the nuts. And finally we all say, "Oh, well let's not be chicken." "What do you mean, chicken?" "You haven't got a gun. Shut your fuckin' black mouth." So he buys a gun. The next step is, "You say you want to shoot a white man? Okay baby, you got your gun, I've got mine, who else is going to go with us?" It's a teen-age way of doing things, where the boys say, "Okay, there are nine feet between these houses," and you see the kids jumping across them all the time. Periodically some kid falls and dies.

HOWE: One last question. There are approximately 1½ million to 2 million Negroes in the American trade unions. And there is considerable internal organization of Negro workers in the trade unions, some of it informal, some of it formal through the Negro American Labor Council. This is potentially a tremendously powerful force. After all, these are people who within the Negro community have relatively better conditions of life. They have higher morale. They hold down regular jobs. Some of them are rising in the trade-union structure; they are getting more and more important posts in the unions. Yet as it appears to an outsider, the Negro trade unionists *within the Negro world* don't seem to play a role commensurate with their numbers, their social stability, their potential strength.

RUSTIN: Well, I think there are several reasons for this. One is that they're isolated. That is to say, unlike Jewish groups; as they developed, they didn't have unions which

were predominantly Negro. You don't have a Negro union. Second, in several unions which have increasingly high Negro membership, like the ILGWU, they're women who have to run home after their eight hours of work and make a meal and look after children, and who therefore do not attend union meetings, cannot be prevailed upon to serve on committees, and do not develop much power in the union. Third, and quite honestly, many of them are in appointed positions, which means they are required to carry out the will of the various Boards. There has to be a tremendous education of rank-and-file Negroes, so that they'll take the time and energy to attend union meetings and vie for elected positions, which would then give them a base from which to operate.

HOWE: Those all seem cogent reasons, but take a place like Detroit, where the Negroes now form something like 40 per cent of the population, and where their percentage within the UAW in Detroit must be a third. Thus far there have apparently not yet developed well-known trade-union Negro leaders. And as a force within the community, the Negro unionists there don't seem to play a major role—or do they?

RUSTIN: I think that you've selected a good example because people like Horace Sheffield in the UAW and others have had a tremendous effect in Detroit through the TULC, the Trade Union Leadership Council. What's happened in Detroit is that the Negroes in the UAW are splintered over political candidates, and only recently have they begun to work together in the union.

HOWE: How about the other way around, though? That is, the role of these unionists in the community?

RUSTIN: I think their role in Detroit has been very profound.

KAHN: Negroes in the large industrial unions like the UAW, Steel, and others, have experienced pretty much the same kind of transformation in their lives that white workers have. The white workers are more and more becoming suburbanites, more and more