

The Negro Revolt:

The Push Beyond Liberalism



DESPITE THE DOMINANCE of liberal ideology inside the civil rights movement, the Negro revolt today is a reaction to the failures of liberalism. As long as the struggle was confined to the South, it could be assumed that legislation, such as that which had already been enacted in Northern industrial states, would provide the answers to the Negro's demands. The Negro community would be satisfied with slow but steady progress toward full participation in the American Celebration. In the late 'fifties, liberals such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., pro-

claimed that the need for "quantitative liberalism," or struggles for economic necessities, was over. The issues of the 'sixties, he promised, would be those of "qualitative liberalism," aimed at bettering the quality of life in a society of abundance.

But in 1963, the civil rights struggle moved North with explosive force, and brought the liberal face-to-face with the reality of social and economic discrimination. The wide range of anti-discrimination laws had not bettered the conditions of life in the ghetto; despite these laws, de facto segregation in the North continued to increase. The civil rights movement demanded programs to translate these policies into immediate and tangible improvements in employment, housing and education; the liberal response was to brand these proposals "discrimination in reverse." The civil rights movement demanded public works and other programs to provide full employment; the liberals assailed this as "unmindful of economic realities." Liberalism's basic commitment to the status quo stood exposed to view.

Meanwhile, the constant talk of politicians about civil rights, the calculatedly limited legislation passed, and the anti-poverty program convinced the white community, particularly blue-collar and white-collar workers, that the Negro was making enormous strides. As the Negro demands outraced the official response, hostility among white workers, who felt threatened by this militancy, increased. A schism developed between the Negro and those whose economic and political interests most closely parallel his interests.

The present civil rights leadership has a liberal ideology for they believe that their goals can be achieved within the present party structure and without basic changes in the way economic life is organized. It must be recognized, however, that as long as the American economy requires a large supply of un-

skilled labor, the majority of Negroes will continue to live in a poverty-centered culture. The most important task of the civil rights movement is to help build and participate in a political movement which can genuinely work for and achieve the demands of the Negro people.

ON JULY 29, A SUMMIT MEETING of national civil rights leaders was held in New York. Attended by Roy Wilkins of NAACP, Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney Young of the Urban League, James Farmer of CORE, John Lewis of SNCC, A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, this meeting was to draw up a statement on the 1964 elections. This statement, signed by Wilkins, King, Young and Randolph, and supported by Rustin, called upon the civil rights movement "to observe a broad curtailment, if not total moratorium, of all mass marches, mass picketing and mass demonstrations until after Election Day, November 3."

When the statement was made public, Roy Wilkins, spokesman for the group, stated that everyone at the meeting agreed with it personally. Farmer and Lewis, he said, declined to sign it until they had time to consult their respective organizations. The next day, both Farmer and Lewis repudiated the idea of a moratorium. Both SNCC and CORE indicated that they intended to demonstrate at the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City on behalf of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

The moratorium was presented as merely "a temporary change of emphasis and tactic, because we sincerely believe that the major energy of the civil rights forces should be used to encourage the Negro people, North and South, to register and vote. The greatest need at the present period is for political action." This last was aimed at Goldwater, who "presents a serious threat to the implementation of the Civil Rights Act and to subsequent expansion of civil rights gains . . . In our view the election contest which is shaping up is a more important reason for a moratorium than any local or state condition that has confronted our forces heretofore."

Although the moratorium statement was issued against the backdrop of the Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant riots, it is more than a reaction to these events. It is more than likely that a similar statement would have been issued even had the riots not taken place. Moreover, had the statement represented only a form of backhanded support to President Johnson, it is possible that Farmer and Lewis would have agreed to it.

The statement was more than that: it was an attempt to divert the civil rights movement from direct action campaigns. In an immediate sense, it was a reaction to the idea that demonstrations would increase "white backlash" and elect Goldwater. But it also reflected the view that demonstrations by and large serve only to isolate the Negro from his liberal and labor allies. It is therefore no surprise that CORE and SNCC, the organizations most closely involved in direct action, repudiated the moratorium statement.

The summit meeting, then, was a confrontation between two divergent tendencies in the civil rights movement. The disagreement is not over the value of political action, for both CORE and SNCC have been in the forefront of voter registration drives in the South. It centers rather around the value of direct action campaigns in mobilizing the Negro masses and the movement's

relation to liberalism. The Wilkins-King-Rustin tendency favors an accommodation to liberalism which CORE and SNCC bridle at.

The broker variety of Negro leader, such as Roy Wilkins, has long been antipathetic toward direct action campaigns. Increasingly, this antipathy is spreading to Northern liberals, who advise curtailment of demonstrations until the Civil Rights Act has time to be implemented. In view of the fact that the provisions of the Act have almost no relevance to the North, this advice is peculiar.

Recently, however, this liberal attitude is being supported by Negro leaders such as A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, who have long been identified with militant and radical views. Moreover, this is no panic reaction to the Goldwater candidacy; it is the expression of a distinct political tendency in the civil rights movement whose appeal is militant and radical in rhetoric, but quite the contrary when put into action. If it is true that the civil rights movement is increasingly faced with the necessity of developing a political action strategy, one must carefully examine the Rustin tendency's views on political action.

ALTHOUGH NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY of the existing civil rights organizations, Bayard Rustin has considerable influence with Martin Luther King, Jr., A. Philip Randolph, and sections of CORE and SNCC. His views illustrate how seemingly radical conceptions can have a conservative influence and lead away from building and strengthening a militant movement.

The day after the March on Washington, Rustin attacked direct action campaigns and demonstrations as "gimmicks" which failed to answer the economic problems facing the Negro community and aroused hostility among potential allies. The foremost immediate task before the civil rights movement was to build a Negro-labor-liberal alliance; the solution to the Negro's economic problems depended upon the ability of such an alliance to realign the political party structure of the United States into consistently liberal and conservative parties. The main direction of the movement should be toward gaining allies, for without allies no minority could hope to gain its objectives.

In this view, then, gaining allies is the decisive strategy. Direct action campaigns for immediate gains and to mobilize Negro support are de-emphasized. In one case, proposals for effective enforcement of fair employment laws have been opposed for the same reason. The New York City Commission on Human Rights proposed that qualified Negroes be given "preferential treatment" in gaining entrance to building trades unions and their apprenticeship programs. The Commission argued that the adoption of a "no discrimination" policy by these unions and their employers would not by itself open up jobs for Negroes; the very restrictive rules which limit entry into these trades would frustrate this. In order to undo a long history of discrimination, the Commission proposed that for a period of time Negroes be given hiring preference. The building trades unions protested bitterly against this proposal; other sections of the trade union movement and liberals attacked it as "discrimination in reverse."

Rustin joined this opposition to a just and reasonable demand on the ground that preferential hiring in itself cannot solve unemployment in the

Negro community. Moreover, such a demand, he maintains, raises fears among white workers that the Negroes are threatening their jobs. But behind this objection lurks the implication that, until there is full employment and a sense of security among white workers, Negroes must moderate their demands for an end to employment discrimination. Such an attitude, if actually pursued, would sound the death-knell of the civil rights movement.

In line with this approach, Rustin has failed to associate himself fully with criticism of the building trades, the most notorious stronghold of racism in the trade union movement. This does not imply, of course, that he supports these unions; but he has noticeably abstained from forcefully criticising them. Again, it is true that all the building trades apprenticeship programs together would hardly ripple the surface of the sea of Negro unemployment; however, any single demand is by its nature only partial.

The first New York school boycott provided another example of the meaning of this approach. Rustin viewed the boycott as a "gimmick" which would do little but incur the hostility of the white community. Only after all the major civil rights organizations had endorsed it did he become involved—as its leader.

The thread of reasoning which unites all these anomolous positions is that the civil rights struggle has reached the stage where only a broad economic program can solve the problems of the Negro masses. This, it is argued, is realizable only through political action, specifically, the realignment of the political parties into consistently liberal and conservative bodies. For this, a broad Negro-white alliance is necessary, and all other considerations must be subordinated.

With this perspective, the activities of the militant sections of the civil rights movement become a danger. The existing organizations are militant enough; the need is not for militancy but for unity. Thus any group or activity which threatens this unity is also a danger.

This view is stated explicitly in the article by August Meier and Tom Kahn in the Spring 1964 *NEW POLITICS*. They criticized the formation of the loose coalition known as ACT for disturbing "the growth of cooperative unity among the civil rights organizations." ACT leaders are accused of having a "revolutionary mystique" and being

... committed to a massive all-out attack on what civil rights activists call the "power structure." Its strategy appears to be a logical extension of the total-freedom-now philosophy that swept the country in the Summer of 1963... Its seeming tactic, similar to Brooklyn CORE's, will be to promote demonstrations if the "power structure" does not quickly and totally eliminate discrimination in a wide range of problem areas. This strategy reflects impatience with the tactics of those civil rights groups which pinpoint their demands, moving rapidly from one specific goal to another.

Unfortunately, Meier and Kahn do not identify these established organizations that are so busy moving rapidly from one goal to another. At another point they imply that these limited campaigns have limited value. While noting that ACT may serve as a gadfly pushing the established organizations "to more frequent and intensive action in order to take the initiative away from the extreme militants," Meier and Kahn point out that

... it would be frivolous not to note the danger it poses to the growth and future of the movement. The civil rights struggle cannot be won simply by

irritating and inconveniencing white people, unless it achieves concrete results, and this, ACT strategy is not likely to do. Certainly, such a strategy is not calculated to hold or gain allies among whites, and the fight for Negro freedom cannot be won without allies. There is also the danger that, by virtue of their unrealistic demands and their criticism of other organizations, the groups represented in the ACT coalition may raise false hopes among the masses to whom they are appealing, and may discredit and undermine the more practical and realistic militant activist organizations like CORE and SCLC and thus seriously set back the whole process of civil rights.

There is, however, one virtue in having "extreme militants" around: "the publicity sent out by the extreme militants will inadvertently increase the effectiveness of CORE, SCLC and even SNCC—for these, formerly regarded as the radical irresponsibles, will now be perceived as relatively respectable and responsible groups with which powerful whites will be glad to deal." Even if the faint aroma of 'sweetheart contracts' is disregarded, it is not clear how ACT, by forcing the white power structure to deal with these new responsables, is at the same time discrediting and undermining them. Obviously if the devil did not exist, it would be wise to invent him.

THE QUESTION OF NEGRO-WHITE ALLIANCES IS OF VITAL importance and in the long run, the success of the civil rights movement will hinge on the alliances it develops.

Three distinct strategies on this question have begun to emerge: 1) the Negro-labor-liberal alliance is the movement's most immediate need and must be achieved at almost any cost, even the sacrifice of the movement's militancy and, if necessary, the weapons which brought it into being; 2) the Negro-labor-liberal alliance is a fraud; the Negro must achieve his freedom by his own efforts, rejecting entangling alliances; 3) the Negro-labor-liberal alliance must be forged on the civil rights movement's own terms, not by sinking to the level of current liberalism but by pushing the labor movement beyond liberalism.

The question of a Negro-white alliance is vital to the civil rights movement, but equally vital is the question of how it is to be achieved and on whose terms. If liberalism were moving toward fighting for a program that would have real meaning for the Negro people, there would not be the present cleavage between it and the civil rights movement. But not even the recent riots have persuaded liberals to go beyond their usual pious pronouncements. Indeed, many of the Negro's "natural allies" are among those who feel that Negro militancy has gotten out of hand.

Most white liberals and moderates support the Civil Rights Act and oppose overt segregation. This general climate of broad agreement with civil rights aims is a valuable political asset. The social and economic problems of the ghetto, however, have met with little understanding, and programs of the scope required to deal with these conditions lack real support. Discrimination in the South is easily understood. If a Negro is denied service in a Southern restaurant, one passes a public accommodations bill. But if he does not have the money to buy a meal even if he is admitted to the restaurant, the problem is more complicated. More complicated, admittedly, but once given the determination to do something about it, it can be rapidly solved. This determination, however, requires the will to change the way the economy is organized, the

way power is exercised, the way income is distributed, and it is precisely here that the liberal failure becomes most evident.

The dilemma of the liberal, torn between his support of civil rights goals and the maintenance of the status quo, is illustrated in an article in the May 9 *New Republic* by Alexander Bickel, of Yale Law School, NR's most frequent civil rights commentator. The article, "After a Civil Rights Act," intends to be an appeal to liberals to understand the justice of Negro demands and the need to be subjected to some inconveniences by Negro protests. "A society that has oppressed a portion of its population the way the Negro has been oppressed, especially in the South, is after all fortunate if all it gets in return is mass marching."

But when Bickel gets to specific demands, his attitude changes. "Grievances in the North are difficult to redress because they go to deeply entrenched features of the society which can be reorganized only over time." In illustration, Bickel cites Brooklyn CORE's demands prior to the attempted World's Fair stall-in: 1) stoppage of all city construction until the work force is integrated; 2) support to rent strikes; 3) an immediate plan and time-table for complete school desegregation, and 4) a civilian public review board to investigate charges of police brutality. Bickel ridicules all these proposals:

These are impossible demands. The grievances that underlie them are just but with the best of faith and the greatest skill and imagination it will take time and more time to do something about them that actually affects the daily lives of masses of people. The upshot is frustration. The responsible Negro leadership knows this, of course, and applies pressure, for the most part, only when some intermediate, attainable goal is denied it, or when it senses that interest in pursuing the long-range remedy is slackening.

This is a typical liberal view. Why it should require the "greatest skill and imagination" to institute a police review board or to enforce existing fair employment clauses in city contracts is not explained. Nor is it explained why a demand for a *plan and timetable* of school desegregation can be considered an impossible one. Nevertheless, sections of the civil rights movement, including some socialists, propose an accommodation to these views. The dynamic of the struggle, they say, rests no longer with the Negro, but must shift to the white liberals, the labor movement, and the other elements that must go to make up a broad reform movement. The Negro has made his point; he has exposed his grievances. Further demonstrations, according to this view, would only give rise to hostility in the white community and block the formation of alliances. If this policy is seriously pursued, the Negro may win "allies" but there will be no civil rights movement.

A policy of moderation has the appeal of being an apparently practical answer to immediate political problems. This policy is strengthened by several direct action protests which were not in fact directed at any specific target. Two examples of this were the sit-down on a bridge by East River CORE and Brooklyn CORE's attempted World's Fair stall-in. Such activities by small groups lacking any real support in the Negro community take on a putschist character. It is impossible to defend any and all projects which do not involve large numbers of people or do not seriously try to involve them, aim at no immediate gains and arouse hostility in the white community. The new leadership of the civil rights movement must combine determination and militancy

with a political program and organization. The "organized spontaneity" of small groups cannot substitute for working to build a mass movement.

The established leaders are in no position to slow the pace of the struggle, and to the extent that they are successful, they only contribute to violent outbursts and to the rise of black nationalist and anti-integrationist attitudes in the Negro community. The great danger is not militancy. The great need is not to curtail demonstrations, but to involve the Negro masses in organized struggle for meaningful economic and political goals. The leadership of the established organizations has instead become entangled in Democratic Party politics, seeking narrow organizational gains and working for an accommodation with liberalism.

The present concern with "white backlash" is justifiable. But the argument that demonstrations must be curtailed because they lead to riots is patently false. Moreover, nothing less than the abandonment of the struggle can really deal with the reaction from sections of the white community. In New York City, such groups as PAT will be placated only when efforts to desegregate the ghetto schools are halted. And if it is necessary to call a moratorium on demonstrations and protests in the North, why is this not doubly true for the South, where the civil rights movement has aroused much more hostility among whites?



THE FAILURE OF THE LIBERAL WELFARE STATE brings forth various separatist and black nationalist tendencies in the Negro community. A new form of militancy appears, an ideological militancy which rejects integrationist goals as conservative.

The largest of these separatist groups is the "Black Muslims," now in the throes of an internal crisis symbolized by the defection of Malcolm X. This crisis arose as a result of the essentially abstentionist attitude of the "Muslims." The idea of a self-sufficient Negro economy only leads Negro workers—among whom it has achieved notable success in Northern cities—away from the struggle against the economic conditions of their existence and furthers the interests of Negro businessmen and an economic theocracy. The character of this movement—politically abstentionist, economically conservative and racially segregationist—has quite naturally evoked some enthusiasm from the ultra right and Dixiecrats.

Somewhere to the left are the Freedom Now Party and the relatively small group formed around the *Liberator* magazine, both of which are sharply critical of the Utopian character and conservative orientation of the "Black Muslims." The program of the Freedom Now Party is "radical": it rejects the existing parties and calls for the nationalization of basic industries. Its focus is on building an organized Negro political power which can pressure the white power structure into granting the Negro economic and cultural freedom. But the FNP

rejects any relationship to other social forces in American society, and therefore ends up with the idea that the Negro community, if organized around something like the FNP, has sufficient power to win its demands from a hostile and inherently racist white society. The very nature of this approach pushes the FNP toward separatist solutions.

Operating on the fringes of the black nationalist and separatist groups are "left" political tendencies, such as the Socialist Workers Party and *Monthly Review* magazine, and a whole range of Stalinist and Stalinoid grouplets such as the Maoist-oriented Progressive Labor Movement. These see in nationalist groups the essence of radical and militant sentiment which they hope to develop into a "revolutionary" movement. As a result there has come into existence a most wondrous creature, the white radical with a black nationalist ideology.

The interplay between Negro and white nationalists can be seen in the May 1964 *Monthly Review*. In keeping with its new Maoist position in the Chinese-Russian dispute, *MR* has discovered black nationalism with a vengeance. *Monthly Review* quotes at great length, and with obvious approval, a statement by Max Stanford, chairman of the "Revolutionary Action Movement," which appeared originally in *Correspondence*, a radical newsletter published in Detroit. Stanford describes RAM's philosophy as "revolutionary nationalism, black nationalism or just plain blackism" and adheres to "the concept that we are at war with white America." Politically it identifies with the have-not nations, "eastern or newly independent nations struggling for independence, socialist nations," and the victory of the "world black revolution or world revolution of oppressed people rising up against their former slavemasters." Huberman and Sweezy see such expressions as an indication of the progressive radicalization of the Negro movement.

One of the few virtues of the editors of *Monthly Review* is that they face up to all the consequences of their position. During Stalin's lifetime, they admitted the existence of the Terror and supported it, unlike the "idealistic" CPers who denied and perhaps even disbelieved its existence. The *MR* asks editorially how a Negro minority, if committed to the "revolutionary nationalism" of the RAM statement and "at war with white America," can succeed. "Most Americans," they say, "black as well as white, probably think that if and when it comes to open warfare, the white's vast superiority in numbers and armaments will ensure a quick and crushing defeat for the blacks."

Not so, say the *MR* editors and they turn to Robert Williams (former NAACP leader in Monroe, N.C., now living in exile in Havana) for the "new Negro radicalism's" view. Williams serves up nothing less than guerilla warfare as the way to win freedom. Through guerilla tactics, "violence and terror will spread like a firestorm" and will bring about economic chaos and total social disorganization. Williams writes:

During the hours of the day sporadic rioting takes place and massive sniping. Night brings all-out warfare, organized fighting, and unlimited terror against the oppressor and his forces. Such a campaign will bring about an end to oppression and social injustice in the U.S.A. in less than 90 days and create the basis for the implementation of the U.S. Constitution with justice and equality for all people.

This crude nationalism *cum* leftism is totally unrelated to the needs or interests of the Negro people—or of white people for that matter. It is not diffi-

cult to imagine the sort of society that would emerge from such communal warfare, and it would bear little resemblance to democracy. If one takes Robert Williams at face value, this is a most unusual way to struggle for "the implementation of the U.S. Constitution with justice and equality for all people." Far from resting on a belief in the strength of the Negro people, it is based on the profoundest pessimism. Such a policy would not only be suicidal for the Negro but would destroy any hope of democracy in America. This unholy amalgam of Mau-Mauism, Castroism and Maoism is of the greatest danger.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT must turn toward political action, seeking an alliance with those sections of white society who support civil rights goals and whose economic interests most closely parallel those of the Negro. An all-Negro party makes sense only if the movement rejects integrationist goals and seeks economic, political and cultural separation from white society. The primary element with which alliance must be sought is the advanced section of the white working class, organized in the labor movement. Such a Negro-labor alliance, however, must accept the urgency of the Negro's demands as a vital part of its program; anything less would only be playing the old liberal game.

One reason, after all, for the present growth of separatist tendencies is the failure of the existing Negro-labor alliance. The leaderships of both the labor and civil rights movements support the Democratic Party in overwhelming majority; rank-and-file white and Negro workers equally overwhelmingly vote Democratic. Much of the talk about the "need to create a Negro-labor alliance" seems to assume that one does not now exist and that a special strategy must be developed to bring it into existence. On the concrete accomplishments of the present alliance as it exists in most Northern industrial states there is silence.

What is needed is a new political basis for the alliance, a program which serves the real interests of white and Negro workers rather than the interests of Democratic Party unity. The civil rights movement must demand a vast program which can provide jobs for all at a decent wage, tear down the slums, build adequate housing, strengthen and enforce civil rights legislation, and provide quality integrated education. It must put forth a program which will end the condition of the Negro as the underclass in American society.

Such a program in itself would not be radical; the Democratic Party platform promises to accomplish many of these tasks. What would be radical is the demand that these promises be fulfilled, and that private interests not be permitted to interfere. In this sense, the civil rights movement challenges the status quo. It raises the issue, without facing it directly, of the way capitalist society distributes and uses its wealth and resources.

The civil rights movement must understand why the Democratic Party, which promises such a program, is unable to carry it out. The most obvious roadblock is the co-existence in that party of liberals, labor and Negroes with the Dixiecrats. The civil rights movement must demand that labor and liberals fight vigorously and unremittingly against the power of the Dixiecrats. The liberal must be forced to choose between the Negro's support and that of the Dixiecrats; he must not be permitted to support the fence-straddling of the Kennedys and Johnsons.

There is a less apparent but no less real roadblock in the Northern Demo-

cratic Party. While the working class and Negroes provide the votes, the big city machines are often in direct alliance with powerful sectors of the business community. Real estate, construction, financial and corporate interests have close and influential connections with local Democratic administrations. To suggest in New York City, for example, that voting for Bob Wagner or Bobby Kennedy can meet the immediate needs of the Negro community is only to convince Negroes anew of the irrelevance of white liberals and radicals.

There was a golden opportunity at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City to take a giant step toward the type of political realignment advocated by the Rustin tendency. The seating of Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates in place of the regular party might have precipitated a walkout of Dixiecrats from other states. But President Johnson and Humphrey were dead set against any proposal which would seat MFDP delegates as delegates from Mississippi because they feared the Dixiecrat walk-out.

However, instead of pushing resolutely for the seating of MFDP delegates precisely because it might lead to a larger Dixiecrat walk-out, Bayard Rustin joined Walter Reuther and Joe Rauh of ADA in urging the MFDP delegates to accept what SNCC leaders called a "back of the bus settlement." The circle has taken a full turn: the accommodation to liberalism has led to support for Johnson, and support for Johnson has led to the abandonment of their own goal of political realignment. As a socialist tendency in the civil rights movement, the Rustin tendency is politically bankrupt in its capitulation to Johnson.

The nomination of Senator Goldwater has obscured many of the real problems confronting the civil rights movement, throwing much of it into closer support of the Democratic Party and Lyndon Johnson. Real and justifiable criticisms of Democratic failures are muted because of the idea that Senator Goldwater is some variety of neo-fascist. Lyndon Johnson, anathema to liberal and civil rights forces at the 1960 Democratic convention, is being boomed as a second Great Emancipator. Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King, A. Philip Randolph and Whitney Young have already announced their support of Johnson on grounds of anti-Goldwaterism. This is also the political motivation of the July 29 moratorium statement.

One charge against Senator Goldwater is that, having voted against the Civil Rights Act, he will not enforce it. It cannot be denied that a Johnson Administration would be somewhat more active in its enforcement, but neither can it be said that Goldwater would fail to enforce it. Moreover, the impression is created that the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations have been as raging beasts, roaming to and fro, seeking whom they might devour under the terms of the 1957 and 1960 Civil Rights Acts. As SNCC workers in the South will testify, this is not quite accurate. In fact, Goldwater would be hard put to be much more restrained than the past Democratic Administration in cases of racist violence against Negroes and civil rights workers. And since enforcement of the Act will depend largely on the federal courts, the racist judges appointed to life terms by President Kennedy will present a real problem. Goldwater's nominees could hardly be worse; they might even, like Eisenhower's, be better.

The enforcement procedures of the Civil Rights Act, such as they are, must also be considered. These are so complex, ineffective and dilatory that, granting the greater determination of a Johnson, the effective difference between

the two administrations would be far less than is feared, unless one assumes that Goldwater would refuse to enforce the law altogether. Even in such a case, organizations such as the NAACP could continue to initiate court actions. This would be a drain on resources, but the NAACP has by and large had to rely on its own resources for many of the most significant court actions for civil rights. The point is not to minimize the reactionary nature of Senator Goldwater's program, but to question whether, in view of the record of the past four years, the differences between his program and that of a Democratic Administration would be that significant.

A civil rights movement which rejects tokenism in integration must also reject tokenism in its political demands. A willingness to trade political support for political patronage and token economic programs is a betrayal of the real interests of the Negro people. A political candidate who does not propose or intend to implement a program which will radically improve the life of masses of Negroes cannot be worthy of support. To be able to present its own program vigorously, the movement must be politically independent; it must remain critical of those parties and candidates who offer only lip service, lame excuses and limping palliatives while basic problems remain and even grow more severe.

A movement which struggles resolutely for the interests of the Negro people is fighting for the interests of all working people. What sets the needs of the Negro apart is not their uniqueness but their urgency. The civil rights movement must express itself through a political party which fights uncompromisingly for its goals, a party free of ties to status quo forces. This is not and cannot be the Democratic Party. Nor can it be, as some have proposed, an all-Negro party. It must be a party which all working people can support and in which they can participate actively and democratically; a party which translates the demands of the civil rights movement in a broad economic and social program which will shape and guide the future of the entire nation.

It was the sit-ins, the freedom rides, the boycotts and marches and demonstrations that transformed civil rights from a series of legal actions into a great movement involving masses of people in active struggle. The movement is radical precisely because it is not content to express its needs only every four years. It is involved in political action on a year-round basis, and its battleground is not the polling booth but the streets. Now the movement is threatened by those who would disarm it ideologically in the face of the enemy, who would transform it into a pale appendage of liberalism and the Democratic Party. The response of the movement to this threat may well determine the future of progress in America for decades to come.

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Notes on the Civil Rights Struggle and the White Community



"THERE IS ONE THING stronger than all the armies in the world," said Victor Hugo, "that is an idea whose time has come." The Civil Rights Revolution is upon us. The American Negro is the revolutionist. Like all revolutionists, he no longer possesses an idea, the idea possesses him. Whether an unemployed worker, a professional, a housewife or a schoolboy, the American Negro wants "Freedom Now." He will no longer submit to racial discrimination in employment, housing, education, public accommodations and politics.

In the broadest sense, freedom to the Negro means that America must accept in deeds, not merely in words, the basic concept that the Negro is a human being. Because he now has a vision of his equality, he is in revolt against a social order that has assigned him a role of inequality.

To recognize the inherent dignity of the Negro means that he must be given the opportunity to express his feelings and he must be accepted as an equal in negotiating with the white power structure. His self-esteem and self-respect require nothing less. He will not be satisfied if gains are obtained for him. He wants them obtained by him and by his own selected leaders. He is not content to be a passive spectator to a struggle taking place about him. He has known enough of white paternalism, of being singled out for special favors as the "good Negro" and of receiving handouts and welfare. He knows how such treatment has robbed him of his pride, maintained his bondage to whites, perpetuated his dependence and increased his self-hatred for his submissive role. Therefore, whatever power is held by whites in the civil rights movement must be relinquished to the Negro so that the civil rights revolution becomes *his* revolution and that *he* becomes fully responsible for its tempo.

The assumption to power of newer and younger Negro leaders will inevitably mean that they will not be as patient, orderly and limited in their demands as the old-guard Negroes. But the white community and the traditional Negro leadership need to accept one of the prime obligations of parenthood, well explained by Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving*. That is, when you really care for the child, you allow and encourage it to grow and develop in such a way that it will one day be able to leave you. The white power structure has for too long sustained the Negro leaders of the civil rights struggle under the guise of wanting "responsible" leaders. But to whom were these leaders responsible—the white benefactors or the Negro people?