

#### A CONVERSATION WITH BAYARD RUSTIN

becoming home owners, moving out of the old central city neighborhoods that they used to live in. So to some extent Negro workers in these unions are removed from the ghetto itself and from its day-to-day problems.

HOWE: I wonder how true that is though, Tom, because first, my guess would be that although obviously the conditions of Negro workers in Detroit have improved, their mobility has not been as great as that of white workers of an equal economic level; for example, that in the big Detroit riot of last summer, according to research that has been done, it was not the declassed elements that were dominant. There was a very considerable number of Negroes with relatively decent jobs who were involved in the riot.

RUSTIN: No, not in the riots, but in the looting. A profound distinction. It was those in the Negro community who live by their wits, the hustlers, the whores, the pimps and others, around whom the riot got started. It was the uprooted slum proletariat. My experience in the community is that once there is wide-spread looting, people of *all* classes ultimately get involved in it. There's something about people, they can't stand around seeing somebody get something for nothing without getting involved. And there's a marvelous story that Norm Hill tells of Newark, where this well-dressed Negro woman who looks like a schoolteacher stands in front of the store for 15 minutes pleading with these young Negroes not to loot the place, but who finally walks out with a small television under her arm. I think we have to see that the rioting is usually triggered by an incident that involves the *lumpenproletariat* or working poor. Then the criminal element moves in to exploit it, and I mean the minor criminal element, because if there's anything that organized crime hates it's a riot. It disrupts its procedures. That is then followed by excessive police force which then gives the whole community a justification: they brought in too much force, we ought to strike back in the way we can, go on looting.

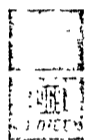
KAHN: I don't want to get too far away

from the question of the Negro trade unionists. The progress that the Negro industrial worker has won through the unions has served to remove him to some degree from the problems of the ghetto. The Negro UAW member in Detroit is a homeowner. He does not live in a slum. That's number one. Number two, trade unionists in general, whether they're black or white, do not tend to participate in community affairs *as trade unionists*. I'll bet if you looked at the NAACP membership in Detroit you'd find it very heavily influenced by members of the UAW; they participate in community affairs as members of NAACP and not as members of the UAW. The third point is that this is beginning to change. Bayard gave an example of Detroit with TULC's very impressive black working-class operation. Another example would be Watts, where the IUD has started to organize the union members in the area to go into the community and play a role in political and economic struggles.

HOWE: I guess this is a good place to end. But it really strikes me as an incredible failure that if this is true of Watts and Detroit, nobody knows it.

RUSTIN: No. That's because many times these creative projects don't get written up. Let me say one final thing, and that is that the chief social characteristic in the United States is grasshopping, whether you're white, blue, or pink. The minute Jews could get out of Allen Street, they got out. And they beat it up to West End Avenue. Anybody who expects the Negroes who are making it economically not to want to get out of these God damned ugly cities just doesn't know the grasshopping nature of the American. Obviously the Negro in the trade union movement is going to behave pretty much the way all union members behave, and I think it's to the credit of people like Sheffield that they've set up their street academies and clubs, and gone into neighborhoods to get the boys into the trades. In the long run, their impact may be greater than that of the TV desperadoes.

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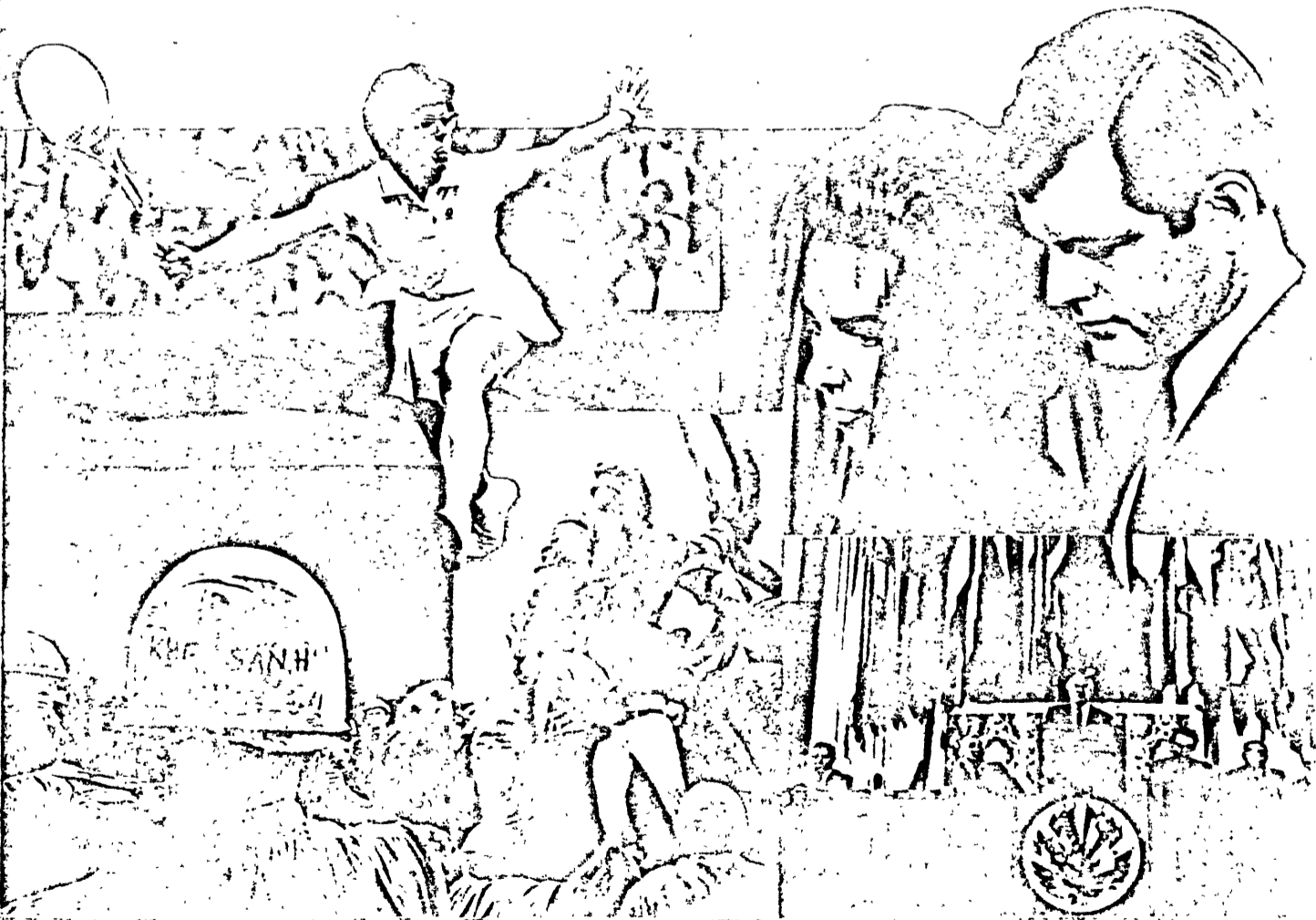
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## Coalition for Tomorrow

by Bayard Rustin, Executive Director,  
A. Philip Randolph Institute

The decade spanned by the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision on school desegregation and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 will undoubtedly be recorded as the period in which the legal foundations of racism in the United States were destroyed. To be sure, pockets of resistance remain; but it would be hard to quarrel with the assertion that the elaborate legal structure of segregation and discrimination, particularly in relation to public accommodations, has virtually collapsed. On the other hand, without making light of the human sacrifices involved in the direct-action tactics (sit-ins, freedom rides, and the rest) that were so instrumental to this achievement, we must recognize that in desegregating public accommodations we affected institutions that are relatively unimportant to the U.S. socioeconomic order and to the fundamental conditions of life of the Negro people.

Thus, the very decade that has witnessed the decline of legal "Jim Crow" has also seen the rise of *de facto* segregation in our most fundamental socioeconomic institutions. More nonwhites are unemployed today than in 1954, and the unemployment gap between the races is wider. The median income of Negroes in 1966 was 58% 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 increases. And behind this is the continuing growth of racial slums, spreading over our central cities and trapping Negro youth in a milieu that, 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. Our urban riots are not race riots; they are 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?

The response of many white liberals to the problem is to advocate the development of self-help campaigns and programs. However, those who believe that self-help is the answer should familiarize themselves with the long history of such efforts in the Negro community. From Booker T. Washington to the present time, self-help programs have been started and have foundered on the shoals of

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*ghetto life.* Even where such efforts have achieved a minimum of success they have been unable to create moral and social reform in the society at large. Recently many Negroes have been drawn into self-improvement activities. It is to be hoped that those involved may find their appetites for change so whetted that they may move into the political arena, which alone promises the solution of the social and economic problems that plague the Negro. For there is no other effective answer.

It is my belief, in the meantime, that the civil rights movement is in fact 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 also 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. Those obstacles include automation, urban decay, and *de facto* school segregation. These are problems that, while conditioned by Jim Crow, do not vanish upon its demise. They are more deeply rooted in our socioeconomic order; they are the result of society's failure to meet not only the Negro's needs but also human needs generally.

And what all this demonstrates even more clearly is that the Negro's needs cannot be satisfied unless we go beyond what has already been placed on the agenda. How then are these needs to be met? The answer, as I suggested earlier, lies in political action and political power.

Before suggesting how this power might be mobilized and used, let me touch upon at least three factors that have contributed to or that feed upon the politics of frustration that has come about since the end of mass civil rights protests in the streets. They are factors which must be taken into account if we are to develop a deeper understanding of the need for black political activity and political power. The first concerns the fundamental differences between the Negro struggle of the 1954-65 period and the struggle as it is today. The second is the eruption of riots in our urban centers. And the third is the emergence of the philosophy of black power.

### Today Versus Yesterday

1. From 1954 to 1965 the objectives of the movement were chiefly to secure the Negro's right to vote and to integrate public accommodations. Those issues affected Negroes almost exclusively and could be attacked simply as civil rights problems. Because they were matters of simple dignity, of getting what the U.S. Constitution clearly said everybody ought to have, and because they yielded

spectacular and emotional victories, they could sustain the interest of people who were becoming attracted to the movement. In the present period we confront the more complex problems of housing, education, and jobs, which affect not only Negroes but also whites. And, in attacking them, we are not merely raising questions about the Constitution; we are also stimulating a great national debate over economics, priorities, and planning.

2. In the earlier period the unity of the Negro community cut across class lines. Most Negroes, regardless of their economic or social station, were subject to the same discrimination in public places. Ralph J. Bunche was as likely to be refused service in a restaurant or a hotel as any illiterate sharecropper in Mississippi. This common bond prevented latent class differences and resentments from being openly expressed. But the people who have benefited most from the Negro revolution are middle-class Negroes (whose sons and daughters actually created and led the sit-in movement). The economic status of the black middle class now makes it possible for them to utilize integrated public accommodations, and U.S. industry has stimulated middle-class progress by upgrading the educated Negro—a fact that is simultaneously appreciated, scorned, and exaggerated by unemployed Negroes. The resentment felt by this new lower class of Negroes is likely to show itself in frustration behavior—such as riots—and in other forms of hostility, not only toward whites who “have it” but also toward Negroes who have “made it.”

3. In the previous period, the only expenditure the federal government was called upon to make involved the cost of police protection and law enforcement. It is much easier to issue moral proclamations when there is no need to back them up with Congressional appropriations. Many white Americans who joined the “March on Washington (D.C.)” in 1963 and applauded the dream of freedom of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., seem far less enthusiastic about helping us realize that dream when it means altering the economic structure.

4. In the 1954-65 period, though it was the quest for voting rights and desegregation that constituted the main objectives, the dynamic around the campaign to secure them was provided by racist brutality. Nothing that any Negro leader did or said stiffened the will of the mass movement quite so much as “Bull” Connor's policemen, dogs, fire hoses, and cattle prods or the bombing of churches and the murder of children and civil rights workers. All this both strengthened the Negro will and created a consensus of conscience in the white community. When Mayor Richard J. Daley failed to respond creatively to some of Martin Luther King's demands in Chicago, Ill., in 1966, he proved that the dynamic of the fight for the objectives of the new period—better housing, jobs, and education—is as much political as moral.

5. In the earlier period, most people, if asked to identify the nation's most compelling social problem, would have said, “Civil rights.” Today the

answer is more likely to be "Vietnam." The Vietnam conflict has created disunity in the civil rights movement; it has caused many liberals to abandon the movement and concentrate their energies in antiwar activities; it has permitted reactionaries, in the guise of superpatriots, to cut back funds urgently needed for social change on the home front.

6. In the 1954-65 period, a young civil rights worker needed only two qualities to function effectively: bravery and perseverance. With those qualities alone, he could sit in at hostile lunch counters, throw his body in front of vehicles, integrate buses and bus terminals, and march in the teeth of police brutality and power. The questions he raised were questions of clear principle—the right to vote, free access to public accommodations, civil liberty. Today the young civil rights worker needs more than just courage and perseverance. The strategies of social reconstruction, of reordering national priorities, and of broad social planning require more than "soul." They require an ability to organize, an understanding of political power and action, and an insight into the processes of social change.

7. The earlier period was one of nonviolence. Even those Negroes who were not persuaded of nonviolence as a moral principle practiced it as a viable tactic. Today, many younger Negroes are convinced that a violent confrontation is both necessary and inevitable. While I myself do not believe that violence can play a constructive role in solving the problems that face Negroes, society keeps providing the ghetto communities with evidence that unless they riot they will get nothing. Yet there is also the danger that rioting will produce repressive action. This is in the nature of the very reluctant and token concessions that are being made to the Negro. Beyond a certain point there will be no token concessions left to be made, and, since the larger and more basic victories will not have been won through violence, rioting will almost certainly come to reap only resistance and repression.

8. We are no longer in a period of civil rights revolt as such. We are now in the midst of a struggle to wrest human and economic rights out of the basic contradictions of U.S. society. I am convinced that, unless we establish social and economic priorities and organize politically in their behalf, nothing will happen. Protest demonstrations alone will not arouse the financial or moral commitment to solve the problems of poverty.

In sum, while the previous period was a period of protests, the present period must be one of politics.

#### The Riots

It is not an accident that many of the fires which have seared our cities for the past four years started in 1964, the year the civil rights protest movement started to bog down. The period of protest had ended and we had not yet developed a coherent political movement and philosophy to

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attack the next phase—basically economic—of the Negro struggle.

The data of black disorder since then have been grim, and even now they are still coming in. Scores of our big cities have been wracked by violence; hundreds of citizens, the majority of them black, have been killed; thousands have been injured and thousands more arrested. Property damage has exceeded a billion dollars; total income loss is perhaps incalculable.

In all fairness to the rioters, however, it must be stated that as a people Americans are accustomed to violence. Frontier lawlessness, Southern vigilantism, and Chicago gangsterism are images and themes embedded in the U.S. tradition. And we lost President John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert, and our own beloved Martin Luther King to white assassins' bullets. Nevertheless, the throes of the national crisis we are in as a result of Negro frustration and oppression have no precedent in this century—no precedent since the Civil War.

But why, asks the white citizen, do the Negroes riot now—not when conditions are at their worst but when they seem to be improving? Why now, after all the civil rights and antipoverty legislation? There are two answers.

First, progress has been considerably less than is generally supposed. While the Negro has won certain important legal and constitutional rights (such as voting and desegregation of public accommodations), his relative socioeconomic position has scarcely improved. There simply has not been significant, visible change in his life.

Second, if a society is interested in stability, either it should not make promises or it should keep them. Economic and social deprivation, if accepted by its victims as their lot in life, breeds passivity, even docility. The miserable yield to their fate as divinely ordained or as their own fault. And, indeed, many Negroes in earlier generations felt that way.

Today, young Negroes aren't having any. They don't share the feeling that something must be wrong with them, that they are responsible for their own exclusion from this affluent society. The civil rights movement—in fact, the whole liberal trend beginning with John Kennedy's election—had told them otherwise.

Conservatives have seized the occasion for an attack on liberalism and the welfare state. But the young Negroes are right: the promises made to them were good and necessary and long, long overdue. The youth were right to believe in them. The only trouble is that they were not fulfilled. Prominent Republicans and Dixiecrats are demanding not that the promises be fulfilled, but that they be revoked.

What they and the people of the United States absolutely must understand now is that the promises cannot be revoked. They were not made

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to a handful of leaders in a White House drawing room; they were made to an entire generation, one not likely to forget or to forgive. If Northern political leaders, hand in glove with the diehards of the Confederacy, continue their contemptible effort to exploit the nation's tragedy for partisan political advantage, they will sow the dangerous seeds of race hate and they will discredit themselves morally in the eyes of the coming generations.

### Black Power

There are, as the "Kerner Report" reminded us early in 1968, 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, differing interpretations have already developed between advocates of black power like Floyd B. McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Stokely Carmichael of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) on the one hand and the late Martin Luther King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Whitney M. Young, Jr., of the National 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 not only that black power lacks any real value for the civil rights movement, but also 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 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 in a position to win a maximum of only two Congressional seats and control of 80 local counties. 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 the United States. Eighty sheriffs, 80 tax assessors, and 80 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. New York City has had a succession of Negro borough presidents in Manhattan, 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 integration 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 \$8 sprinklers on hydrants in the summer. I am not for one minute arguing that Powell and Dawson 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, even with its fractured hopes, the Great Society, and they are right to stay. For the Black Panther perspective is simultaneously utopian and reactionary—the former for the reason, obvious by now, 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 because it would give priority to the issue of race precisely at a time when the fundamental questions facing the Negro and U.S. society alike are economic and social.

The winning of the right of Negroes to vote in the South ensures 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, Miss.; Birmingham, Ala.; and even to a certain extent Atlanta, Ga.) 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 that would work to make the Democratic party truly responsive to the aspirations of the poor, and that would develop support for programs aimed at the reconstruction of U.S. 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 is the creation of a new black establishment.

The Vietnam conflict is now partly responsible for the growing disillusionment with nonviolence 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 nonviolence 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.

We must see, therefore, in the current debate over black power a fantastic challenge to U.S. 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 riots to abandon the civil rights movement leave us no choice but to question their motivation.

#### Political Action and Power

It is here that we who advocate coalitions and integration and who object to the black power concept of physical separation and independent economic growth 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.

Although the civil rights movement cannot by itself activate political will in the United States, it can, if it succeeds in readjusting itself to the realities of the new period, take the lead in stirring us all into motion. To that end it will have to concentrate on three major objectives: 1. the implementation of existing laws; 2. voter registration and education; and 3. the development of an economic strategy that will unite blacks and whites in a new majority.

The movement has made enormous strides in securing the Negro's right to vote in the South. By taking full advantage of opportunities won at great cost, the movement can now help to change not simply the plight of the Southern Negro but the shape of U.S. politics as well. Only half the eligible black voters below the Mason-Dixon line are registered. However, they have already begun to exercise an impact on their region, as Negroes sit in state legislatures and city councils for the first time since reconstruction. An increase in

Negro registrants will inevitably mean a growth of Negro political power. But voter education is no less essential than registration. Southern Negroes, once they have registered and organized themselves politically, will have to seek out allies with whom they can form a new majority. The consequences of such an integrated political coalition would extend far beyond the South.

If Southern Negroes were to register, organize themselves, and enter into alliance with the white liberal and labor movements of the South, there could be a realignment from the Democratic left rather than from the right. The effect of such a strategy would be the creation of a two-party South and a consequent erosion of one of the main sources of conservative strength in the United States. Viewed in this perspective, a dynamic Negro political movement in the old Confederacy would make an enormous contribution to solving the problems of the black ghettos of the North and, indeed, of the entire society.

This leads directly to another point: the importance of an economic program. As long as white workers think that the Negro demand for employment is an attempt to steal their jobs, or that the Negro insistence upon decent housing is a conspiracy to destroy the property values so laboriously accumulated by the white lower middle class, just so long will there be no progress in these areas. Put more generally, there can be no such thing as an exclusively Negro economic program, for that would counterpose the interests of a little more than 10% of the society to those of the overwhelming majority. The action urged by the civil rights movement either will be integrated or else will be a failure. Black people must indeed organize black people and assert their rightful power. But this power will avail them little in the absence of a political strategy and a workable social and economic program.

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 the 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. The issue is which coalition to join.

The role of the civil rights movement in the reorganization of U.S. 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 other problems. 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.

### The Unbridgeable Gap

by James J. Kilpatrick, Commentator,  
The Washington Star Syndicate

One of these days the historians may put it down that, by the end of 1968, it had become temporarily impossible for civilized men to engage in rational discussion of the race problem within the United States. Contrary to hope and expectation, the divisions between the races had not grown narrower; they had grown wider. Worse still, the communicative arts had failed. Little remained of a common language. It was as if the spokesmen, black and white, stood on opposite sides of a windy chasm, crying vainly to one another. You could see arms waving and lips moving, but no more.

This is how it seems to me now, in the fall of the year. Pessimism deepens. The reservoirs of good will, which might have sustained a quest for constructive achievement, diminish inch by inch and foot by foot. By some ironical defiance of the laws of physics, the closer we draw together, the farther we fly apart. Attitudes spin full circle, orbiting in a new rhetoric of unreality. The garden is choked with weeds. Nothing much grows.

In one sense, I have been *particeps criminis* to the U.S. race problem all my life. I was born in 1920, a white Southerner; my grandfather, a New Orleans, La., aristocrat, served as a captain in the Confederate army; my attitudes grew as naturally as sixth-year molars, swelling slowly beneath the gum. It never occurred to me that there was anything wrong with these attitudes. It was not something you thought about one way or another. We lived with colored people all around us—a nurse, a gardener, a cook who lived in, a wise and wiry old woman (her name was Nash) who came on Mondays to do the laundry. To sneer at the

relationship as a "massah-massah" paternalism is to demonstrate a regrettable ignorance. We loved and looked after them, and they loved and looked after us. This was the way things were.

My first recollection of *race* goes back to a fleeting incident when I was six or seven. There used to be a trolley line that ran out to our neighborhood; its turn-around point was only a few blocks from our home. In those days, the custom on every trolley car was to suspend a small sign, maybe six by eight inches, from a window bracket. One side of the sign read "white," the other "colored." White passengers sat in the front of the car, ahead of the sign; colored passengers sat in the rear, behind it. When a trolley turned around at the end of the line, it was necessary to move the sign. Those passengers who were making the return trip had to adjust themselves accordingly, the white passengers filing to what was now the front, the colored passengers passing them in the aisles, moving to what was now the rear. It was a folk ritual, this segregationist do-si-do; we had a lot of curious rituals in those days.

I recall this particular occasion, when I undertook to help the motorman by flipping the hinged seats briskly to their new position, and by running down the aisle with the "white-colored" sign to place it in what now would be the bracket in the back. I bumped into a black man on the way. He scowled and curled his lip—I see his face now—and I felt the look like a blow. The incident passed. Nothing came of it. But it stuck in my mind.

Some years later, I was a student at the University of Missouri at the time of the great Gaines case. I was 17 then, maybe 18. I can remember, writing home to my family, in a fury of Southern passion, that if Lloyd Gaines ever were admitted, I was leaving school. Quitting. Going somewhere else. Most of the students felt the same way. Nothing ever came of that incident either. Gaines won his lawsuit, but something went awry. So far as I know, he never showed up.

As an editor in Richmond, Va., 15 years after that, I brought to the climactic moment of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (Kan.)*, in the spring of 1954, the accumulated and cultivated attitudes of a lifetime. For a time they served me well, as a cud serves a cow. In all of this, I will insist, there was no lust for white supremacy, no hatred for the Negro people; it was a strange, insoluble mixture of love, pity, compassion, pride, fear, distaste, custom, and group identification.

More time passed; and not in any blinding flash, but little by little, as the eye adjusts to a winter's dawn, I came to understand the meanness, the baseness, the cruelty, the insult, and the searing injustice of state-enforced segregation. I ceased to defend it. I found fresh meaning and stronger convictions in the direction of personal freedom. And the more I traveled about the country, meeting Negro leaders, debating them, talking for hours in private with them, the more I took heart. For I seemed to see answers then. I imagined the emergence of



## The Influence of the Right and Left

### In the Civil Rights Movement

I was asked to discuss the "influence of the Right and Left in the Civil Rights movement."

To anticipate some conclusions, it seems to me that many of the old definitions and distinctions about "Right" and "Left" no longer apply. In general, the problems which do exist do not result from infiltration by tightly disciplined agents of an outside organization, or other organizations. Rather, they spring in large part from the honest, confused frustrations of sincere people. Consequently, a program to deal with this situation cannot be based upon organizational measures - expulsions, membership screenings, etc. Instead, it is necessary to get to root causes, like the slow pace of integration in a time of accelerating aspiration - as in the state of Mississippi.

But even if there are these subtle aspects to the problem, it is important that we discuss it. First of all, the Rightists and reactionaries continue to utilize the charge of Communist domination and have even spread some suspicion in our own ranks. Only candid discussion can deal with such an attack. Secondly, internal confusion has arisen around the issue, and we must be clear on exactly where we are. Thirdly, by approaching the question of "Left" and "Right" seriously, we can confront the real, and often new issues under the old labels.

### The American Right

In the Twentieth century, Southern racism was quite distinct from Northern ultra-conservatism with its Rightist economics. Many a Dixiecrat - the virulent race hater Bilbo among them - championed both white supremacy and positive social welfare programs.

During the post-War years, this traditional pattern broke down. In the 1964 elections, the new trend came to a head with the coalition of racist politics and Rightist economics under the banner of Barry Goldwater. The Goldwaterites now claim that 26 million Americans proved themselves conscious, ideological conservatives on election day. That, as the various polls have demonstrated, is untrue. Yet, the fact remains that the Rightist-Racist coalition succeeded in capturing one of the two major political parties in America.

Moreover, there is a very real sense in which the racist political appeal is greater than appears at first glance. Nationally, the voter was given a choice between Johnson and Goldwater. If an individual shared Goldwater's hostility to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or feared a Negro moving into the neighborhood or getting a job, he could vote for Goldwater and express these sentiments, but at a price; i.e., he would be casting his ballot for a man who was also utterly irresponsible on the question of

war and peace, whose primitive, contradictory economics threatened economic crisis and depression, and whose mental powers seemed to be those of an amiable incompetent. Thus, many Americans suppressed, but did not give up, their "backlash" feelings and voted for Johnson.

This can be clearly seen in California where although Johnson scored a notable victory, Proposition 14 was carried and Pierre Salinger lost the election, in part because of his stand on the Referendum. And on local issues during the next four years, when the price of a backlash sentiment is not a vote for Goldwater, we can be sure that the Right will have a powerful appeal.

This Rightist threat basically comes from outside the movement. As November demonstrated, Negro voters and organizations were overwhelmingly anti-Goldwater. Thus, taking Rightist in this Goldwaterite-Ultra sense, there is no internal threat within the movement but a most serious, and in many ways new Rightist challenge to the nation as a whole.

Secondly, and this illustrates the imprecision of the old definitions, where on the old Right-Left spectrum does one place the nationalist trends in the movement?

In one sense, the anti-integrationist ideology of some of the nationalists has led to a programmatic agreement between them and some of the segregationists. There have even been occasional public alliances of black and white race separatists. On the other hand, many nationalists insist that they are much more radical than the "middle class" leadership of the established organizations, and they attack from the "Left." So, once again, it is necessary to see the new reality which the old terms can no longer contain.

First of all, let me distinguish four different strands in the phenomenon of nationalism.

There is a healthy nationalist emotion, a race pride, a total psychological rejection of white supremacy. It expresses itself in hair styles, African art and history, and in a new elan. It is positive and it is good. Secondly, there is a kind of nationalism which seeks to build black, middle class enclaves and to solve the issue of race by avoiding it. It amounts to an abstention from the struggle and is a negative, if not too widespread, strategy for withdrawal. Thirdly, there is a literary nationalism, often expressed in neo-Marxist terminology, which has captured a section of the Negro intelligentsia. It is intense, contradictory (some of its best known advocates have inter-racial marriages) and of considerable importance since it involves some of the most talented Negroes whose intellectual abilities are needed by the movement.

Fourth, and finally, there is the organized nationalist movement in all of its forms. The programs of these groups are often

confused yet certain themes persist: Buy Black; a Black state or enclave; an identification with the new African nations; a hatred of the "white devil." Underlying all these points is the conviction that there are no present alternatives, within a framework of democracy, non-violence and integration, for the Negro. Out of this despair, there comes an identification with the most violent and extreme tendencies of African nationalism, like the Mau Mau. Sometimes even the African history is distorted, as in the assertion that Jomo Kenyatta was exactly the kind of brutal terrorist that his British persecutors and their perjured witnesses said that he was when they jailed him. But, more importantly, the nationalists advocate the guerilla strategies which may have made sense when a 90% or 95% African majority was seeking national liberation from a colonial minority but have little relevance to the plight of that 10% of America which is black.

Clearly, this fourth type of organized nationalism poses a problem to the movement. Yet, the source of its strength is not conspiratorial or foreign. The nationalist emotion first really appeared right after World War I when Negro migrants from the South found in northern cities, not a promised Land, but a de facto racist economy and society. Similarly, today, the influence of the various forms of organized Nationalism is greatest among the ghetto poor and workers who experience the contradiction between the talk of a "Negro Revolution" and the reality of Negro unemployment, housing and schools in their daily lives.

The Nationalists will not be won to our cause because we maneuver shrewdly. Neither will they be convinced by scholarly analyses of their errors. As long as the intolerable conditions of ghetto life continue and worsen, the Nationalists cannot be written off. And conversely, the minute we begin to really move on the issues of unemployment, slum housing, and slum schools, we have the most powerful anti-Nationalist argument in the world.

Let us turn now to the "Left." I put the term in quotation marks because it has been used to mean so many things. And I think it important that we distinguish between three phenomena which are often carelessly lumped together under the single label of "Left." There is, first of all, the traditional Communist Left; secondly, the "Ultra Left"; thirdly, the "Unaffiliated Left".

#### I. The Traditional Communist "Left"

Since the end of World War I, the most successful organization proclaiming itself to be part of the Left was the Communist Party. By "Left", the Communists meant unquestioning subservience to the Soviet Union. In domestic American political terms, the Communist Party was fairly early transformed from a revolutionary and insurrectionary movement into the American propaganda agent for Moscow's line of the movement. In pursuit of this aim, Communists acted as disciplined, and often secret, members of a Party "fraction" within other organizations. They took the Civil Rights cue, not from the situation of the Negro, but according to the

needs of Moscow. So it was that the Communists attacked the March on Washington Movement of 1941 and charged those who sought the "double V" of victory at home and abroad over racism with being disrupters; so it was that they fought against the struggle for Fair Employment Practice legislation during the War.

Since this mode of operation posed the problem of an organized, coherent group taking orders from outside, many Civil Rights, liberal and labor organizations were forced to build counter-fractions to deal with the situation. The basic tactic was that of "in fighting", and usually no holds were barred on either side.

In 1956, a Communist Party which had already lost three fourths of its peak, 1944, membership, was shattered by the Khrushchev revelations about Stalin and by the Polish October and the Hungarian Revolution. Entire sections of the Party quit in disgust, including almost the entire staff of the Daily Worker. More recently, the orthodox Moscow Communists expelled supporters of the Chinese Communist position and further weakened themselves. As a result, the Communist Party is now at a historic low point within the Civil Rights movement.

Therefore, the problem of the traditional "Communist" Left is not that of combatting a disciplined "fraction" by organizational means. And, as will be seen, such a strategy would not only ignore the real problem, it would exacerbate it.

II. The "Ultra Left."

There are other organizations -- "Chinese" Communists, Trotskyists, etc. -- which criticize the Communist Party for being too moderate and which retain the Communist mode of factional struggle within other other organizations. However, these groups do not have a significant following among Negroes: they are even smaller than the Communist Party; and they do not occupy any positions of organizational power within the Civil Rights mainstream. By far and large, such groups have concentrated on an appeal to the nationalist sentiment among Negroes.

The foregoing analysis of the traditional "Communist" and the "Ultra" Left does not mean that there are no Communists of any kind infiltrating the movement. There are. But it does mean that people like J. Edgar Hoover, who have a vested political interest in maximizing the strength of the Communists, have distorted the problem. I suspect the complex reality can best be put in terms of the Harlem riot last summer.

As even the FBI admitted, no group, not the Communists nor anyone else, "organized" that upheaval. It grew out of the intolerable conditions of the ghetto and the hatred of police brutality; it involved many socially desperate youth who, as drop outs, are without a future at the age of sixteen or seventeen. Various elements attempted to sieze on the situation, among them criminals whose main concern was looting and some "Ultra" Left organizations. The latter organizations could not start the riots, nor control them. They could only seek to try to fan existing emotions. If, once again, there were an adequate program and struggle against the ghetto conditions, such groups would become utterly irrelevant; and if there is not, there is no way of stopping them from trying to capitalize on the situation.

III. The "Unaffiliated Left."

By the "Unaffiliated Left" I mean groups of people within the movement who are bound together, not by membership in an organization, but by sharing common experiences, emotions and politics. There are two types of thinking on this "Unaffiliated Left" that are most important.

a) The Thirties Veterans. One encounters people who went through the Thirties together (or sometimes their children), who were in or around the Communist or fellow-traveling movements but who no longer belong to any organization. These people often act in common, yet they are not under orders from any Central Committee. They usually regard Communist totalitarianism as "progressive" but proseletyzing this point of view is not their main activity. They believe that white liberals, the Negro middle class, the union bureaucrats and many other participants in the movement can, and should be, bluntly criticized; but to talk of "Communist" or "Ultra" tendencies within the movement is "red baiting." Thus, anyone with Communist or pro-Communist leanings is granted a privileged sanctuary where, immune from criticisms, he can criticize everyone else.

The distinguishing political characteristic of the Thirties Veterans is that they have no concept of coalition and alliance with the major forces in the society. Most of them did not understand, for instance, that Johnson, for all his faults, was infinitely better than Goldwater. In their America, there is nothing to choose between LBJ and Goldwaterism which means that the overwhelming majority of the American people are politically hopeless. From this despairing vantage point, the Thirties Veterans come to think of a Genocide resolution at the UN as more important than the Civil Rights Act and to engage in an elitist politics of maneuver.

The Thirties Veterans are not a numerically large group in the movement. But they are sophisticated, organizationally skilled, and their significance is in terms of their influence rather than their strength. They obviously cannot be dealt with by any organizational means since they are not themselves formally organized. The problem which they represent can best be confronted by dealing with those to whom they attach themselves: the "Spontaneous Left."

b) The Spontaneous Left. This is perhaps the most important group on this spectrum and the hardest to define. It is not organized and it contains considerable differences within itself. The Spontaneous Left is critical of "white liberalism," the established Civil Rights leadership, and prides itself on "militancy," which is defined as intransigence and the refusal of all compromise. While calling for a mass movement, the Spontaneous Left tends to isolate itself because of its rejection of all possible allies: labor, the churches, the liberals, etc. On many issues, the political positions taken by this tendency are the same as those urged by the "Ultra" Left, by the Thirties Veterans or even by the Nationalists. This has led many people who are familiar with the facts of life in the Thirties and Forties to assume that this must be the result of conspiratorial, Communist-type infiltration. This is not the case.

The Spontaneous Left appeals to young people who, first of all, are convinced that Civil Rights and genuine equality will require significant changes, not simply in Southern prejudice of bigotry generally, but in American society and the American economy. I share this point of view.

But then these people go on to despair -- and they sometimes do not themselves know that this is what they are doing. They reject all allies within and without the movement, black and white. Racism, they say, is not a negotiable issue; it is absolutely wrong and therefore any compromise, and demand sort of total and immediate freedom, is a sell-out. Of course racism is absolutely wrong, but the effective implementation of the moral rights of a 10% minority requires allies and politics. The Spontaneous Left does not see the necessities and complexities of the struggle. It therefore accentuates the negative: "social dislocation" as the only tactic (social dislocation is, as I have so often pointed out, one of the most important tactics, but not a panacea); the refusal of partial and limited victory. Sometimes a positive program is put forward, but it is usually a fantasy about guerilla strategies, or a revolutionary upsurge of the black and white poor against the whole society, the Civil Rights and labor movements included.

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As critical as I am of this point of view, I insist that we distinguish its extreme, and oversimplified, abstractions from its genuine insights. This is necessary because the spirit and the people of the Spontaneous Left are very important to the movement. Our progress is slow; sometimes our allies drag their feet; and sometimes we ourselves fail in leadership and imagination. What is not true is that democracy and non-violence have irrevocably failed. If they have, so then has the Negro failed for there is no other way to win. And the only way to prove that democracy and non-violence still have meaning is to demonstrate their effectiveness in action by achieving significant change.

The key to the phenomenon of the "Spontaneous Left" is not in Moscow, Peking, or Havana. It is in Harlem and Mississippi. And the only effective answer to blind-alley approaches is solid progress which makes a tangible difference in the daily lives of Negro citizens.

That the Civil Rights Act was an historic step forward is undeniable. Indeed, historians will record that the decade between the Supreme Court school decision and the Civil Rights Act witnessed the destruction of the legal foundation of Jim Crow. This achievement, of course, has been registered in response to the massive pressures generated by the Negro and his white allies. I am not in sympathy with those who would decry the Civil Rights Act as an opiate, ignoring the possibilities it opens up for us - possibilities of shifting our focus to new problem areas. The Act has been rightly described as a prologue - it sets the stage.

But we must be ready for the first act - ready with the program and the actors. Here I want to be brief, but it is pointless to outline the problems posed by the Right and the Left without suggesting solutions.

#### Possible Solutions

##### A. The Civil Rights Movement Alone:

1. Throughout the country, but particularly in the South, massive voter registration campaigns must be mounted. An estimated 3.6 million Negroes of voting age remain to be heard from in Dixie. Their potential political power must be mobilized - through a variety of techniques: demonstrations, litigation, or whatever seems appropriate in given situations. Above all, I am convinced, the civil rights organizations must be unified in this effort - in Mississippi and elsewhere - combining our various specialized skills and techniques. We simply cannot afford disunity and divisiveness in this critical area.

2. I believe we must begin now to prepare the Negro community for vigorous enforcement of the fair employment section of the Act, which will take effect in July. I understand that the Civil Rights Department of the AFL-CIO has already begun to prepare local labor bodies for full compliance. We have an obligation to educate and mobilize our community on this issue, so that they will be ready to demand their rights - again, through a variety of techniques, including boycotts

3. Police brutality, North and South, is another area in which the civil rights movement as such can make progress. We must everywhere be part of the cry for civilian review boards - not in the naive belief that they are a panacea but in the conviction that police conduct is not the exclusive responsibility of commissioners and politicians. Police must be answerable to the citizenry they presumably protect, and if they have been educated to any other concept of their role, now is the time to re-educate them.

B. The Civil Rights Movement and its Allies:

These, then are some of the major areas in which the Negro community, relying on a diversity of means, can push forward. Let us frankly admit, however, that there are limits to the progress that the civil rights movement can achieve on its own. After all, the fundamental limitation of the Civil Rights Act is precisely that it is a Civil Rights Act, whereas the most serious problems confronting the Negro community today are not, strictly speaking, civil rights problems. They are social and economic problems deeply rooted in our economic life. They are problems of employment, housing, and education. The Civil Rights Act does not abolish slums, create jobs or provide decent housing.

To achieve these goals requires an alliance between Negroes and organized, progressive forces in the white community. This principle governs the second group of programs I would advocate.

1. We have to develop employment policies which go beyond the placing of individual Negroes into professional jobs. It is not enough to exhort Negro youth to stay in school. We must insist on a sufficient degree of economic planning to enable us to know what jobs will be available for them upon graduation. We must have answers for the mass of unskilled and semi-skilled Negroes who are imperiled by structural changes in the labor market as a result of the technological revolution.

2. Full and fair employment and the upgrading of wages are essential if civil rights are to be meaningful. The voice of our movement should be loud in demanding implementation of the proposals of the Senate Sub-Committee on Manpower and Employment for an additional \$5 billion in social investment per year as a means of creating jobs and beginning the elimination of slums.

3. We should be joining with labor, liberals, and others in a campaign to extend coverage of the Fair Labor Standards Act to all workers;

4. And to increase the minimum wage to \$2.00 per hour.

5. We should be demanding immediate passage of an accelerated public works program and repeal of Section 14 b of the Taft-Hartley Act.

6. We should be in the front ranks of the fight for Medicare and medical programs for poverty-stricken children as steps toward a



national health plan.

7. We should be mobilizing support for the expansion of the Economic Opportunity Act, insisting on the rights of the poor, black and white, to be involved in the decision-making process.

8. We must be open to new ideas - to the proposals, for example, that youngsters be paid to go to school.

9. Finally, we need to be demanding of government - at all levels - a serious timetable for the elimination of slums.

#### Conclusion

Automation and the like are not exclusively Negro problems. Nor is the educational crisis, or the growth of slums. Of course, we cannot take all of society's burdens on our shoulders. On the other hand, enlightened self-interest dictates that we come up with some far-reaching answers or find ourselves stymied. For in a modern, automating society, there are limits to self-help.

And in such a society, the economic realities are such that, in seeking answers for the Negro, we will in fact be refashioning national policies for the benefit of the white dispossessed as well. We can help stimulate motion in sections of the white population - in the labor movement, among liberals, religious groups, and so forth. Whoever doubts this need only ask why we have a "war on poverty" today, if not for the civil rights movement and its reverberation throughout the country.

We need to stimulate such motion for another reason. We cannot talk about the democratic road to freedom unless we are talking about building a majority movement in America. This means we need white allies. It means we must be united with them in demanding a program for reconstructing American life.

Such a program in my view, will not only answer the frustrations which breed no-win policies; they will also undercut the danger on the right - or at least its political potency. We must create a situation in which backlashers are politically neutralized by having to pay too high a price for the exercise of racist impulses. The program for racial equality must be so intertwined with progressive economic and social policies as to make it impossible to choose one without the other. I know of no better educational technique.

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Prepared by Bayard Rustin  
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THE BLACK STRUGGLE: PROTEST AND POLITICS

by Bayard Rustin

In the wake of the March on Washington of 1963, and particularly after the passage of the civil rights acts of 1964 and 1965, a debate took place within the civil rights movement over whether the time had come to shift from a strategy of protest to a strategy of politics. As is often the case when movements debate strategy, the final arbiter was circumstance. Whereas the struggle against Jim Crow called for freedom rides, sit-ins, and demonstrations as a way of dramatizing the injustice and the unconstitutionality of the system of legalized racism in the South, the effort to alter the social and economic conditions in which the poor found themselves required new policies at the national level. These could only be implemented through the political process: by electing a President and a Congress committed to a program of providing equality of opportunity for each and every citizen. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, this strategy became not only necessary but also feasible.

At the present time there is no question that the emphasis in Black strategy is on electoral politics. The success of this strategy has been impressive, not simply in terms of the election of thousands of Black officials, but also in transforming the South from a bastion of reaction into a region that is moderate in its racial outlook and more enlightened than it was before in the field of social and economic policy.

Still, there are some Blacks today who have become somewhat disillusioned with electoral politics. Several factors seem to account for this. The most obvious one has to do with the disappointment over the performance of the Carter Administration up to this point. It is widely acknowledged that the Black vote was an important, perhaps decisive, factor in the election of Carter, yet on the major issues affecting

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the well-being of the Black poor -- particularly employment, welfare, and the cities -- the President's policies have left much to be desired. Few would argue that the current Administration is not an improvement over the last one, but this has not prevented some Blacks from questioning the efficacy of electoral politics.

The disillusionment with electoral politics, to the extent that it exists, is also related to the tremendous hopes for rapid and uninterrupted progress which were generated by the civil rights movement. These hopes have been fulfilled for many middle class Blacks, but the condition of the Black lower class has not improved and in some ways has deteriorated. Some progress was made during the period of rapid economic growth which ended in 1968. Since then, though, the economy has been through two recessions, one of them the most severe since the Great Depression, on top of which there has been a steady loss of manufacturing jobs to low-wage economies abroad. The plight of the Black poor has also been aggravated by certain structural problems in our economy, specifically the unusually high number of young people entering the labor force at the present time, and the steady flow of manufacturing jobs away from the cities where so many poor Blacks are trapped to the outlying metropolitan districts and to the South and the Southwest.

The entry of Blacks into the political mainstream thus came at a time when a number of complex developments made progress very difficult to achieve. Still, it is reasonable to maintain that the effect of these trends on the Black poor would not have been as damaging had, for example, Humphrey and not Nixon won the election of 1968. This suggests, of course, that we need more -- not less -- involvement in electoral politics by those who favor Black progress. I would also add that President Carter's policies have been modified in a positive way under pressure from the Black and labor groups that helped elect him. This, too, is an argument in favor of electoral politics.

Perhaps the most persuasive argument in favor of electoral politics is the alterna-

tive that has been proposed. For example, the sociologists Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, reflecting the views ~~of~~ <sup>but vocal</sup> of a small/number of Blacks, recently called upon the Black poor to forego electoral politics and to organize instead massive "disturbances" to "force political leaders to respond" to their plight. Far from speeding the process of social ~~change~~ change, this approach would have the very opposite effect. Disruptions might lead to some token concessions by a handful of weak-hearted and opportunistic officials. But they will also produce a backlash against the poor and dangerously polarize the society along racial lines. Blacks and the poor will be isolated from needed allies, and constructive efforts to solve problems will flounder as the country concentrates its attention on the re-establishment of social order.

It would be a serious error to equate the policy of disruption to force change with the protest strategy of the civil rights movement. The protest strategy was designed to arouse the conscience of the nation against the denial of democracy to Southern Blacks. Once the democratic process was opened up in this way, it followed that the next step for Blacks was to participate in this process at all levels. In this sense, democratic politics flowed naturally from democratic protest. What the current advocates of disruption are saying, however, is that democracy doesn't work. The only thing that does work is a policy of force by which a minority, by threatening or actually creating disruption, compels society to submit to its will.

Blacks will suspect any policy which seems to make them proxies in someone else's revolution. Most Blacks, I think, intuitively understand the meaning of George Orwell's comment that ~~in~~ democracy would be endangered by "an army of unemployed led by millionaires quoting the Sermon on the Mount." If American Blacks have learned anything from years of struggle, it is that democracy is in their self-interest. Where it is strong, they will prosper; where it falters, they will be victimized. That this is not an easy time for Blacks, no one will dispute. All the more reason, therefore, for Blacks to resist the siren song of those who promise instant solutions, if only the democratic process will be circumvented.

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# FUNDING FULL CITIZENSHIP

**Bayard Rustin**

Executive Director  
A Philip Randolph Institute

I want to do three things: first, to analyze the merits of the contention that the civil rights movement is dead or in confusion; second, on the basis of that analysis, to point up how and why the problem of civil rights has changed in the last five years; and third, if the premises which arise out of points one and two are defensible, what should be the direction of our future strategies.

Since the founding of the NAACP in 1909, we have gone through three distinctly different periods. The first and longest period, which I shall henceforth refer to as the first period, ran from 1909 to 1954; the second period ran from 1955 to 1965; the third period we are just entering. I shall refer, therefore, to the period from 1965 to the present as the current period. Needless to say, when one is evolving strategy and tactics, the tactician is aware that a division into three periods is fundamentally an analytical tool to determine direction; he knows that in actual fact these periods overlap. But he must be aware of the center of gravity in order that both tactics and strategy will be clearly understood.

In period number one, from the founding of the NAACP until 1954, the single fundamental objective was to establish in the courts that "separate and equal" was not equal. The leadership of the NAACP permitted nothing to deter it from going into court to file brief upon brief until the 1954 decision established under law that any form of segregation was unconstitutional. If the symbol of the first period was a lawyer with a brief case going into court, the symbol of the middle period was people marching in the streets. There is a fundamental relationship between these two periods, because no effective protest could have occurred—Montgomery could not have occurred; Selma could not have occurred; the sit-ins could not have occurred—had not the Supreme Court decision of 1954 been the platform which freed the Negro people and their white allies to protest. The year 1965 marked the end of this second period and the beginning of the third—the period of politics. I want to analyze why this has occurred and why the second period is at an end.

*First:* In the middle period we were dealing fundamentally with problems which exclusively affected the Negro. This is no

longer true! The battles for open accommodations, open theaters, open libraries, open swimming pools essentially have been won. We are now confronted nationwide with problems of housing, schools, and jobs, which, although most grievously affecting the Negro, affect also the 67 percent of the poor in this country who happen to be white. This new situation has obvious strategic implications. When one is dealing with problems which exclusively affect the Negro, then protest can do two things: it can call attention to and can destroy an evil simultaneously. When enough young Negroes and their white allies willingly sat and sat at lunch counters, in swimming pools, at libraries, in parks, if they had courage, perseverance, and the willingness to go to jail, they accomplished their goals. But there is no way that any mass of people, short of revolution, can deal with the problems of housing or schools or jobs through protest. Protest can call attention to the fact that an evil exists but it cannot bring forth new institutions.

*Second:* In the middle period, if you had asked average intelligent Americans, "What is the most crucial social problem America faces?", most would have said: "Civil rights." Today, however, the same individuals are apt to reply: "Viet Nam." The national consensus and dynamic which made the protest movement meaningful has disappeared. It is not a question of "backlash," as some would have us believe. It is a basic psychological change, and any responsible strategist better understand this clearly.

*Third:* In the middle period he who walked most, who got arrested most, who was brutalized most, had to emerge as a common and central symbol of the movement and that was Martin Luther King. This is at an end because neither Dr. King nor anyone else in America—black or white—can become the symbol for the newer period of political struggle into which we are moving. I do not mean to take any credit away from Dr. King, whom I adore. We simply are living in a different time. In the middle period, identity of interest was manifest. Every Negro wanted the right to use hotels, swimming pools, restaurants, etc. But when you attack the problems of housing, schools, and jobs, basic differences of view regarding political

and social philosophy are bound to emerge. A. Philip Randolph and I believe that the Negro can make no further progress in this nation without the socialization of our institutions. But this places us in conflict with many other Negro leaders who look upon this position as foreign to the American system, perhaps even communistic. Therefore, this period will witness great conflict, with much side-taking, and thus no one charismatic symbol.

*Fourth:* In the first period one needed to be a trained lawyer; in the middle period one needed courage and perseverance. My, how Negro leaders sprang up overnight by the thousands! All one had to do was to go and sit somewhere and get arrested a few times, and he was automatically a leader. The period demanded only a philosophy of faith. The fact that intellectuality was absent during the middle period is evident in that no important book or piece of music was written by any young Negro from 1955 to 1965. In a period, however, when one is talking about strategy for eliminating slums, or creating adequate schools, or finding jobs, a philosophy of faith is not enough. To it must be added a philosophy of history, an analysis of our society's economic structures, and a sociology of social change. Further, one must have the ability to examine and walk one's way through the complicated problems of political alliances. Therefore, it is my opinion that most of the leadership which provided only perseverance and courage is profoundly useless for the present period. This opinion has pertinence when one analyzes the left wing of the Negro movement, which is not interested in a philosophy of history. This group contends that any Negro over thirty-five cannot be trusted, thus rejecting not only history but also themselves and their forebears. The same leadership which was so valiant in helping Negroes join the middle class now turns around and denounces as a traitor anyone who is able to join the middle class. Instead of engaging in politics, they engage in social masturbation, which may give one a titillated feeling but produces nothing.

*Fifth:* The press. The press is interested in three things: Is it new? Is conflict involved in it? Is it sensational? From 1955 to 1965 everything done on the streets was new, had conflict in it, and was sensational. Negroes had not acted this way before. Therefore, from 1955 to 1965 the newspapers ran a blow-by-blow account of the daily action on the front page. But thinking through the problems of education is neither sensational nor new; the hundreds of committees working up and down the country to do something about slums cannot be dramatic; the work which is being done all over the country by people who are trying to get jobs for Negroes is dry as dust compared to the drama of a Birmingham bus boycott. Therefore, the newspapers do not print it. In this third period we cannot count on the kind of support from the press which would make the movement for us. We have the tedious and irksome work of building organization ourselves.

*Sixth:* Until the Supreme Court Decision of 1954 and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, we could not have a basic class struggle in the Negro community. We were all too

busy concentrating on caste to permit the class struggle to emerge. But once the segregation foolishness is lifted off the Negro people, a class struggle does emerge—one similar to that which has emerged in all other groups in this country. This phenomenon explains the action of the young men in Watts when they called Martin Luther King and me "house niggers," or when they said, "Why don't you go back to New York? You have nothing to tell us, baby. You made it. If we are all equally as smart and you made it and we didn't, it is because you are a house nigger for whitey and he permits you to make it. But we stand out here telling him like it is, and he won't let us make it." It explains the vicious attacks on Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, the NAACP and the Urban League. A class struggle has emerged which is now intermeshed with the older caste struggle. The implications of this new struggle for organizing people are significant. It means that even if Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young spent \$5,000,000 next year to organize the ghetto, they could not do it. It is not a question of whether they want to, or whether they can put the right people there. Rather, in this kind of struggle, the only leadership which ultimately is trusted is the caste leadership which the people know. But the moment that this caste leadership is elected by them, it has become middle class and can no longer be trusted. I am not joking! Every Negro who goes from the ghetto to anti-poverty board is suspect before his second meeting.

*Seventh:* In the first two periods, the dynamism of the period and the organizational will was created by Southern brutality. The Negro leadership never had to organize any marches. The dogs, Bull Connor, lynching, the bombing of churches, the killing of children congealed the Negro community and the white consensus. The reaction was not the result of a positive program; it was a positive reaction to a negative thing that was being done. The boys are now too smart. We are not going to have—South or North—the same kind of extended brutality again. This means that instead of depending on brutality, we now have the tedious educational organization job of putting forth concrete, objective, achievable programs for the first time in our history.

This is truly a new period. The old period was one of hope: We shall overcome; We shall never turn back; Freedom now! The present period, in contrast, at least for many, is one of disillusionment. Many believe this society is not going to act. A society which can engage in war in Viet Nam, oppress the Negroes, and tolerate poverty is a society which does not mean to move. I went to Stokely Carmichael not many months ago with a very important project in which I wanted him to go into four major cities and to lead young Negroes in carrying two signs. The first was to read "WE DO NOT WANT RELIEF," to confront the myth which contends that all Negroes want is a handout; and the second, "GIVE US WORK," to back up by demonstration the aims of the Freedom Budget. Stokely's response can be paraphrased as follows: This society is so corrupt it does not mean to give Negroes freedom. Therefore, to have program, to project program, is to mislead Negroes. All the program you need is to "give them hell," to reveal to Africa and Asia what a corrupt society we live in, and to hope for revolution. Che Guevara becomes my hero, Castro becomes



"Moment of Man"

Richard R. Benda

***The present period, at least for many, is one of disillusionment***

my hero.

*Eighth:* From 1955 to 1965 the federal government did not expend one penny, except for police protection, for basic Negro objectives won in that period. The federal government must now spend, according to the Freedom Budget, \$185,000,000,000 in the next ten years, or the Negro people will not advance. There are great numbers of people, white and black, who marched in Washington for Negro dignity on August 28, 1963, but who had no basic concept of what dignity means. They assumed that once legislation was enacted, freedom would descend from heaven. But true freedom must first be conceived in economic categories. The economy is the bone, the social institutions are the flesh, the political institutions are the skin which grows on that bone and flesh. Ultimately, all human freedom is determined by the economic structure of the institu-

tion. Many people who marched in Washington were for Negro freedom, but when they are asked to support a guaranteed income or a two-dollar minimum wage, they shy away, not understanding the intimate relationship between economics and freedom.

If the above analysis is true, how can we characterize the present period? First, the civil rights movement is not dead. The NAACP has more members now than ten years ago; it has much more money than ten years ago; it has several hundred more chapters than ten years ago; Whitney Young of the Urban League is now manipulating a budget almost three times that of ten years ago. There are thousands and thousands of Negroes in the ghettos trying to do something about their condition, many more than there ever were at the time of the march on Washington. The movement is not dead! It is simply confronting a much more complex issue—the basic contra-

dictions inherent in our society. It is much easier to confront prejudice in this society than it is to ask the same society to change its economic priorities and to provide for the poor. From the very beginning we have fallen into the same trap Thomas Jefferson fell into. Jefferson awoke one night after a bad dream, in which he had seen the Republic being torn apart by slavery, and did a very noble thing. He took a piece of paper and manumitted his slaves on his death—a great moral act. But an inadequate one! He should have arisen, manumitted his slaves, and then, on the basis of that moral act, attacked the problem economically, and gone into Congress and fought for the elimination of slavery. We are still acting like Jefferson. "Oh, if only white people would be nice." Ministers preach every Sunday telling white people they ought to be friendly. The fact of the matter is, prejudice is always with us, in blacks and whites.

If society is constructed in one way, prejudice is able to rise to the surface and be socially and politically organized. If, on the contrary, society, particularly its economic life, is organized in another manner, prejudice can be reduced to an irreducible minimum. Martin Luther King's assailants stoned him in Chicago last December, not fundamentally because they were prejudiced, but because they were living in a society where there were inadequate jobs and inadequate housing for everyone. Given such conditions, it takes but two or three potential Hitlers to organize dissatisfied people to throw stones. This probably could not have occurred if full employment and adequate housing were realities in Chicago. Both Negroes and whites have to accept the fact that the basis of prejudice is economics and stop all this foolishness about psychology. The struggle before us is a human rights struggle to eliminate poverty, bad housing, and inferior schools.

Let me proceed to specific strategies. If Stokely Carmichael and his ilk believe that this society is going to do anything special for Negroes, they are profoundly mistaken. I understand how bad white folks can be perhaps better than they do, and therefore I ask for nothing special for Negroes. With this in mind, I ask that we press for two basic economic commitments: an immediate two-dollar minimum wage and guaranteed employment. A small businessman might question the first commitment: "Well, Mr. Rustin, I would be put out of business; I only have five employees and I couldn't afford to give it to them." Our reply must be: "We will have the government examine your business. If it is or can become socially useful, we will ask the government to subsidize you in order that you can pay these men a minimum wage, in the same way that the government subsidizes Mr. Harriman's railways and the nation's farmers. But you better have a business that is worthwhile."

**L**ook at the "war" on poverty. This so-called war picks up a piece of string here, and a little piece of scotch tape there, and a little spit here and makes a nice little paper wrap-

ping. The approach is basically wrong! We do not need paper wrappings, we need a new package. If a little Negro child benefits from Head Start, fine, but this is not the answer. We take some boys from street corners and send them to the Job Corps, at the same time that the Job Corps states that 50 percent of the boys they train cannot find work. I could have told them that the very day it started. Or we can create bands for the children to play music, or, as Mayor Lindsay is planning in New York City, we can send Shakespeare to the ghetto. I oppose none of these programs as such, but note this. In 1910 a Moynihan Report could have been written about the Italians: they were all criminal, all carried stilettos, all were involved in crime and broken families. In 1900, an even more vicious study could have been written about the Irish: they were called "Shanty," which meant "white nigger," and characterized as filthy, dirty, and unintelligent. Their families were also said to be disorganized. But, as the family heads of both these groups were permitted to gain economic independence, the problems in their communities and family life gradually disappeared. The same thing will happen when we give economic security to the heads of Negro families, and not before.

What about guaranteed work, full employment? I am not talking about Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "made work," because if the government is going in for public works it must answer two questions: Are we producing something everybody seriously needs? Are we building into the program the possibility for upgrading? I do not know Robert Kennedy very well, but I would like to help the poor Senator. He announced last spring that he could no longer take his children sailing in their yacht on the Hudson because his doctors told him that the filth of the river's spray would transmit diseases. We can assist Mr. Kennedy and others who own yachts by hiring hundreds of thousands of young men to clean up every river and every streamlet in this country. We can give them the title of assistant engineer. After a three-year period, those who have the talent can be elevated to the salary of an assistant engineer, and from there hopefully proceed to the salary and title and diploma of an engineer. John Dewey and I have much in common on this issue. Dewey said, "You learn while you do." I agree, but add, "You learn while you *do*, while you are being *paid*."

I also want to help poor Governor Rockefeller. He thinks he is rich, but he is as poor as the most deprived person on 116th Street and Lennox in New York City, because he has to breathe the same filthy air every time he comes into the city. Why do we not put hundreds of thousands of boys to the task of cleaning the increasingly filthy air in America's cities? Let us train them to be something more than people carrying other people's tools. Those who have the ability can be raised to an engineering or semi-engineering status. Or again, in every city in this country the transportation system is rotten. Why do we not put people to work improving it, or in building more hospitals, or more roads where they are needed, or more psychiatric clinics? We should put people to work building hospitals, not as orderlies who will always necessarily remain at that level, but with a possibility that over the next five years they could learn by doing to become assistant nurses at decent salaries and with diplomas.



Where We Are Now

by

Bayard Rustin

For the past year or two we have not been witnessing the kind of spectacle and excitement in the civil rights movement which, for almost ten years, we were accustomed to. What we have been witnessing, instead, are the annual outbreaks of rioting. This has caused some people to say the movement is in crisis, and others to say it is dead.

While I cannot argue with the first claim, I must reject the second.

In almost every city across the country there are scores of community groups working on the problems of housing, schools, jobs, health, and police relations. In New York City alone there are over 300 such groups. There have emerged across the nation since 1964 a whole complex of organizations dealing with welfare and educational problems. The South is honeycombed with voter registration and education groups that have emerged since the passage of the 1965 voter rights act. These latter groups are largely coordinated by the Southern Regional Council, which also brings together the Negro elected officials from across the South in a series of study groups. From New York to Los Angeles, vigorous work is being done to get youngsters into the building trades, and in New York City alone, we have succeeded in getting almost 300 of these minority youngsters accepted.

While a number of the groups that were concerned, between 1955 and 1965, with direct mass action now show evidence of decline, the two oldest groups, the NAACP and the National Urban League, have been growing vigorously since 1965. The NAACP has just completed one of its largest national conventions. Its budget has increased. Last year it raised \$686,786 in new life memberships, a considerable increase over 1965. In the last two years, it has added 87 new branches and 60 youth councils;

its membership in Mississippi alone has doubled. In the last three years the National Urban League has added a third more affiliates than it had originally -- increasing from 66 to 86; its budget has doubled and its staff has grown.

But if the movement is not dead, it is in a crisis. It has just come to the end of one historical phase of activity, and now confronts the beginning of a new one. The chief challenge is how and whether the movement can develop programs and strategies that, if relatively undramatic, are nevertheless relevant to the nature of the problems that must now be attacked.

## II

The modern civil rights movement can be divided into three periods. The first spanned the years between 1909, when W.E.B. DuBois' Niagara Declaration led to the founding of the NAACP, and 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down its school desegregation decision. In those years the central task was to establish under law the principle of equal and integrated citizenship for all Negroes. The movement's resort to judicial strategy was dictated by the need to overthrow the doctrine of separate but equal established by *Plessy vs. Ferguson*.

The *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision of 1954 freed the Negro movement to move on to new strategies and made it possible for a new period to emerge -- the second period, lasting from 1955 to 1965. The objectives of that period were not only to achieve enforcement of the 1954 decision, but also to compel the Executive Branch to submit legislation aimed at guaranteeing the right to vote and abolishing segregation in public accommodations. It was the Montgomery bus boycott, beginning a few months after the school desegregation decision, that signalled the emergence of the second period of nonviolent mass demonstrations in the

streets and other public places. These protests and the brutality and indignity they exposed pulled hundreds of thousands of sympathizers into the streets, moving the Congress to legislate more boldly and conscientiously in behalf of equal rights for all citizens than it had ever done before.

This legislation, culminating in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, ended the second period and brought us to the present one for which the earlier struggle in behalf of social and political dignity had not prepared us.

Three problems assaulted us simultaneously. First, we found that the Civil Rights Acts had torn down the segregated structures behind which Negro poverty had accumulated in more than a hundred years of systematic discrimination. More Negroes were unemployed in 1965 than in 1955. The median income gap between blacks and whites had widened. The ghettos had grown darker and fuller, both with frustration and with rats. It became clear that even if discrimination and segregation were abolished overnight, joblessness, inadequate education, ghettos, and disease would remain. The Negro had always faced the dual problem of racial discrimination and economic exploitation, but now the latter evil had taken precedence.

Secondly, we discovered that though Negroes were the most grievously victimized, the majority of Americans living in poverty were white. If this was true, how then could we make the issue of poverty an exclusively civil rights issue? We could not. Not only was it impossible to abolish poverty with protest demonstrations, but even if that were possible the government was unlikely to spend money to abolish poverty for Negroes alone.

Thirdly, we discovered that hundreds of thousands of those who had poured out into the streets did not really understand that the logic of what they were doing in the streets led directly to far-reaching economic programs, that dignity, ultimately, must be translated and fulfilled in economic terms. So they withdrew at the end of 1965.

III

These are some of the problems we met in the transition to the new phase -- the nature of which can be clarified by comparing it with the preceding period.

1. From 1955 to 1965 the objectives of the movement were chiefly those of voting rights and integrated public accommodations. Those issues affected Negroes almost exclusively and could be attacked simply as civil rights problems. Secondly, because they yielded spectacular and emotional victories they could sustain the interest of people who were attracted to the movement. They were matters of simple dignity, of getting what the Constitution clearly said everybody ought to have. In the present period we will be dealing with the more complex problems of housing, education, and jobs, which affect not only Negroes but also whites. And, in attacking them, we are raising not merely questions about the Constitution, but a great debate about democratizing American institutions.

2. In the previous period the unity of the Negro community cut across class lines. Most Negroes, regardless of their economic or social station, were subject to the same discrimination in public places. A Ralph Bunche was as likely to be discriminated against in a restaurant or a hotel as any illiterate sharecropper in Mississippi. This common bond prevented latent class differences and resentments from being openly expressed. White immigrant groups, incidentally, had not had this experience when they sought to be absorbed into American life: It had been possible for them to make two kinds of struggle at the same time -- the struggle to secure their rights as citizens, and the struggle to assert class distinctions within their own groups. It is only today, in the present period, that this class struggle among Negroes has fully emerged, and this

has come about because the people who benefitted most from the Negro revolution are middle class Negroes. (It was, after all, the sons and daughters of the middle-class that created and led the sit-in movements.) The economic status of the middle class now makes it possible for them to utilize public accommodations. And American industry has stimulated middle-class progress by upgrading the educated Negro, a fact which is both appreciated and scorned by unemployed Negroes. This new class resentment is as likely to show in frustration behavior -- such as riots -- as in other forms of hostility, not only towards whites who "have it" but also towards Negroes who have "made it." A Negro youngster said to me after the riots in Watts, "You can't talk to us, man, because you have made it and we haven't."

3. In the previous period, the only expenditure the federal government was called upon to make was what it took to meet the cost of police protection and law enforcement. In the present period, the federal government will be doing nothing if it is not prepared to spend billions and billions of dollars on full employment, public housing, medical care, education, and slum clearance. Many of the white Americans who joined in the March on Washington to applaud Martin Luther King's dream of freedom today seem far less enthusiastic about helping him realize that dream -- which requires the economic upliftment of all of America's poor and all of America's minorities. And the willingness of Americans to help bring about the fulfillment of that dream is going to be reflected in the extent to which they are willing to support programs of open housing; a guaranteed income for everyone who cannot or should not work; programs to tear down slums and replace them with decent housing; full and fair employment; a redefinition of the nature of work; or a \$2 minimum wage.

4. In the 55-65 period, though it was the quest for voting rights and

desegregation of public facilities that constituted the main objectives, the dynamic around the campaign to secure them was provided by brutality. Nothing that any Negro leader did or said quite so stiffened the will of the mass movement as the brutality of Bull Connor's policemen and dogs, firehoses, cattleprods, bombings of churches, and the murder of children and civil rights workers. This not only strengthened the Negro will, but also created a consensus of conscience in the white community. It is unlikely that this kind of stimulation will take place on so large a scale again and, therefore, in the present period the movement cannot look to negative brutality to sustain a dynamic.

5. Because of the drama of the previous period, the movement received a great deal of help from the mass media; almost every day for seven years newspapers all across the nation carried civil rights news and stories on their front pages. In the present period, however, the slow, irksome, and unspectacular work being done around voter registration and education, community organization, and programs for better schools, housing, and jobs, does not draw headlines. Most of our present activities are either ignored or relegated to small items on back pages. Perhaps this is the reason why so many people consider the movement dead. In any case, we find it harder to develop and sustain momentum.

6. In the previous period, if most people were asked to identify the nation's most compelling social problem, the answer would have been "civil rights". Today, the answer is most likely to be "Vietnam". This means that whereas in the previous period we were being carried along in a psychological forward movement, we are now trying to progress against a stream of psychological withdrawal. The war in Vietnam has created disunity in the civil rights movement; it has caused many liberals to desert the movement and concentrate their energies in anti-war activities; it has

permitted reactionaries, in the guise of super-patriotism, to cut back funds urgently needed for social change on the home front.

7. In the 55-65 period a young civil rights worker needed only two qualities to function effectively: bravery and perseverance. With those qualities alone, he could sit-in at hostile lunch counters, throw his body across the streets, integrate buses and terminals, and march in the teeth of police brutality and power. The questions he addressed were questions of clear principle -- the right to vote, free access to public accommodations, etc. Today the young civil rights worker needs more than just courage and perseverance. The strategies of social reconstruction, of reordering national priorities and of broad social planning require more than "soul". They require an ability to organize, an understanding of political power and action, and an insight into the levers of social change.

8. From 1955 to 1965, because the chief strategy centered on non-violent mass action, the movement tended to congeal. Such a simplified strategy is not now possible. The present strategy and tactics will have to be based purely on objectives, programs, analysis, and debate. While there was some debate surrounding strategy and tactics in the preceding period, it was limited solely to the areas of public accommodations and voting. But once the questions become, as they have now become, questions of economics, housing, jobs, and schools, there must be a wider dialogue; and there cannot be a meaningful discussion of national priorities, planning, and socialization without basic philosophic differences emerging.

9. The previous period was one of nonviolence. Even those Negroes who were not persuaded of nonviolence as a moral principle practiced it as a viable tactic. Today, many of them are convinced that a violent confrontation is both necessary and inevitable. While I do not believe that violence can play a constructive role in the solution of problems that face

Negroes, society provides them evidence that they won't get anything, however token, unless they riot:

In Harlem, Negro policemen weren't raised to the highest ranks and put in charge of ghetto precincts until young Negroes rioted. And only after the riots did the city and federal government rush in with summer money and summer programs.

In Watts, the young Negroes said to me: "We won. You know we won. We asked the Mayor to come, he would not come. We asked the governor, we asked the chief of police, none of them would come. But after we burned, baby, burned, they all came."

In Chicago, last year, young Negroes said again: "When we wanted sprinklers, we went out in the streets, forgetting nonviolence and patience, and we tore up the street, and in 24 hours we had not only the \$8 sprinklers we wanted, but they also gave us swimming pools."

In Buffalo, only after young Negroes rioted did the Mayor run to the Chamber of Commerce to get jobs that had been promised a whole year before. And then it took two riots to obtain just 100 inferior summer jobs.

All of this has some damaging effects on the Negro movement itself. First of all, as the powers that be respond to rioting with token concessions, an atmosphere is created in which the long range techniques of constructive organizations are discredited and undermined, along with the leadership that advocates them.

As an example: for some years prior to the Harlem riot of 1964, A. Philip Randolph, dean of Negro leaders, had urged the New York City administration and police department to upgrade Negro officers, and had proposed specifically that a Lieutenant Sealy, a Negro, be made Captain and placed in charge of central Harlem. For years, Randolph's appeal fell on deaf ears. After the riot, however, the city officials and the police



department announced that Lieutenant Sealy had been made a captain and placed in charge of the central Harlem precinct. Three days later, in a discussion with a Negro youth group, I was told by the leader of the group: "You and Randolph, with your ideas about peace and nonviolence, are useless. You have been begging whitey to make Sealy a captain -- but they paid you no mind. When we tore up 125th Street, they got the message. We upgraded Sealy with sticks and stones. You and Randolph ain't no leaders. You fools are beggars and begging is out of style."

There is also the danger that the riots may produce repressive action. This is in the nature of the very reluctant and token concessions that are being made to Negro violence: these token victories will be won up to a certain point, but beyond that point there will be no more token concessions left to be made. The larger and more fundamental concessions will not be won through violence, and therefore beyond a certain point riots will reap nothing but the most violent resistance and repression. Therefore, one of the challenges of the constructive leadership in the present period is to channel all this volatile energy into creative rather than destructive action. In short: how to reach the disinherited in the ghetto when the society itself does not make possible the kind of change that brings meaningful relief.

10. Finally, and in summary, we are no longer in a period of civil rights revolt, as such. We are now in the midst of a struggle to wrest human and economic rights out of the basic contradictions in the society. The question before us is: How is it possible in the United States, in the year 1967, to lift masses of Negroes out of poverty? I am convinced that unless we establish social and economic priorities and organize politically in their behalf, nothing will happen for us. Protest demonstrations will not get the billions of dollars that are needed to solve poverty. To get

money out of Congress for the broad social and economic programs, we must organize within the broad coalition of American need and American social and political concern. In short, the previous period was a period of protest; the present period must be one of politics.

IV

Given the nature of the foregoing analysis, it is obvious that developing a program and a strategy for political action, as necessary as it is, will not be a simple task. Nevertheless, the objectives of the movement from here on must be the following: (1) the implementation of existing laws; (2) voter registration and education; and (3) developing the groundwork of an economic strategy that will unite blacks and whites in a new majority.

The segregationists have taught us a bitter lesson in the importance of the way in which a law is applied. For several years now, Negroes have been winning legislative victories, while racists have been subverting much of the value of these victories by their relentless pressure on the bureaucracy in Washington. As a case in point, Federal civil servants have been frustrated in their efforts to award government contracts without discrimination. And there have been, of course, pitched battles between Washington and the Dixiecrats over guidelines for both Medicare and aid to education. So, the black man who, first, was forced to master the secrets of the judicial and then the legislative process in America is now being forced to learn how to deal with the bureaucratic apparatus. And therefore one of the central, practical demands of the present period is going to be the adequate enforcement of existing laws.

This does not mean, however, that Negroes should turn their backs on politics. The movement has made enormous strides in winning the vote in the South. By now taking full advantage of the opportunities won at great cost, the movement can help to change, not simply the plight of the

Southern Negro, but American politics as well. Only half the eligible black voters below the Mason-Dixon line are registered. However, they have already begun to have an impact upon their region, as Negroes sit in state legislatures and city councils for the first time since Reconstruction. An increase in the percentage of Negro registrants will inevitably mean a growth of Negro political power.

But there must be voter education as well as registration. In Alabama last year it might have been possible to defeat the Wallaces if there had been unity between the Negroes and the liberal-labor bloc. There was not, and the result was that the black voting strength was dissipated and a racist presidential candidacy was furthered. This situation may well reoccur in the South, but it need not. In state after state, once Negroes have registered and organized themselves politically they will have to seek out allies and seek to create a new majority. This tactic has already achieved some success in states like Tennessee, Texas, and Florida. Now it must be applied to the racist heartland itself.

The consequences of such an integrated political coalition would extend far beyond the South. In his brilliant analysis of "four party" government in the United States, James MacGregor Burns identified liberal Presidential Democrats, the moderate Presidential Republicans, conservative Congressional Democrats, and the Republicans. It was, of course, the cooperation between the Congressional Democrats and Republicans which frustrated all basic social change from 1938 until the Johnson landslide in 1964. And one of the main supports of this reactionary alliance was the one-party South. It provided a bloc of safe conservative seats which accumulated tremendous seniority and guaranteed the Southern caucus disproportionate power on the committees.

In 1964 Barry Goldwater forced a temporary realignment from the right,

and in the aftermath of the Johnson landslide, Congress passed more social legislation than at any time since the New Deal. But the defeat of the liberal freshmen in 1966 changed all that. The ruling alliance of the conservative Congressional Democrats and Republicans was reconstituted, albeit circumspectly. It is a fairly good bet that the practical reactionaries will not again follow a Goldwater tactic in this generation. That could mean a new "deadlock of democracy", to use Professor Burns' phrase. Negroes would suffer, of course, since they are the first and worst victims of every social problem in this country. But so would whites. There would be no political dynamic capable of responding to the challenge of the city, of transportation, of pollution and so on.

But if Southern Negroes were to register, organize themselves and make their alliances with the white liberal and labor movements, there could be a realignment from the democratic left rather than from the Goldwater right. The effect of such a strategy would be the creation of a two-party South and a consequent erosion of one of the main sources of Republican strength in the United States. Viewed in this perspective, a dynamic Negro political movement in the old Confederacy would make an enormous contribution to solving the problems of the black ghettos of the North and, indeed, of the entire society.

This view of the tremendous political potential of Negro registration and voter education in the South leads directly to my third point: the need for an economic program.

As long as white workers think that the Negro demand for employment is an attempt to get their jobs, or that the Negro insistence upon decent housing is a conspiracy to destroy the property values so laboriously accumulated by the white lower middle class, just so long will there be no progress in these areas. In each case, the posing of the issue

inevitably divides people who could, under other circumstances, be allies. Put more generally, there can be no such thing as an exclusively Negro economic program, for that counterposes the self-interest of a little more than 10% of the society to that of the overwhelming majority. Therefore, the economic legislation and action urged by the civil rights movement will either be integrated or else it will be a failure.

This point takes on a special urgency in view of the war in Vietnam. It is quite clear that, economically speaking, America is rich enough to have both guns and butter. The pressure now building up to cut back on social programs is not derived from some stern necessity. It is, basically, a conservative attack which is using the cover of patriotism to further reactionary aims. Therefore, the civil rights movement should join now with all those who are fighting against these disastrous cuts in appropriations for fighting poverty, rebuilding the cities, providing decent education for all, and the like.

But beyond this immediate struggle, Negroes must prepare now for that day when the tragic war in Vietnam will be over. At that point, the society will be plunged into a debate over basic economic priorities. Will the multi-billion dollar Federal investment in military destruction be replaced by tax cuts that increase the wealth of the rich and the corporations more than that of the rest of us, both black and white? Or will there be truly massive social investments to destroy slums, create full employment, abolish poverty and improve the quality of life for every citizen? There are those currently within the Johnson consensus -- businessmen who only recently have been converted to the Democratic Party and to a commercial version of Keynesianism -- who will push forcefully for the first option. And there had better be not simply a movement committed to social spending, but a movement with a program which it can explain to all the American people.

It was with this thought in mind that A. Philip Randolph insisted that his Freedom Budget be drawn up so that it would apply to every citizen and not just to Negroes. But the point has only begun to be made. And there is a crying need right now for Negroes to lay the basis for a qualitatively new civil rights thrust. Black people must indeed organize black people, and assert their rightful power. But this can only be done if there is a serious, practical political strategy and a social and economic program.

In the period immediately ahead, I do not see the civil rights movement scoring dramatic victories, such as those scored in the struggle to end segregation in public accommodations and the voting booths. Rather, I see a process of reorganization and regroupment which may well seem to be tedious and gradualist but which is even more revolutionary in its implications than the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955, the sit-ins of 1960 or the March on Washington of 1963.

The movement now can, and must, prepare to challenge, not just the prejudices of the white community, but some of the basic and unjust contradictions in the political and economic nature of American society. It is only when this has been achieved that justice will come into the lives of all our poor minorities and rioting and violence will cease.

### THE NEW RADICALISM: ROUND III

*Round IV of our series on the New Radicalism will appear in the Winter PR, with pieces by Norm Fruchter, Tom Hayden, Sargent Shriver and others. The discussion was opened in the Spring issue by Michael Harrington and Nat Hentoff. Different points of view will be represented in future issues.*

#### **Bayard Rustin**

The "new radicalism" can be observed at two levels: as mood and as movement.

Primarily, it is a new mood and style of social action—a hostility toward the dominant economic and political institutions of the country and an impatience with the conventional efforts to transform those institutions. For many of the new radicals, the hostility and impatience grow out of naked confrontations with power forces representing the worst in American life. These confrontations are both effect and cause of the new radicalism. As embodied in direct action, they are sought after and valued in themselves as the most effective antidote to hypocrisy, which is seen as *the* crippling disease of the American cultural and social order. On the other hand, to encounter racist police, their clubs and dogs, is a searing revelation that permanently stamps one's perception of his relationship to society. And, indeed, it is hard to argue that this raw existential experience does not reflect a significant aspect of social reality, stripped of its trappings and its verbiage of consensus.

But it is not the total reality. That understood—really understood—I have no difficulty in identifying myself with the mood. The revelation came to me years ago, and it has been reinforced with every jail sentence, with every beating, with every slander, with every betrayal. And there will be more.

As an actual social movement, the new radicalism must be sorted out. Lumping its components together under a phrase may induce a

sense of vast solidarity, but the sense is illusory; worse, it is a form of self-indulgence which radicals cannot afford.

The first component is a youthful wing of the civil rights movement whose evolution can most conveniently be traced back to the 1960 sit-ins. Here were lower-middle-class Negro college youth challenging through direct action a set of institutions (lunch counters, libraries, etc.) which directly constrained and oppressed them. These institutions, visible and close at hand, were concrete manifestations of a social order that blocked the upward mobility which this class of Negro youth and their parents had been experiencing for roughly two decades, as a consequence of the postwar prosperity and industrialization. These institutions were an affront to a new self-image based on the perception of new possibilities.

The sit-in movement was not merely a flash in the pan but helped stimulate motion in other segments of the Negro community because the institutions under attack were part and parcel of a socioeconomic order which oppressed the entire Negro community. Almost every feature of that order has come under attack. Because of the relative economic homogeneity of the Negro community, the revolt of one stratum spread rapidly to the others, and a full-scale social revolution is now in progress. It is a revolution rooted in a definable social base.

Obviously the *entire* Negro community is not actively participating in the revolution (though it has been estimated that nearly one out of every ten Negroes in the country joined the 1963 March on Washington!). Still, its extraordinarily democratic character is clear from its demands and from the massive participation it has stirred.

The demands and needs of the Negro community are articulated, however imperfectly, by the civil rights movement. But aren't the organizations comprising this movement merely bureaucratic shells, representing in membership only a stratum of the community? To some extent, sadly, this is true. Let it be noted, however, that this condition applies to *all* of the civil rights organizations—from the NAACP to SNCC. Merely to speak in the name of, and to "orient toward," the dispossessed is not to have their proxy at the conference table or a mandate to haul them into your end of the political spectrum. Merely to talk about community organization neither achieves it nor preempts the field. The need to dig roots deep into the Negro community faces all of the civil rights organizations. The



support of that community has to be won, through hard work and ongoing programs. Its morale must be nourished by victories.

Meanwhile, the civil rights organizations in the aggregate have won the right to speak for the Negro community, and they retain that right until it is challenged or withdrawn by the community itself. Charges of "sell-out" may be hurled at will; until new organizational forms are thrown up, capable of demonstrating, concretely and not merely rhetorically, that *they* and not the established organizations are the chosen instruments of the masses, the critics remain entitled to their views, but they must be tempered with humility. They must beware of a disease peculiar to their kind: elitism.

This admonition is especially relevant to the second component of the new radicalism, which I view as a qualitatively different phenomenon from the first. It is not rooted in an oppressed class in any socioeconomic sense. It is a new intellectual class. Sociologically, its origins are in the mushrooming of higher education, in the fact that some five million youth are presently enrolled in colleges and universities, a figure to be multiplied in the years ahead. Graduate students play an important role in molding the outlook of this new class. Its members, by and large, have been reared in middle-class affluence, not grinding poverty or racial discrimination. Their motivation is moral (not material), their quest is for new values (not programs), and, perhaps above all, they seek situations and experiences which are affirmations of meaningful personal existences. This largely existential search not only explains much of the abstract anti-institutionalism of the new radicals; it also throws light on some differences between the current student movement and its counterpart of the thirties and forties. Better educated than the latter, the former is nonetheless less ideological. It is also less intellectual—in that, as Irving Howe has suggested, it is ahistorical and less discriminating. (In my view, this condition tends to arise not when the intellectual class is small and struggling to assert its distinctive role, but when it has become large enough to see itself as institutionalized and therefore generates the tensions making for disaffiliation and self-negation. The condition itself is a by-product of affluence.)

Reacting against the increasing bureaucratization and impersonalization of the campus, and rejecting the vapidness, conformity and boredom of middle-class life, the students disaffiliate from both. They come to the Negro and to the poor in search of meaning.

It would be the grossest slander to say that they go slumming. True, most of them will return to the larger society to claim the good jobs for which their educational backgrounds qualify them. No matter; they have made a noble choice, and many will benefit from it. So long as they are in the movement, the question is: are they to be taken seriously, or are they to be condescendingly patted on the head? Here I suspect some of their best friends are among their worst enemies. That is what happens when friendship becomes idolatry.

This, it strikes me, is precisely what has happened to create a third component of the new radicalism—a relative handful of writers and intellectuals who see in the Negro and student movements a potential base for their ideas. These ideas range from one-dimensional economic panaceas to new theories of protest, to world-historical notions of the rise and fall of civilizations. I do not speak of them pejoratively. Throughout history such people have played an enormously important catalytic role. One need only recall the great socialist theoreticians. But they enjoyed an advantage of which modern American radical intellectuals have been deprived by history: a socialist movement which gave their theories flesh and blood substance. Thus deprived, today's radical intellectuals are more alienated, more isolated, and more dependent for sustenance on their own theories than any similar class I can think of. Worst of all for everybody, they have not been conditioned to relate their production to the step-by-step building of a movement, to strategies and programs. This is not to say that they lack the capacity for specificity and detail; quite the contrary, they have been conditioned by the general trends in the intellectual and academic worlds toward the minutest specialization. Within their special fields they may evolve radical ideas and interpretations—in *vacuo*.

Former presidential assistant Richard Goodwin stated the problem well in a speech reported in the *Washington Post* (July 21, 1965):

In other periods of challenge and forward movement, we have had a fertile advance ground of thought towards which Government could move—from the economics of Lord Keynes to the views of Louis Brandeis. Today with the exception of a few men—men like Ken Galbraith and Michael Harrington and Paul Goodman—this is not true. Of course much is being written and said. The air is filled with the insights of sociology and psychology, political science and public administration. This

is the age of insight—often penetrating, sometimes brilliant, but . . . there is a bleak and dismal failure to relate much of this fresh understanding to the process and needs of society.

This failure stems, I contend, from the absence of anything that can seriously or precisely be called a liberal-radical *movement* in this country. Only through such a movement, and not merely through the assimilation of intellectuals into the government, can the relevance of the intellectual community be reestablished. That movement is not built by locating the most "radical" theses on some calibrated yardstick and projecting them onto masses in motion.

This is precisely the method by which some intellectuals, failing to propose meaningful, feasible next steps, perpetuate their incapsulation as a class apart. I trust I shall not be accused of anti-intellectualism when I assert that in this state they develop bad habits. Rendered inconsequential, they come to lack a sense of actual consequence. Unnourished by a political movement, they are peculiarly tempted into arrogant and elitist postures as a defense against sterility.

Michael Harrington did not invent poverty. Where, before him, were the voices of the vast majority of intellectuals? What "radical" esoteric pursuits had absorbed them? Martin Luther King did not invent segregation. Where were the intellectuals then who today cry "sell-out" and arrogate to themselves the right to tear up other people's membership cards in "the movement"—that fragile and embryonic stirring in America which some of us have struggled to sustain for decades and whose growth and victory are even now by no means absolutely assured?

## I

The above may be thought crabby or negative. I intend it to be deflationary, to help restore a sense of perspective among the components of the new radicalism, of which I consider myself a part. I want that radicalism to flourish, to broaden its base, and to approximate, at least, power. It follows that I do not want it mired in an exceedingly unoriginal existential subjectivism, or addicted to strategy by temperament. For it is literally true that the aspirations of millions of people, a good number of them black, will be profoundly affected by what we build—or fail to build—now. Our strategy must be based,

first of all, on a recognition of who we are and where we are today.

It is easy to get caught up in semantics. In the spring PR Nat Hentoff speaks of the new radicalism as "a political and economic movement."<sup>1</sup> That we can even speak of the phenomenon as a *movement* shows how far we have come from thinking seriously about power. One may speak of the trade unions as an economic (and political) movement, because here are discernible millions of people organized behind a more or less specific program. On the local union level that program consists of demands relating to wages and working conditions—demands which, when won, lift in a thousand ways the daily lives and dreams of working people. On the national level, the AFL-CIO has a definable program for reforming the national economy in the direction of full employment, social security, better schools and the rest. This program is surely inadequate to meet the conditions described by the signers of the Triple Revolution statement. It is at the same time the most advanced and rightminded program being pressed by any of the mass institutions of the country.

Now this is simply a fact, and it is difficult to participate in discussions with people who will deny facts. (When Nat Hentoff writes that "labor's demands for higher minimum wages and higher social security benefits, moreover, are *irrelevant* for those who have no jobs and no prospects of jobs" (italics mine), he takes us to the heart of the problem: all-or-nothingism. Because these demands are not the total cure, they are irrelevant. Well, of course they are not. At least a *part* of the unemployment problem can be cast in terms of insufficient aggregate demand, which would be increased if labor's call for a \$2.00 minimum wage and extension of the Fair Labor Standards Act to more than five million presently uncovered workers were met. To say this is not to deny the technological revolution (except in the eyes of the monoists, variants of the all-or-nothing school); the problem is largely that the fruits of the technological revolution have been snatched by corporate interests and held back from workers and consumers (hence the lag in demand).

For reasons I have set forth elsewhere (*Commentary*, February 1965), I do not believe that the current demands of the labor movement go far enough or deep enough. But that is a far cry from saying that they are *irrelevant*. I suspect that there are millions of working

1 "The New Radicalism: Round I," PR, Spring 1965.

poor and unemployed who would like a taste of these irrelevancies. I hope they get it, that they fight hard for it—despite the hecklings of some new radicals (especially those for whom a \$2.00 minimum wage would be a decided comedown).

Hentoff goes on to say, incredibly, "Nor do the liberals or the churches seem fully to realize not only that the War on Poverty is inadequately financed and narrow in scope, but that it cannot succeed in terms of the present definition of 'work' and the sacred link between the traditional definition of production and income." If the liberals and churches do not realize (even "fully") the inadequacy of the War on Poverty, where then is the push for an expanded program coming from? Unless, of course, Hentoff would deny that there are any forces to the left of the Johnson Administration other than the "new radicals"! To say this is clearly to deny that what he calls the "traditional package of demands of the AFL-CIO, the ADA and the rest of the liberal 'coalition'"—namely, "such limited immediate goals are massive public works, national health insurance, a two-dollar-an-hour minimum wage"—that these are to the left of, or different from, the program of the Administration. If there is no difference, then what an embarrassment to the new radicals. For, as Hentoff also writes, "they aren't themselves so fully utopian as not [sic] to overlook the need to gather support for such limited immediate goals. . . ." But if these immediate goals already constitute the Administration's program, rather than a significant push from the Left, the new radicals have in fact been sucked into, are no different from, the "Establishment." What strange conclusions follow from all-or-nothingism! Not enough that liberalism isn't socialism (alas), it's not even permitted to be liberalism. It is part of the oppressive Establishment, and there's no one left to fight it but "us." (And "us" is an ever diminishing quantity as, one by one, we fail Hentoff's tests.)

There are some among the new radicals who have carried this mode of analysis even farther than Nat Hentoff. They see the welfare legislation of New Deal liberalism not as inadequate meliorism but as an extension of the Establishment's bureaucratic controls over the poor and, on balance, as an evil. They speak of "corporate liberalism" as a quasi-fascism which has corrupted all of the institutions of American life. Aside from the fact that such an equation overlooks with insufferable glibness the crucial existence of political democracy

under "corporate liberalism" and its equally crucial absence under fascism, one may be permitted to ask this question: assuming that the evil has so permeated society and has accumulated so much concentrated power, what counterforce would be required to destroy it? Would it not have to be a majoritarian popular movement, consisting not simply of a stratum of students and the poor, but of Negroes, the organized labor movement, the liberal middle class and other segments of the population? Is this not a coalition of forces welded into a movement capable of exercising power *democratically*?

In the face of this need, what is the response of the new radicals? It is to define the necessary as the unattainable (which explains why the new radicals are not optimistic). Thus, Hentoff writes: "For the more radical goals, such as a guaranteed annual income and a redefinition of work, some new radicals do see the possibilities of a coalition. But not yet." Then when? When sections of the middle class are hit by the technological revolution, when the unions respond to the loss of membership caused by automation, etc. (One wonders how the new radicals, given their view of the Establishment's monolithic impregnability and the pervasive corruption, can be confident that the unions will respond at all or that the reaction of the middle class, left to itself, won't be toward fascism.) In any case, until these folks are radicalized by a deteriorating situation, there is no basis for coalition. Coalition must occur on the terms of the new radicals because "they tend to believe that to focus *all* one's energies on an illusory goal like 'full employment' or on such other transitionally important but ultimately inadequate programs as massive public works, reduced work-weeks and greatly expanded retraining programs is not to be radical enough. [The italics are Hentoff's. As if anyone is focusing *all* his energy on these goals!] But they are not especially sanguine that they can convince others in time."

Woe for the rest of us who cannot recognize revealed truth, for in the immortal words Hentoff attributes to Tom Hayden, "Bitter days will pass if ever sweet ones come to be."

I submit that this arrogance is not new. It is a distillation of the worst catastrophist varieties of sectarian leftism, and its resurrection in the sixties leaves one speechless.

In the name of precisely what new radical program do the new radicals abjure coalition for now?

First, there is the recognition that, in U Thant's words, "the fundamental revolutionary change" is that the developed countries "can have—in anything but the shortest run—the kind and scale of resources they decide to have. . . ." Very good, although why Hentoff has to refer to U Thant for an idea Mike Harrington has long been expounding (and which his new book treats at length) leaves me puzzled. Then there is Ben Seligman's point about structural unemployment, taken from that "tired radical" magazine *Dissent* (edited by that "tired radical" Irving Howe). Then there is the observation by Wilhelm and Powell about the Negro being the weather vane of the future, a notion I seem to recall having expatiated on occasion and about which Hentoff kindly quoted me at length in his *The New Equality* (written a year or so before I too became an ex-radical).

Then there is Robert Theobald's proposal for a guaranteed annual income, but with the warning that given "the values permeating this society, the Theobald idea might well produce a future similar in its bland essentials to that described by Ellul" [viz., a dehumanized, entirely paternalistic welfare society]. Thus we need a change in societal values. A first step is a "revision of the way we educate teachers," along the lines of Goodman, Bruner and Friedenberg. (Are they part of the new radicalism; to what extent have their writings been studied or rendered programmatic by the new radicalism?)

But the new education requires a redefinition of work, and for the redefinition Hentoff again turns to Tom Hayden for a paragraph which Hayden would never claim to be original with him. Every idea in it comes from Frank Riessman (even before his *New Careers for the Poor*) and his colleagues. Never mind; Hayden favors a society which "subsidize[s] community-level art and journalism, health clinics, recreational facilities, libraries and museums. . . ." Lest we be transported by enthusiasm, however, Hentoff reminds us that just as the present system of values would corrupt Theobald's idea, so would it "violate Hayden's 'humanist' goals of spontaneity and self-growth through social and individual action. The experiences of Mobilization for Youth and HARYOU-ACT, among other shattered illustrations, testify to the absurdity of expecting this government to make the radicals' social revolution for them."

The last observation is well put and absolutely correct. But, then, who *will* make the radicals' social revolution? This is the central

question, the hub of my disagreements with many new radicals. It is central because only by answering it is there any hope of breaking out of the vicious circle which may seem at first to be merely a function of Hentoff's style but is really a vortex of contradictions in the basic thinking of the new radicalism.

In the absence of revolution, revolutionary *ideas* either wither or become the property of the established social order, infused with its values and turned toward its ends. The Theobald idea, for example, is not terribly dissimilar to Milton Friedman's mechanism for abolishing poverty. It *could* become a device whereby the haves buy off the have-nots, the latter being totally separated from the productive process. It *could* easily be incorporated into a *Brave New World* totalitarianism. Radicals who are optimistic about the correctness of their ideas ("... it is not too late to shape a technological society so that human capacities and spontaneity can be maximized...") but pessimistic about the prospects of actual change ("... they are not especially sanguine that they can convince others in time.") are therefore in a peculiar position.

Obviously, I am not proposing the fabrication of optimistic outlooks where no basis for them exists. But the insistence of the new radicals that there is no basis for a coalition now, that they are not interested in a coalition except on radical terms (even where those radical terms become nonradical in the absence of large-scale movement) is in the nature of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Eschewing coalition now, the new radicals in practice attack coalition and its proponents. They counterpose themselves to coalition and thereby to the very forces which must be set in motion if the radical ideas are to be radical, i.e., become functional. Having begun a "constant dialogue" with a bare handful of the dispossessed, some new radicals would already speak in their name; and in their name they attack as empty shells organizations which have actually organized and enjoy the adherence of millions. Hentoff cites the work of Students for a Democratic Society, most of which I find exciting. But at this writing, at least, no SDS community organizing projects can claim a steady membership of more than fifty indigenous people. Of course, these are fifty more than would have been reached if the student organizers had not moved in. But it hardly entitles them to dismiss the NAACP (with over half a million members); to charge Martin



Luther King with selling out in Selma, where he led thousands; to challenge Walter Reuther's ability to speak for hundreds of thousands of auto workers. It is perfectly legitimate for anyone to be critical of established leaderships of any kind. (I am not without some personal experience on this score.) The danger arises when one assumes that because his program is "objectively" in the interest of the masses, he in fact has the allegiance of the masses, whose "so-called" leadership is therefore discredited. From that assumption is a short leap to another: stubborn retention of their so-called leadership indicates the stupidity or incompetence of the masses. Someone else must therefore act for them. Need it be said that there is nothing new about this brand of "radicalism"?

## II

It will be said that I am setting up straw men, that the new radicals—with their slogan of "participatory democracy"—are the last people among whom a tendency (and a *tendency* is all I am talking about) toward elitism can be discerned.

But let us turn to a recent article by Staughton Lynd in *Liberation* (June-July). In identifying Lynd, the magazine quotes Dow Jones's *National Observer* that he is "the foremost intellectual in the radical left." Since the New Left is rightly incensed when its leaders are designated by outsiders, it should be recalled that Lynd was chosen to be chairman of the April 17 March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam. We may assume that this historic honor would be conferred only on someone who, to a greater rather than lesser extent, represented the thinking of the new radicals. I have many strong objections to Lynd's controversial article, but I want for now to focus on this excerpt from his final paragraph, describing the March:

Still more poignant was the perception—and I checked my reaction with many many others who felt as I did—that as the crowd moved down the Mall toward the seat of government, its path delimited on each side by rows of chartered buses so that there was nowhere to go but forward, toward the waiting policemen, it seemed that the great mass of people would simply flow on through and over the marble buildings, that our forward movement was irresistibly strong, that had some been shot or arrested nothing could have stopped that crowd from taking possession of its government. Perhaps next time we should keep going. . . .

The easiest thing is to dismiss these words as extreme revolutionary romanticism, as a fantasy growing out of the New Left's frustration with a repressive, machine-dominated, bureaucratized political order. And one may sympathize with their desire for the *ultimate* demonstration as a means of breaking through the walls of cold power with a mass of warm flesh and blood.

Indeed, has not Staughton Lynd's vision at some time or other visited every radical—especially radicals uprooted from the middle classes, powerful in their ideas but impotent in their individual alienation? Of course. But the democratic radicals have held the vision in check by raising certain questions which I fear have gone out of fashion in New Left circles, submerged under their catchall phrase "participatory democracy." One cannot escape the feeling that "participatory democracy" is being counterposed, not merely to the empty formalisms of "representative democracy" as historically evolved under American capitalism, but to the essential structural guarantees of political democracy that must prevail in any social system that would call itself democratic.

To get to the point: under whose mandate are the 20,000 Washington marchers entitled to occupy "their government" for even ten minutes? Does Lynd believe that they represented the views of anything approaching a majority of the American people on the question of Vietnam? On the contrary, the public opinion polls all revealed substantial majorities in support of Administration policies. What gives the disaffected sons and daughters of the middle class the right even symbolically to become the government?

How frustrating that the majority will not see the light and accept the wisdom (and there *is* wisdom) of the enlightened! Since they will not, the enlightened minority has one of three choices: (1) It can fight for its point of view in the hope of becoming a majority. (2) It can give up the fight and withdraw into privacy. (3) It can proclaim itself the majority and attempt to seize power.

The first course is what democratic radicals would advocate; the second we reject as complicity in present evil. As for the third, take away its romantic coatings, its existential audacity, and the personal warmth of its exponents, and you have . . . putschism. There is no more accurate way to characterize the political event inbedded in Lynd's vision than as a *coup d'état*, albeit nonviolent. Elsewhere in his