

the Negroes

To most New Yorkers today to whom the word means anything, “Fort Greene” means the Fort Greene Houses, the largest public housing project in the city, which stands between downtown Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Navy Yard. To the eye, it is mostly Negro, though the official figures show that a fifth of the 3,500 apartments are occupied by whites, and another fifth are occupied by Puerto Ricans. It would probably surprise New Yorkers who recall stories of gang fighting in the Fort Greene area to discover that above the housing project, in a little park, stands one of the major monuments in the city. It commemorates the prison ship martyrs of the Revolution and was designed by the great architects of New York’s age of elegance, McKim, Mead & White, who also built the University Club, the Columbia University campus, the N.Y.U. Hall of Fame, the Pennsylvania Station, and the Brooklyn Museum. This monument contains a great central

column standing amidst urns and eagles, a magnificent staircase down which one may approach the project, a comfort station designed like a Greek temple which puts the utilitarian structures of Mr. Moses to shame. From the site one may view the entire housing project and a good deal besides. All this provides a rather grander setting for gang rumbles than they usually find.

It does not pay to extract too much symbolism from the accidental coming together of a mostly Negro housing project and a great monument erected by an earlier city. And yet, one does not have to force the symbolism, because between the New York represented by the monument and the New York of the housing project there is a close and intimate link. Historical irony makes the elite of that older New York and the poor Negroes of the project both, for the most part, Protestant. Indeed, more than half the Protestants of New York, who are only a quarter of the population, are colored. And since the work of the city is so often divided along religious lines, it means that the old elite and its institutions—churches, charitable societies, hospitals—often find they have inherited a special responsibility for the Negro.

Fort Greene is rich in symbols. Bordering the park to the south stands the huge bulk of the Brooklyn Technical High School, one of the specialized high schools of the city system which have often served as the first step in the economic and social advance of many boys from earlier immigrant groups. It is the potential bridge between the project and the monument.

NUMBERS

IN 1960 THE CITY HAD 1,088,000 NEGROES. THERE HAD BEEN an increase of 340,000 in ten years, coming after an increase of 290,000 during the 1940's. During the 1950's the white population of the city dropped by almost a half-million. The New York of 1960 was one-seventh Negro (see Table 3).

New York of course is not alone in this great shift in population. Indeed, it has a smaller proportion of Negroes than other great Northern cities. In 1960 Chicago was 24 per cent Negro, Philadelphia was more than one-quarter Negro, and Cleveland and Detroit had even higher

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proportions—both 29 per cent. New York is so enormous that even large population changes affect the proportions slowly. In Newark, for example, which is a city of 400,000, the Negro population increased by 63,000 between 1950 and 1960, and Newark became one-third Negro. But the kind of change that transforms a city the size of Newark is for New York only a neighborhood shift.

The Negro population is younger than the white, though not as young as the Puerto Ricans. Thus, it forms a higher proportion of both the school population and the juvenile delinquent population for demographic reasons alone. (There are of course other reasons why there are more Negro juvenile delinquents.) In the next decade, owing to the fact that about three-tenths of New York's schoolchildren (almost all white) attend parochial and private schools, the Negroes and Puerto Ricans will together exceed the rest of the public school population.¹

The Negro population is still in large part new to the city. In 1960 half of the entire nonwhite population of the city above the age of 20 had come from the South.² These Americans of two centuries are as much immigrant as any European immigrant group, for the shift from the South to New York is as radical a change for the Negro as that faced by earlier immigrants.

The Negro immigrant has not had the good fortune of arriving with useful skills and strong institutions, nor has he found a prosperous, well-organized Negro community to help him.³ The Negro community in the city is indeed an old one, but age has done nothing to prepare it to meet the problems of mass migration. In 1910, before the first decade which saw a sizable migration from the South, New York had 90,000 Negroes, less than 2 per cent of the population. Negro writers who remember that antebellum New York community often write about it with something like nostalgia, but in those days, aside from a tiny Negro "upper class" of minor government employees and professionals, the community consisted almost entirely of domestics, laborers, waiters, unskilled workers. Negroes accepted an inferior place in society; and in this inferior place, despite the existence of distinctions of class and status, poverty was matter-of-course and segregation was universal. This group could

do little for Negroes coming up from the South and from the West Indies.

During the First World War the Negro population increased rapidly. In 1920 it was 150,000, about 3 per cent of the population. In the 1920's mass immigration from Europe came to an end, and the Negro population of the city more than doubled. The migrants poured into a New York in which they could not eat in a first-class restaurant, go to a first-class hotel, or get a job in the white world (aside from some specially reserved government jobs) above menial labor. And yet the city did offer a large variety of jobs, at pay much higher than Negroes could get in the South, and, as important, it offered Harlem, a more exciting and stimulating environment for Negroes then than any other place in the country.

Segregation helped make Harlem alive. It is hard to envisage, as one walks the streets today, with the buildings forty years older, and the population greatly changed, what Harlem was like in the 1920's. In those days, Negro entertainers and musicians were a rarity on Broadway, and one had to go above 125th Street to find them. Because of the unbroken pattern of segregation, Harlem included everyone in the Negro community—the old tiny “upper class,” the new professionals and white-collar workers, the political leaders just beginning to take over the old political clubs, the artists and entertainers and writers, as well of course as the domestic workers, the laborers, and shady characters.*

Writing in 1930, James Weldon Johnson described a Harlem few of us would now recognize, but he helps explain the enormous attractions of New York, even though the city did not offer the advantages of jobs in heavy industry available to Negroes in Chicago and Detroit: “In nearly every other city in the country,” Johnson wrote,

* We are today very conscious of the role of public services, in particular relief, among Negroes, and the charge is often made that it is really relief that is bringing in large numbers of poor newcomers. This is part of the story; but it is interesting to recall that in the twenties, when there was no such thing as relief and the poor were dependent on private charity, the Negro population of New York leaped from 150,000 to 327,000. And that in the next decade, when public relief did become a reality, the increase was much smaller.

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“the Negro section is a nest or several nests situated somewhere on the borders; it is a section we must ‘go out to.’ In New York it is entirely different. Negro Harlem covers one of the most beautiful and healthful sites in the whole city. It is not a fringe, it is not a slum, nor is it a quarter consisting of dilapidated tenements. It is a section of new-law apartment houses and handsome dwellings, with streets as well paved, as well-lighted, and as well-kept as any in the city. . . . The question inevitably arises: will the Negroes of Harlem be able to hold it? Will they not be driven further northward? Residents of Manhattan, regardless of race, have been driven out when they lay in the path of business and greatly increased land values. Harlem lies in the direction that path must take; so there is little probability that Negroes will always hold it as a residential section.”⁴

This makes strange reading today; it made strange reading only ten years later, when another major Negro writer, Claude MacKay, wrote a book on Harlem. Ten years of depression had been for the Negroes a disaster that almost rivaled slavery. MacKay quoted estimates that 60 per cent of the population was on relief, 20 per cent held WPA jobs.⁵ Dependent on casual labor and household service, without salaried jobs, without businesses, Harlem’s residents suffered far more from the depression than any other part of the city. White workers knew what it was to go two or three years without steady work, but a case of special distress in the white world was the norm in the Negro world. Harlem became more frightfully crowded than ever—even though there were high vacancy rates in adjacent East Harlem—because the population was so impoverished. The Negro population continued to rise through natural increase and migration, but much more slowly than in the 1920’s. In 1940, on the eve of World War II, it stood at 450,000.

With the war, a new period in the history of the Negro in New York City began. The age of Harlem, as the seat of the Negro renaissance and of depression misery, drew to a close as new areas of Negro settlement, in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and the suburban counties, were opened up and rapidly increased. The war created a new New York for the Negroes—new in the kinds of

neighborhoods where they lived, the kinds of jobs they held, the role they played in politics and social life, and in their image of themselves and their relation to other groups. Central in this transformation of the Negro position was a revolution in the level of income that was typical, and in the kinds of jobs that became accessible.

JOBS

DURING THE DEPRESSION, THE NEGRO WORKER, WHEN HE worked, made a little better than three-fifths what the white worker made in New York City, and the wages of the white workers were barely above what was needed to survive. As a result of the war, and the entry into new types of employment, a great change occurred; unemployment fell sharply (though it was still higher than among whites), wages increased, and the gap between Negro and white income narrowed. In 1949 the Negro in New York State made about seven-tenths as much as the white worker. During the fifties the gap has remained at about this figure. The 1960 census reported that the median income of Negro workers in the New York metropolitan area was about 70 per cent of the white median. For nonwhite families, it was 73 per cent of the median of all families, reflecting the fact that more members of a Negro family work.⁶

In other Northern cities during the fifties, this gap was smaller. New York was behind Detroit and Chicago in wages because it did not have the same concentration of auto plants, steel mills, stockyards, and other heavy industry, in which powerful and progressive unions had achieved high wages and a strict equality in pay between Negroes and whites. Incomes in New York, with its great variety of low-wage and service industries, lag behind those for white as well as Negro workers in the big, heavy-industry cities. However, as the economy slowed down in the late fifties and the early sixties, New York was spared the high Negro unemployment of the heavy-industry cities. In 1961 the National Urban League estimated that about 10 per cent of Negro workers in the New York metropolitan region were unemployed. This was less than the national figure of 14 per cent and much less than the figure of 17 per cent in Chicago, 20 per cent in Cleveland, or 39 per cent

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in Detroit.⁷ (The 1960 census reported 6.8 per cent of male nonwhite workers unemployed, as compared with a New York City rate of 4.9 per cent.)⁸

Before the onslaught of the industrial unemployment of the late 1950's and early 1960's, Negro men whether unskilled or semiskilled generally could find better jobs in the Midwest than in New York. But the situation for Negro women was better. New York is not a workingman's town. Its big individual employers are nonunionized banks, insurance companies, corporation front offices, "communications" industries, retail stores. At the lower levels of skill, there are better jobs for women than for men. In 1960 the median income for Negro women was 93 per cent of the median for white women; for Negro men it was only 68 per cent of the white median.⁹

But it is not only today that we see a peculiar and characteristic difference between the economic power and capacity of Negro men and women. In 1940 in New York City, almost as many Negro women as men were employed—81,000 to 88,000. By contrast, among whites, two and a half times as many men as women worked. More than three-fifths of Negro women then worked as private household workers. The enormous Negro community of 450,000 was in large part supported by the domestic labor of women, which was the single most important source of income. About a third of the men were engaged in various service jobs—as superintendents, bootblacks, watchmen, and the like. A quarter worked in skilled and semiskilled crafts, a seventh as laborers (see Table 4).

There were in 1940 only small groups of professionals and clerical and sales workers. But perhaps most striking was the almost complete absence of a business class, and this is still true today. The small shopkeeper, small manufacturer, or small entrepreneur of any kind has played such an important role in the rise of immigrant groups in America that its absence from the Negro community warrants some discussion. The small shopkeepers and manufacturers are important to a group for more than the greater income they bring in. Very often, as a matter of fact, the Italian or Jewish shopkeeper made less than the skilled worker. But as against the worker, each businessman

had the possibility, slim though it was, of achieving influence and perhaps wealth. The small businessman generally has access to that special world of credit which may give him for a while greater resources than a job. He learns about credit and finance and develops skills that are of value in a complex economy. He learns too about the world of local politics, and although he is generally its victim, he may also learn how to influence it, for mean and unimportant ends, perhaps, but this knowledge may be valuable to an entire community.

The small businessman creates jobs. In the depression, the network of Jewish businesses meant jobs for Jewish young men and women—poor paying, but still jobs. The impoverished businessman still needed a delivery boy, the small furniture manufacturer needed someone to help with the upholstery, the linoleum retailer someone to help him lay it. These were not only jobs, they also taught skills. In addition, the small businessman had patronage—for salesmen, truck drivers, other businessmen. In most cases the patronage stayed within the ethnic group. The Chinese restaurant uses Chinese laundries, gets its provisions from Chinese food suppliers, provides orders for Chinese noodle makers. The Jewish store owner gives a break to his relative who is trying to work up a living as a salesman. The Jewish liquor-store owner has a natural link to the Jewish liquor salesman. These jobs as salesmen are often the best the society offers to people without special skills and special education. As such, they can be important to Negroes, as the picket lines before liquor stores in Harlem in 1960, demanding the use of Negro liquor salesmen, attested. A Negro action committee threatened that the pickets would soon be in front of the grocery stores. But how different matters would be if Negroes owned the grocery stores they patronized to begin with, as most groups in the past have, and as Puerto Ricans today do.¹⁰

One may scoff at the small businessman as pursuing an illusion—who can fight the A & P? For a community, however, regardless of what the balance sheet showed, the small businessman was important.

Much has been written about the failure of the Negro to develop an entrepreneurial class.¹¹ In the

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early 1900's, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, one an accommodationist and the other a militant, both exhorted the Negro to go into business, to develop wealth and power. Today Negro business is if anything less important than fifty years ago. The catering business, in which Negroes played a role of some significance in the late nineteenth century, has declined and fallen into other hands. The only important forms of Negro business are beauty parlors, barber shops, the preparation of special cosmetics, and undertaking parlors. Negro insurance companies (which once developed because Negroes found it hard to get insurance from established companies), banks, the Negro press, Negro real estate, whatever their importance symbolically, are of small importance economically in supplying jobs, economic contacts, skills. Perhaps one may make an exception to some extent for real estate, for a sizable amount of savings has been invested in houses and business property, and there are now a good number of real estate brokers and operators. And yet, this is for the most part all on a remarkably small scale. When anything even as extensive as a building of an apartment house is planned by a group of Negroes, this is news in the community newspapers.¹²

There are some obvious explanations for lack of Negro businesses. Negroes emerging from slavery had no experience with money, and had no occasion to develop the skill in planning and foresight that even the smallest businessman must have. In this respect, the European peasant, whose standard of living may have been as low as a slave's, was better off, for he had to market his produce and manage a small stock of money and goods. The upper class of slaves, the house servants who might have been given some small education, had as models the lavish expenditure of a plantation society, and it was easier for them to observe the processes of consumption than those of production and marketing.¹³ The freed slaves and later the migrants to the North were absolutely without financial resources, even the scanty sums needed for tiny businesses. They met unbending prejudice and discrimination in their efforts to get stock, capital, or space for rent.

Yet surely there were in the great Negro city that grew up in Harlem in the 1920's opportunities for the

business-minded to get a foothold by serving their own, as so many ethnic groups had done before them. But other factors came into play to inhibit the rise of Negro businessmen. One of them was that the Negro, while a migrant, was not like the immigrants bearing a foreign culture, with special needs that might give rise to a market. There was no local demand for a Buitoni and a La Rosa to make pasta, for a Goodman and a Manischewitz and a Schapiro to supply matzos and kosher wine. The only demand was for undertakers, hairdressers, and cosmetics. As we know, in time these small beginnings in supplying members of one's own ethnic community might grow into sizable enterprises which laid fee on a world of customers that extended beyond the initial ethnic base.

Perhaps another way in which Negroes differed from European immigrant groups was that they did not develop the same kind of clannishness, they did not have the same close family ties, that in other groups created little pools for ethnic businessmen and professionals to tap. There was little clubbing together of the South Carolinians versus the North Carolinians versus the Virginians—life in these places was either not different enough, or the basis of the differences was not attractive enough, to create strong local groups with strong local attachments. The Negro family was not strong enough to create those extended clans that elsewhere were most helpful for businessmen and professionals. Negroes often say, "Everyone else sticks together, but we knock each other down. There is no trust among us." This is a stereotype and probably has the same degree of truth that most stereotypes have, that is, a good deal. Without a special language and culture, and without the historical experiences that create an elan and a morale, what is there to lead them to build their own life, to patronize their own? The one great exception to this is the Negro church, and it is perhaps no accident that tight churchlike groupings among the Negroes have often branched out into business enterprise, as was true of Father Divine and Daddy Grace and is now true of the Nation of Islam.¹⁴

In the end, the most important factor is probably the failure of Negroes to develop a pattern of saving. The poor may have had nothing to save; but even

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those better off tend to turn earnings immediately into consumption. The reasons are clear enough to anyone sensitive to the frustrations under which almost all Negroes in America live. They are sufficient to explain the search for pleasure in consumption which makes the pattern of saving and self-denial so rare. To quote Elijah Muhammed addressing a great throng in Harlem (and more authoritative voices, such as that of the sociologist Franklin Frazier, could be added): "You're a sporty people! . . . You look fine and well-dressed. . . . But you haven't got anything. You spend more than your rich white master and your children! You spend your paycheck back for sport! And your masters wait for the money they just gave you to come back home." ¹⁵

But if problems of incapacity for business prevailed among Negroes coming up from the South, it did not among that large part of the Negro population of New York that comes from the West Indies. We cannot help, when we talk about any group, obscuring differences that are important within it. When we say "Negroes," we speak of those born in the city as well as those coming from the South, the middle class as well as the lower class, the native-born as well as the foreign-born, the light-skinned as well as the dark, the speakers of French and Spanish as well as those who speak English. To the external white eye all these distinctions seem of no importance. This tendency to create a group by perceiving people as being all one occurs not only in the case of Negroes: very different groups of Jews were merged by the perception of the outer world, more than by their own self-perception of similarity. But this process affects Negroes more harshly because the outer world makes so few distinctions among them.

Alongside the stream of migrants from the South was a stream from the West Indies, primarily the British West Indies, and mostly from the single most populous island, Jamaica. After 1925 this immigrant stream became much smaller; most of the New York West Indian element was established in the city by the mid-twenties. In 1930, no less than 17 per cent of the New York City Negroes were foreign-born, and with their native-born children they certainly formed between a fifth and a quarter of the Negro population.¹⁶ They were viewed from the beginning by

native American Negroes as highly distinctive—in accent, dress, custom, religion (they were Anglican), and allegiances (they celebrated the King's birthday). Distinctive as they were, they were forced to live in the same quarters as other Negroes. Furious at a prejudice far greater than that among whites in their home islands, they were helpless to do much about it. Many, as a consequence, turned radical. Negro Communists and labor leaders, it has been said, were disproportionately West Indian.¹⁷

But the West Indians' most striking difference from the Southern Negroes was their greater application to business, education, buying homes, and in general advancing themselves. James Weldon Johnson (whose parents stemmed from British West Indies) described them in 1930: they "average high in intelligence and efficiency, there is practically no illiteracy among them, and many have a sound English common school education. They are characteristically sober-minded and have something of a genius for business, differing almost totally, in these from the average rural Negro of the South."¹⁸ They contributed disproportionately, all observers have agreed, to the number of Negro leaders and accomplished men. Claude MacKay, himself a Jamaican, pointed out that the first Negro presidential elector in New York State, the first elected Negro Democratic leader (Herbert R. Bruce, in 1935), one of the first two Negro municipal judges, were West Indians. Marcus Garvey, who in the 1920's, led one of the greatest Negro political mass movements in American history, was a Jamaican.¹⁹ A sociologist wrote (in the only book-length study ever made of the foreign Negro in America) in the late 1930's, "It is estimated that as high as one-third of the Negro professional population—particularly physicians, dentists, and lawyers—is foreign-born."²⁰

The ethos of the West Indians, in contrast to that of the Southern Negro, emphasized saving, hard work, investment, education. Paule Marshall has described this ethos in a remarkably revealing novel about Barbadians in Brooklyn. Here is a wife denouncing a husband who has not measured up to Barbadian ("Bajan") ideals:

No . . . he ain no Bajan. Look Percy Challenor who was working the said-same job as him is a real estate broker and

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just open a big office on Fulton Street. More Bajan than you can shake a stick at opening stores or starting up some little business. They got this Business Association going good now and 'nough people joining. . . . Every West Indian out here taking a lesson from the Jew lanlord and convertin these old houses into rooming houses—making the closets-self into rooms some them!—and pulling down plenty-plenty money by the week. And now that the place is near overrun with roomers the Bajans getting out. They going. Every man-jack buying a swell house in dichty Crown Heights. . . .²¹

The West Indians have by now pretty much merged into the American Negro group, and their children do not feel themselves to be particularly different. They never found it possible to create a separate residential area. They are citizens, have given up the Queen, and lost their accents. The group might have been maintained by renewed immigration which reached a thousand a year from Jamaica alone after World War II; but the new McCarran-Walter immigration law of 1952 radically cut the numbers eligible to come in from the British West Indies, and the stream was deflected to England, thus becoming indirectly responsible for the development of a new, large Negro community there. One can still detect the West Indian stream in New York from first names such as Percy, Cecil, Chauncey, Keith.

No one has studied why the West Indians were superior in business enterprise and educational achievement to the native Negro. Very likely the fact that they came from islands which were almost completely Negro, and in which, therefore, Negroes held all positions in society except the very highest, inhibited the rise of a feeling of inadequacy and inferiority, and gave them the experiences and self-confidence that Southern Negroes on the whole lacked. And the Barbadians in particular were rather better educated than Southern Negroes.

In any case, notwithstanding the West Indian difference, Negro business did not develop, despite the fact that business is in America the most effective form of social mobility for those who meet prejudice. The young man of ethnic background who encounters discrimination may find a place in a business of his own or that of a rela-

tive. Thus the Chinese in America, a small group who never dreamed until World War II of getting jobs in the general American community, had an economic base in laundries and restaurants—a peculiar base, but one that gave economic security and the wherewithal to send children to college. It has been estimated that the income of Chinese from Chinese-owned business is, in proportion to their numbers, *forty-five times* as great as the income of Negroes from Negro-owned business.²² Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, while not as specialized as Chinese, show a similar history.

Professional men, despite their much higher status than shopkeepers among Negroes, have not been common either among Negroes, but their history is quite different. For while businessmen have always been infrequent, a professional class did develop in the Negro community in the fifty years after slavery, but its growth has been slow. Thus there were in the nation 3,400 Negro physicians and surgeons in 1910, and only 4,000 in 1950. There were only 1,450 Negro lawyers/in 1950, and the increase since 1900 had kept pace only with the increase in Negro population. There were only 1,500 dentists—a sevenfold increase from 1900, but still very small in relation to the Negro population.²³

But even though the numbers of businessmen and professionals did not grow importantly, great changes did take place in the Negro community in the 1940's and 1950's. The dependence on menial labor has been broken. In 1960 a relatively large proportion of women still work—49 per cent of nonwhite women work, compared to 36 per cent of white women. But now only one-quarter of the women work in domestic households, as against the almost two-thirds of 1940; and these are the older women. More than a quarter work as professionals and white-collar employees.

Among the men, the changes in occupation have not been as striking, but in their case as well there has been a sizable reduction of service workers and laborers and an increase in skilled and unskilled workers. A fifth of Negro men are employed in professional, technical, managerial, clerical, and sales work²⁴ (see Table 4).

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In a peculiar way, as we shall see again and again, the problem of the Negro in America is the problem of the Negro men more than the Negro women. It was the woman who could get whatever work was available even in the worst times. It was the man who was seen as a threat and subject to physical violence. It was the woman who came in touch with the white world, and for whom favors, if any were forthcoming, were more common. Perhaps it was easier for whites to be gracious to the women, who, because they were women, could be seen as accepting subordination with more grace and with less resentment and sullenness. Already a member of one underprivileged group (that of women), membership in another (that of Negroes) did not perhaps weigh so heavily upon her, or so it might appear to the white world.

In New York, the problem of the Negro man is if anything exaggerated. What kind of job is he to get? Here, as we have said, there is little heavy industry, where skilled or unskilled labor, if unionized, can get a good wage. He has mostly depended in New York on unskilled labor and services. We are dispensing with unskilled labor by new machines, better organization, poorer maintenance, and simply learning to do without.²⁵ Just as the Negro Southern agricultural laborer has been displaced by machinery, so too the Negro urban unskilled laborer is being displaced. In the long run, this may be a blessing. In the short run (which is likely to be quite long) and for the individual, it means strain and suffering and a high rate of unemployment. It means strong and increasing pressure on the Negro male to qualify himself for jobs that demand special skills. It means a particularly desperate problem for the Negro boy coming out of high school, with or without a diploma, and looking for a job in a market where there are few jobs for the unskilled, and in a neighborhood and a community in which there are few businessmen or professionals or skilled workers to give him a break or tell him about the breaks (this is the way the unqualified of other groups get started). This is the "social dynamite" that so shocked James Bryant Conant in the Negro slums of the great Northern cities in the late fifties,²⁶ and that reduces social workers to despair in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn and Harlem

in Manhattan. The problem is *not* those with the capacity to go on to college or even get a good commercial high school education—there is always, at least, a government job for them. The problem is those who will have to work with their hands, in a society that has less and less work for people with only hands.

The array of jobs potentially available for Negro men and boys in New York raises special problems. There is a great clothing industry, but although the Jewish male found work at sewing machines no threat to his manliness, other males have not been so adaptable. Neither the Negro nor the Puerto Rican man seems to find the garment industry attractive. In any case the best jobs demand skills and training that tend to be kept within the ingroup. The same pattern, in even more extreme form, is found in a wide variety of skilled trades. Who can become an electrician, a plasterer, a bricklayer, a machinist, unless he has connections? The problem is not just discrimination against the Negro but discrimination against any outsider. Here again we see the problem created by the lack of a Negro business class. There are Irish and Italian skilled workers, in part because Irish and Italians were prominent in contracting and construction.

For women there is a great variety of clerical and sales jobs, technical and semiprofessional jobs, and there are no restrictive and monopolistic unions in these fields. The educational attainments required are often moderate, and in any case Negro girls seem to do better in school than boys. (In a lower-class group, school is a threat to masculinity, but not to femininity.) And a woman too will be satisfied with a clerical and sales job and income that will not satisfy a man.

Both the NAACP and the State Committee Against Discrimination are concerned with the skilled crafts, hoping to effect a breakthrough in Negro employment. Less than 2 per cent of 15,000 registered apprentices in the state are Negroes.²⁷ The difficulties in increasing the number are great. Negro youths have little contact through family and friends with the skilled trades. They have little experience with apprenticeship, and do not always see any point in long training at low wages. Skilled labor of any kind

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does not have great prestige among Negroes. Many managements are indifferent to the measures necessary to reach Negro youth, or positively antagonistic, for they see no reason to believe they will be good workmen. A shift into the skilled trades thus involves changes in the unions, in management, in the Negro community.

There are jobs that involve relatively little training but are likewise restricted by a union-employer network. The State Commission Against Discrimination (SCAD)* and the National Urban League have made intensive efforts to get Negroes jobs in breweries, as truck drivers, and as bakery driver-salesmen.²⁸ These efforts have brought small results. The employers blame the unions, the unions point to their rules on getting membership (which are generally very complicated), and both point to the Negroes—they do not come looking for the jobs. But why should they, when there are so many problems in getting them, and in any case the man on the inside, with the contacts, will get it?

As one examines the employment picture among Negroes, a number of major conclusions become obvious. One is that it is easier to change employment patterns in huge, bureaucratically organized, strongly led organizations than in small ones, which are the characteristic employers of skilled labor.

It is the small organization that hires friends and relatives, or people of the same ethnic background, and where the personal prejudices of the boss can come into play. According to the law in New York State, discrimination in small organizations (as long as they have six employees) is as illegal as discrimination in large ones. But one feels that SCAD is perhaps being more diligent than it has to be—or than is rewarding—when it turns its eagle eye on a small Italian restaurant where it turns out only Italians are employed.

In large organizations, everyone has to learn to play according to the bureaucratic rules, to mute his personal feelings, and keep them from affecting his actions. The small business in New York finds it easier to be tricky and evasive than the big one. For the big organization has

* The name was changed in 1962 to the State Commission for Human Rights.

personnel directors, formal application forms, formal tests, formal rating arrangements, formal rules, all of which SCAD is empowered to observe or study.

A second major conclusion is that the strictly legal approach to discrimination will have to be supplemented with new approaches. The major advances possible through legal measures alone have, in New York City, been made. The major success of both the law and the voluntary organizations has been with the big organizations; and there are not many big divisions left to be captured. The law can handle pretty well the problems of discrimination in *initial* employment, and these have been greatly reduced. This is not to say that every job is available on equal terms—when is this ever the case? and what law can ever overcome the prejudice in favor of pretty girls?—but that enough are, as many as there are qualified personnel to fill them. But now problems develop that are much harder for SCAD to deal with—the problems of advancement in bureaucratic organizations. In a big organization this must be based theoretically on capacity and accomplishment. But how is one to be fair about that? There are many ways of getting ahead, and many ways of finding oneself stuck at the lowest rungs of the ladder. Within the organization there are a thousand subtle factors affecting advancement that no outside agency can police.

A third major point: in the follow-up of opportunities—following up the first few Negroes into an organization, and moving up the bureaucratic ladder—one needs people with training and motivation, with the ability and skills and education required to hold jobs and to advance in them. For one reason or another (and they are not, at least on the surface, hard to understand) there are today problems in finding enough colored Americans with the motivation, training, and ability to fill the opportunities that are available.

The NAACP report on the apprenticeship problem supplies much food for thought in this connection. It speaks of “pre-training,” and says:

Indenturing units [that is, firms that have apprenticeship programs] almost universally demand that apprentices register a good scholastic record, as is evidenced

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by completion of either academic or vocational high school. . . .

Available evidence indicates that Negro youth are deleteriously placed with respect to the pre-training factor. Nationally, fewer Negroes attend secondary school than whites. They also evidence a lower rate of completion. Because of a lack of motivation, derived in part from acknowledged parental frustrations in the field of employment, portions of Negro youth completing high school are not apt to have treated their educations with the attention commensurate with its importance in later years. . . . Negro youths do not emerge from high schools in desirable numbers, nor, if they do, is their training on a par with that of white youth. . . .²⁹

Again and again, one finds that a breakthrough in Negro employment has not been followed up. For example, SCAD has issued a report on employment in banks. Each of a number of huge banks, with thousands of employees, has a few hundred Negro employees, generally about 2 per cent of the total employment.³⁰ There are certainly attitudes and practices in these elite institutions which restrict Negro employment at higher levels. A few hundred is, however, more than token employment, and yet Negro employment shows little tendency to grow since these jobs were opened.

The only areas of white-collar employment in which there are really large numbers of Negroes are in government agencies, city, state, and federal. This perhaps suggests one clue to the Negroes' slowness to seek private employment. Negroes still *expect* discrimination and rebuffs. Only in government is this feeling overcome, for there the civil service laws ensure impartiality, and Negro political strength backs it up. Elsewhere, cases are won, changes are made, but the follow-up is slow.

And yet this is not the whole story. One finds other cases of relatively sluggish follow-up in which discrimination or fear of it could not play a major role. It is interesting to note some contrasts between Negro and Puerto Rican employment patterns. Negroes and Puerto Ricans both work in sizable numbers in hotels. Puerto Ricans entered after Negroes, and it is not likely that they face

less discrimination. Yet many more Puerto Ricans than Negroes are employed in the hotel industry.³¹ The same thing holds in branches of the garment industry. Perhaps the difference can be ascribed in part to the relative weakness of clan and extended family feeling among the Negroes. One Puerto Rican may be quicker to bring in another, and there seems more of a tendency for family and related groups to work together.

Finally, it is the general economic situation that will do most to break down discriminatory employment patterns, regardless of people's attitudes or the law. The big change in Negro employment was a result of wartime shortages of labor. Negro unemployment is always higher than white, but the gap becomes greatest in times when the general unemployment rate rises. Newest in jobs, with least protection from seniority, they are the first to go. Disproportionately represented among those with poor training and undeveloped skills, they are also less capable of holding on to jobs in times of difficulty.³² The critical problem of Negro employment today has been created by a general economic change—the rapid elimination of unskilled and semiskilled jobs. This social change has nothing to do with discrimination, and yet it has dealt Negroes (and the whole community, picking up the tab in the form of increased costs of relief, youth projects, police, and so on) as severe a blow as discrimination.

Aside from all the problems we have discussed, the facts still show that Negroes, at the same levels of education as whites, do not get as good jobs, as high incomes. These are still the crude, brute facts of discrimination. And yet the same facts can be responded to in different ways. The Japanese in California before the war found it impossible to get good jobs outside the Japanese community; Jews until the Second World War took it for granted that they would find few jobs in engineering or with large corporations. But at the same time, Japanese attended college in phenomenal numbers; they became the best educated racial group in California. Jews did the same. This meant frustration for Japanese and Jews who could not find jobs for which they had trained and were qualified. Graduate Jewish chemists peddled cosmetics that they

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had concocted and bottled, graduate Japanese technicians worked as busboys.

But this overtraining also meant that when the barriers came down these groups were ready and waiting. The Negro today is not. It is true his experience has been more frustrating, prejudice more severe, personality damage more extensive. And yet in some ways the situation is better; never has there been more opportunity for education and training at government expense, never has there been a more favorable environment for minority students in colleges, never have there been so many opportunities making the struggle of education light in contrast to the rewards held out. Important leadership elements in the Negro community are aware of this situation; but can they successfully communicate a sense of urgency to great numbers?

EDUCATION

THERE ARE SOME CRUCIAL FACTS ABOUT NEGRO EDUCATION IN New York City. One-quarter of the city's elementary school population was Negro in 1960; a fifth of the junior high school population; only a tenth of the academic high school population.³³ There are no figures by race on the graduating classes of the city academic high schools, but they are certainly less than 10 per cent Negro. When we come to the free colleges that are the peak of the city's educational system, we do not have figures by race, but it is clear that they in no way represent the very large numbers of Negroes in the low-income population. New York Negroes do go to college in fairly large numbers. In 1960 nonwhites formed more than 6 per cent of the college graduates of the city, more than 10 per cent of those with some college education. But these figures conceal a much greater gap in quality.³⁴

The vocational high schools are more than one-fifth Negro. The New York City vocational high schools teach trades, but it is also well known that they serve to keep poor students off the street until they reach the legal age for dropping out of school. They serve this function for many Negro youths.

At first glance, the picture may remind us of some European immigrant groups of peasant background

who have little contact with education, little knowledge of what value or use it might be, and in which the parents are interested in getting the children out of school and at work or married as soon as possible. In these groups, very often a close-knit family positively discourages further education. The failure of children to pursue their education is not a product of social disorganization but of the fact that the values of the parents were not the standard American values, and they gave no support to education.

The Negro situation is different. Negroes do place a high value on education.³⁵ The educational attainments of young men and women are emphasized in news stories and announcements. Negro professionals stand at the top of the social ladder, and make the highest incomes. Parents continually emphasize to children the theme of the importance of education as a means of getting ahead; and this is true among the uneducated as well as the educated, the failures as well as the successful. And yet the outcome is a poor one.

There are not as many good Negro students coming out of the high schools as there are places in colleges to put them. Indeed, the major task of the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, which has for years been working on the problem of getting places and scholarships for Negro students in colleges, is to find enough qualified students, or to get colleges to accept those who formally fall below the admission requirements but who NSSFNS feels can make the grade. Richard Plaut, President of NSSFNS, has written that "places [in Northern colleges] for five times as many [Negro students as were actually placed] might have been found had that number been qualified and available."³⁶ The former principal of a New York City high school reports that one of the best colleges in the Northeast was willing to accept Negro students on his say-so, regardless of formal record.³⁷

Even money is in some cases no longer a problem. A meeting of Medical Fellowships, Inc., revealed "that the chief bottleneck in efforts to increase the number of Negro physicians is not . . . finding available openings in medical schools or even the monies required for a medical education but . . . finding college graduates interested

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in medicine who have the requisite high academic standing.”³⁸ We have pointed out that the number of Negro physicians has been almost static for fifty years—there is certainly no question of the rewards that await Negro doctors.

Studies of Negro students in schools reveal too that aspirations are high. One also sees many Negro students who remind one of the students of other minorities that have met discrimination, students whose motivation and drive are great. The emphasis on the values of education does have a real effect on many children, though there are still many who are unaffected.

We can think of many reasons why this should be so, after the fact. There is of course the poor education Negroes have received in the South; and so many students in the New York schools are transfers from the South. There is the long heritage of prejudice and discrimination that convinces so many of them that it is not worth trying.

In the minds of most Negroes in New York City, the problem of education is essentially the problem of segregation. In the South their children are forced to attend all-Negro schools with inferior teachers, buildings, standards; in New York City their children may attend all-Negro schools, with the same deficiencies. Since the Supreme Court decision on segregated schools in the South, segregation in New York schools has been a major political issue in the city. In 1954 Professor Kenneth Clark of City College, who had testified for the Supreme Court as an expert on the psychological effects of segregation, argued that the decision should be applied in the schools of the North that were segregated by the effects of the combination of neighborhood concentration of Negroes and neighborhood school zoning. The Board of Education requested the Public Education Association to investigate the problem. A year later it reported that in schools of high Negro and Puerto Rican concentration the children scored much below children of other schools in various tests. The city spent more on the education of children in these high-concentration schools, supplied more staff. The buildings however were older, and

there was a higher proportion of substitute teachers. And the results were worse.

The Board of Education then started its ponderous machinery in motion to come up with ways of “integrating” the schools. To Negro parents the issue was simple—the children go to school with other Negro children, their education must be worse. The Board of Education, confronted with enormous Negro areas supplying tens of thousands of schoolchildren, and resisting the notion of doing away with the neighborhood school, tried to reinterpret the problem as one of education alone, and most of its measures adopted in the course of the integration controversy were designed to improve the education of Negro and Puerto Rican children in schools that it saw no way of desegregating. Thus, it supplied larger and larger numbers of specialized personnel to the so-called “special service” schools (those with high proportions of Negroes and Puerto Ricans); it supported the Demonstration Guidance and Higher Horizon projects, which experimented with substituting trips to the opera and more intensive reading instruction for the presumed lack of an appropriate home background; it insisted that new regular teachers be assigned to the difficult schools—as a result, many preferred to hold on to their substitute status, or teach in the suburbs. It rezoned schools, tried to place new schools in border areas. By the time they were built, the areas were generally all Negro or Puerto Rican. It replaced the old schools in the slum areas.

From the point of view of the militant elements in the Negro community, all this was irrelevant—the issue was simply the fact that their children had to go to schools that were almost entirely Negro and Puerto Rican. (The Puerto Rican community actually played little role in the controversy.) Meanwhile, this situation became worse. In 1957 the Board of Education began to keep meticulous records of the numbers of Negro, Puerto Rican, and “other” children in each class and in each school, so as to determine the effect of measures to integrate the schools. In despair, they saw the proportion of Negro and Puerto Rican children rise from 36 to 43 per cent of the elementary school

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population of the schools by 1960. In Manhattan 75 per cent of the elementary school population was Negro or Puerto Rican! What was an “integrated” school under these circumstances? In 1960, 95 of 589 elementary schools contained more than 90 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican children, 22 of 125 junior high schools held more than 85 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican children (these figures serve to separate “segregated” from “integrated” schools in the peculiar language used in New York City to discuss this problem; yet it is doubtful that many parents in a school with an 80 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican enrollment would consider the school “integrated”).³⁹ The situation is aggravated by the large number of children attending parochial and other private schools. The executive director of the United Parents Association pointed out that while only seven in the city in the 5-to-14-year age-group was Negro, one out of three-and-a-half in the public schools was Negro. From 1950–1951 to 1960–1961, enrollments in private and parochial schools rose from 307,000 to 415,000, an increase of 35 per cent, while public school enrollment rose only 11.5 per cent.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, in September 1960 the Board of Education succumbed to the pressure of Negro parents demanding the right to send their children out of the districts in which they lived to schools with small proportions of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Negro parents, led by Paul Zuber, a Manhattan lawyer, and the Reverend Milton Galamison, minister of the Siloam Presbyterian Church in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, had forced the change by school strikes and threats of further school strikes. The Board announced a program of permissive zoning, whereby the children attending the “segregated” schools would be allowed to transfer to “integrated” schools with space available. The first major test of the program came in February, 1961, when the parents of 15,000 children headed for junior high schools were allowed to request transfers. Almost 4,000 requested the transfer to “unsegregated” schools, indicating how strongly Negro parents felt about the issue. Of those requesting transfers some, however, were the parents of “other” children who sought the privilege of

transferring even more eagerly than did the parents of Negro and Puerto Rican children. P.S. 197, a new school surrounded by middle-class housing projects in Harlem—Riverton and Lenox Terrace—showed the highest percentage of requests.⁴¹

And yet it is not likely that “permissive zoning” will have much impact on the education of Negro children in the city, despite the passion with which it has been espoused by middle-class parents. Even in 1960, before the impact of permissive zoning had made itself felt, more than half the Negro and Puerto Rican children in the city attended “integrated” schools. No one has examined these schools to see whether a school that is 50 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican is by that fact alone better than one that is 90 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican. In the South, where segregation is the formal and legal embodiment of society’s effort to keep the Negro in a less than human position, there is no question its effects are damaging. In New York, where it is simply the expression of the existence of the Negro ghetto, it is doubtful whether a purely formal effort to change the proportions of black and white in a school will have much effect, even though it will reduce the political pressure of parents desperately eager to get their children off to the best possible start.

In the end, the Board of Education accepted the principle that the concentration of Negro and Puerto Rican children was *itself*, and independently of the factors of poverty and background, educationally disadvantageous. And yet one cannot help asking: why were schools that were indifferent to the problems of the children of other groups, forty and fifty years ago, adequate enough for them, but seem nevertheless inadequate for the present wave of children? Why is the strong and passionate concern of the Negro community and Negro parents for education so poorly rewarded by the children?

There is little question where the major part of the answer must be found: in the home and family and community—not in its overt values, which as we have seen are positive in relation to education, but in its conditions and circumstances. It is there that the heritage of two hundred years of slavery and a hundred years of discrimina-

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tion is concentrated; and it is there that we find the serious obstacles to the ability to make use of a free educational system to advance into higher occupations and to eliminate the massive social problems that afflict colored Americans and the city.

THE FAMILY AND OTHER PROBLEMS

THERE WERE IN 1960 IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA 353,000 Negro families; a quarter were headed by women. In contrast, less than one-tenth of the white households were headed by women.⁴² The rate of illegitimacy among Negroes is about fourteen or fifteen times that among whites.⁴³ When we find such an impossible situation as that discussed in the New York press in 1960, in which babies are abandoned in hospitals by their mothers, and live there for months on end, for there is no room for them anywhere else, most of them are Negro children.⁴⁴

There are not enough foster homes for the Negro children who need care; there is a desperate shortage of adoptive parents for Negro children, for there are so many of them who need adoption.

More Negro children live apart from parents and relatives; more live in institutions; more live in crowded homes; more have lodgers and other related and unrelated persons living with them.⁴⁵

Broken homes and illegitimacy do not necessarily mean poor upbringing and emotional problems. But they mean it more often when the mother is forced to work (as the Negro mother so often is), when the father is incapable of contributing to support (as the Negro father so often is), when fathers and mothers refuse to accept responsibility for and resent their children, as Negro parents, overwhelmed by difficulties, so often do, and when the family situation, instead of being clear-cut and with defined roles and responsibilities, is left vague and ambiguous (as it so often is in Negro families).

We focus of course on one side of the problem—there are more unbroken than broken homes among Negroes, more responsible than irresponsible parents, more nonworking than working mothers, more good homes for children than poor ones. There is a whole world in which

these problems do not exist. But the incidence of these problems among Negroes is enormous, and even those who escape them feel them as a close threat. They escape, but family, relatives, friends, do not.⁴⁶

All this cannot be irrelevant to the academic performance of Negro children, and indeed it is relevant to a much wider range of problems than educational ones alone. In particular, it is probably the Negro boy who suffers in this situation. With an adult male so often lacking, there is a much greater chance of psychological difficulties. Certainly, even without the problems of a figure with whom to identify and on whom to model himself, the Negro boy, as was pointed out in talking about jobs, would have problems enough. But it is understandable that his knowledge of the adult male world should be weak and uncertain, that his aspirations should be unrealistic, that his own self-image should be unsure and impaired. And this indeed is what studies show. One psychologist reports on a comparative study of Negro boys and girls in a New York elementary school: the girls "generally have better academic performance, a greater span of attention, report more positive family atmosphere, have more positive and realistic self-concepts."⁴⁷

We do not propose a single explanation of the problems that afflict so many Negroes; obviously, if the schools were better, the students' performances would also be better. If housing and job conditions were better, there would be less illegitimacy. If the police were fairer, there would be less arrests of Negroes. If Negroes had better jobs and higher incomes, fewer of them would be sentenced, fewer criminals would be made in prisons and reformatories.* All these things are true. And since it is easier to do something about education, housing, jobs, and police administration than many other things, there is where we should put our emphasis, and there is where we begin. But I think it is pointless to ignore the fact that the concentration of problems in the Negro community is exceptional,

* The New York City Police Department does not keep records by race. The Department of Correction, however, does. In 1958 more than two-fifths of all male first admissions and more than three-fifths of all female first admissions to institutions of detention or sentence were Negro.⁴⁸

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and that prejudice, low income, poor education explain only so much.

Migration, uprooting, urbanization always create problems. Even the best organized and best integrated groups suffer under such circumstances. But when the fundamental core of organization, the family, is already weak, the magnitude of these problems may be staggering. The experience of slavery left as its most serious heritage a steady weakness in the Negro family. There was no marriage in the slave family—husbands could be sold away from wives, children from parents. There was no possibility of taking responsibility for one's children, for one had in the end no power over them. One could not educate them, nor even, in many cases, discipline them. The sociologist Franklin Frazier, in one of the most important books written on the American Negro, has traced the history of the family, from slavery, to the Southern postslavery situation, to the Northern city. What slavery began, prejudice and discrimination, affecting jobs, housing, self-respect, have continued to keep alive among many, many colored Americans.

This is the situation in the Negro community; it will be the situation for a long time to come. The magnitude of the problems in the lower-class and disorganized sector of the population is so great that the middle-class element is inadequate to deal with them, as other middle-class elements, of other ethnic groups, dealt in the past (and deal today) with their problems. Consequently, while the problems of other groups are in large measure their own, the problems of the Negro community become the problems of all of us. It is true (as is often pointed out by sociologists) that we do not hear of Jewish illegitimacy or juvenile delinquency because the community is so blanketed with institutions that it gets them before the public agencies do. But this works only because the proportion of problem-solvers to problem-producers in this community is so large.

The Negro middle class suffers deeply from the burden of Negro social problems. For as against other groups—even the Mexicans in the Southwest, and certainly most European ethnic groups—the middle-class Negro can-

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not hide his membership in a community that includes so many who make problems. The image of the Negro is still predominantly that created by the problem element. But it is also true that the Negro middle class contributes very little, in money, organization, or involvement, to the solution of Negro social problems. Conceivably, institutions organized, supported, and staffed by Negroes might be much more effective than the government and private agencies that now deal with these problems.

But it is not likely that we will see a massive self-help effort. For one thing, the middle-class Negro, separated by a thin line from the lower-class Negro, is often too busy maintaining his own precarious adaptation to offer sympathy or assistance. But more important, it is not possible for Negroes to view themselves as other ethnic groups did because the Negro is so much an American, the distinctive product of America. He bears no foreign values and culture that he feels the need to guard from the surrounding environment. He insists that the white world deal with his problems because, since he is so much the product of America, they are not *his* problems, but everyone's. Once they become everyone's, perhaps he will see that they are his own, too. For even if he has not *chosen* his group (and who has?), even if he finds nothing positive in it, the group does exist. Groups are formed in strange ways. The word Slav comes from the word for Slave. The Hebrews were created by a group of wandering outcasts. However formed, eventually those who are part of groups must make peace with them and accept them.

For the Negro, this acceptance must mean, in the end, a higher degree of responsibility by the middle-class and well-to-do and educated Negroes for the others.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD

THE GREATEST GAP BY FAR BETWEEN THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE of New York's population in general and the specific part of it that is Negro is to be found in housing. Here is the greatest and most important remaining area of discrimination—important in its extent, its real consequences, and its social and psychological impact.

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The Negro ghetto in New York City has not dissolved, neither in Manhattan nor in the other boroughs, for the poor or the well-to-do.⁴⁹ The ghetto is not surrounded by a sharp line, and there is less sense of boundaries in New York than there is in many other cities. But in each of the four main boroughs there is a single concentrated area of Negro settlement, shading off at the edges to mixed areas, which tend with the increase in Negro population to become as concentratedly Negro as the centers. If one looks at a map of New York City on which the places of residence of the Negro population have been spotted, one will find many areas with small percentages of Negroes, and it may look as if the Negro population is spreading evenly through the city, is being "integrated." But a closer examination will reveal that these small outlying areas of Negro population are generally areas with public housing projects, and the Negro population is there because the housing projects are there. The projects in the outlying boroughs are partly Negro islands in a white sea.

There are laws forbidding discrimination in renting and selling housing, just as there is a law forbidding discrimination in employment. The city and state laws have steadily increased their coverage to the point where all housing but rooms or apartments in one's own home, and units in two-family homes in which one is occupied by the owner, must be made available without discrimination on account of race, religion, or national origin. Ninety-five per cent of city housing is now covered by the law. But the law forbidding discrimination in housing is much less effective than the law forbidding discrimination in employment. It is weaker, and provides no specific penalties, though if a landlord remains adamant, the city can bring him into court.

But the main reason the law against discrimination in housing can do less to change this situation than the law against discrimination in employment is that apartments are not controlled by big bureaucratic organizations. The big projects can be prevented from discriminating by law. But most apartments are in existing houses owned by small landlords. Long before the complaint can possibly be acted on, the apartment is gone. There is also

little danger in a landlord practicing evasive action. It is fair to say that this is a law to which the run-of-the-mill landlords have responded with massive evasion. It takes really elaborate measures to get an apartment the way the law is now written. One needs a respectable-looking white friend to find out first that the apartment is available; a Negro who really wants it and is ready to take it then asks for it and is told it is not available; a second white is then required in order that he may be told that the apartment is still available, so as to get a sure-fire case; then direct confrontation plus rapid action in reporting all the details to the City Commission on Human Rights* is required. At this point, the landlord will often succumb. The Committee on Racial Equality (CORE) as well as Reform Democratic clubs and other organizations have supplied the whites for this sandwiching technique, and the elaborate advance planning and chance for immediate gratification have supplied perhaps a more satisfying activity to CORE than picketing local branches of Woolworth's. (The white pickets were generally in the majority, and were unhappy at the Negroes going past them.)

Perhaps even more significant in reducing the effectiveness of the law than landlord resistance is the perpetual housing shortage in New York City. This "temporary" situation is now as permanent as anything in life ever is. Someone beginning school in New York City during the Second World War may now be married and having children in a housing market that has the same "temporary" shortage that it had at the end of the war. Even in the absence of discrimination, the low-income tenant would find it very hard to find cheap housing when it is being demolished faster than it is being built. The housing shortage means that we deal with a situation of "discrimination for" as well as "discrimination against." Just as good jobs are reserved for friends, relatives, and insiders, so are good apartments. Indeed, the better apartments in New York descend through a chain of relatives and friends, year after year, decade after decade. The most valuable of these valuable commodities are of course the rent-controlled apart-

* Formerly the Commission on Intergroup Relations. The name was changed in 1962.

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ments. Rent-controlled apartments mean, as a matter of course, discrimination against everyone who has come into the city since 1943. Even *without* any discrimination on the ground of color, Negroes (and in larger measure Puerto Ricans) would be getting a poor share of the housing market, and paying more for it, because they are in larger measure latecomers.

But the law is not only interested in improving the housing available to Negroes, it is also interested in breaking down the pattern of segregation in housing. And here it is hard for the law to be very effective, whether in conditions of housing shortage or housing plenty. It is again instructive to compare housing with jobs. The breakthrough into an area of employment *does* mean a racially mixed working force; the breakthrough into an area of white housing has up to now generally meant a period of transition ending with the extension of the all-Negro and mostly Negro neighborhood. It has not meant, the objective that so many feel is desirable and that seems so unattainable, a stable, racially mixed area.

This pattern of white withdrawal or flight before incoming Negroes is found everywhere in the nation. It is perhaps mildest in New York City, for in Manhattan, if not in the other boroughs, people act as they do nowhere in the nation. Manhattan is unique because the struggle for space is so intense, and so many people want to live there, that the flight of some white elements means their immediate replacement by other white elements. In Manhattan, therefore, one does find mixed areas of whites, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes, and it is likely the island will become even more mixed in the future. But one of the reasons that people live so closely together there is because they can have so little to do with each other. Manhattan has few communities to protect, for here a variety of "communities" as well as many people who are connected to none share the very same ground. One element goes to a church, a second to a synagogue, a third to neither. One patronizes one kind of store, another a store with a somewhat different line of similar goods, or a different price range, located right next door to the first. One group sends its children to public school, another to parochial school, another to private

school, and a fourth, surprisingly large, has no children at all—which, again, is one of the reasons they are willing to live so close to Negroes and Puerto Ricans. If the groups do not share the same apartment houses, they do share the same blocks, parks, shopping streets. But they are willing to share as much as this, and be as close as this, because they really share so little. These are important considerations, and the reason why it is unrealistic to compare Manhattan with the other boroughs, or the rest of the metropolitan area. These areas outside Manhattan are, to a much larger extent than Manhattan, communities, and when a community feels threatened by what it feels is an alien element, there is a strong tendency for those in it to move away and reconstitute something like it, or to find something like it.

In other cities, less tolerant than New York, the community, instead of fading away, may put up a hard shell and fight. Here, sentiment, the governmental authorities, and the law give little support to any violent effort to prevent Negroes from moving into white areas. The resistance comes mostly from landlords, operating out of prejudice or calculations of rational advantage, less from tenants or homeowners. There are two other reasons New York has had little violent resistance to the expansion of Negro neighborhoods: many are renters who will not fight for their houses; many are Jews who would not resist a Negro move with violence.

Around the edges of Harlem, of Bedford-Stuyvesant, and of the other major centers of population, then, there is “integration,” if one thinks in terms of people living near one another. In the middle-class suburban areas around New York, there are a few integrated communities, but they tend, more or less rapidly, to become more and more Negro, or less and less white, unless the houses are quite expensive—a fact that automatically limits the Negro market. The Negro population of the city and the metropolitan area is rising, and the Negro population of high and steady income is also rising; it is understandable that the Negro proportion in a desirable and pleasant area, where Negroes can buy homes, will also rise. This would be so in any case; it is also true that the transition is often speeded up by real estate men, Negro and white, encouraging people

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to move out. In southern Queens, in the Springfield Gardens, Laurelton, Rosedale area, a Tri-Community Council exists, and the real estate men are countered by a community organization that encourages white homeowners to stay. The same kind of effort to freeze the changeover from white to Negro occupancy is to be found in Teaneck, New Jersey, in Lakeview, Long Island, and other suburban areas. Such organizations, which tend to bring together the new and old elements in a changing community, and to teach people the great truth that people are very much alike, are desirable. They slow down the transition. Certainly they make life pleasanter while the transition goes on, and have important educational effects. But if we look at the over-all picture, we cannot but conclude that in most cases the tendencies for an area to become mostly Negro is irreversible.

Often prejudice has nothing to do with it at all, or hardly anything, and indeed the movement into the area may have begun because it showed the *least* prejudice, the *least* resistance. But the older group may still desire to live in a community of "their kind." Rising incomes and rising land prices and house prices make mobility easy. Often there are differences aside from color between the old community and the newcomers. And often the older settlers, living in older homes, and now without young children, needed only a little push to do what they were already thinking of, to move out into a smaller and more convenient house, or into a suburban apartment. Prejudice is extensive but is rarely unmixed or pure. Economic advantage in selling out, higher income permitting better housing, changing needs and wants, social interests, and other factors may play a role in the moving out of the whites.

The effect of these patterns of growth and movement has been to spread the Negro population through the city and metropolitan area, but its spread has been around a single main concentration in each borough. Harlem in Manhattan (the term has grown with the Negro community, and it is now almost synonymous with the main area of Negro occupancy) has already reached its peak as a center of Negro population. Manhattan had still in 1960 more Negroes than any other borough (397,000), but its rate of increase in 1950-1960 was by far the smallest. Mean-

while, the centers of Negro population in the other boroughs have grown rapidly. The Bronx, which had only 25,000 in 1940, had 164,000 in 1960. Queens, which also had about 25,000 in 1940 had 146,000 in 1960. Brooklyn has grown from 110,000 in 1940 to 371,000. Manhattan, which had two-thirds of the city's Negro population in 1940, has only a little more than a third today.⁵⁰

Beyond the borders of the city, in other cities such as Newark and in suburban areas, there has been a great increase in the Negro population. Westchester has risen from 32,000 Negroes in 1940 to 56,000 in 1960. Nassau and Suffolk in this time more than doubled their Negro population. In these counties, older Negro settlements that very often consisted of servants and handymen have expanded and been joined by very different, prosperous, middle-class communities.⁵¹

While discrimination is the main channelizer of this population movement, we tend perhaps to minimize other factors at work in this process of Negro community formation. Even with much less prejudice directed against them, Jews have formed dense and concentrated suburban settlements. Great Neck did not become Jewish because Jews could not move anywhere else, but because it was an attractive community, and once there were enough Jews to organize synagogues and temples, to support social circles and associations, bakeries and delicatessens, it became even more attractive. There may be less in the way of specialized tastes in food and certainly less in the way of specific cultural attachments to differentiate the Negro middle class from the great American average. But there is a distinctive and important religious and organizational life, and in time, and indeed perhaps the time is now, we shall have to recognize that a community that is Negro is not necessarily the outcome of discrimination, just as a Jewish community is not necessarily the product of discrimination. In the absence of discrimination these clusters would continue to exist. But there is no question that today, in a Negro community, compulsion and limitation are felt more strongly than the free decision to come together.

No one has thought very seriously about what truly integrated communities would be like. What

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would be the basis for common action, for social activities bringing together people of different groups? The communities of New York have always been in large measure ethnically and religiously delimited, and the social and organizational life of suburbia is lived within the distinctions created by religious affiliation. If Jews set up clubs and recreational activities and social activities largely on the basis of affiliation to synagogues and Jewish community centers and other Jewish organizations—as, outside of Manhattan, they increasingly do—then what areas are left for the mingling of Negroes and Jews? They only rarely meet at work, and that does not generally affect the communities to which the workers return to live. If Catholics do the same, there is again little room for social intercourse with Negroes. There remains local politics, and one of its chief virtues is that it does remind people of the variety of our communities, and does require them all to come together.

It is the white Protestants on whom the moral injunction to form a community together with Negroes falls most heavily, at least from a theoretical point of view. For in America religion is a legitimate basis on which to erect partially distinct communities, and neither Jews nor Catholics need feel that they act in discriminatory fashion when they base their social life on a religious affiliation which does not include Negroes.* But the basis for the separation of white and Negro Protestants is much less clear. The white Protestants were generally the first settlers in the older suburban communities into which Negroes are moving. But by now, white Protestant dominance in many of these has ended in the face of a heavy Catholic and Jewish movement. Many of the white Protestants of these communities left long before the Negroes got there, two migrations back, so often there are not many white Protestants left to wonder about the basis of the division of Negro from white Methodists, Negro from white Episcopalians

* Negro Jews are actually only one of the many city sects that have grown up among Negroes in imitation of exotic religions. They are for the most part not really Jews, just as most Negro Muslims are not really Muslims, for they have not gone through the prescribed process of conversion. There is a sizable body of Negro Catholics, but the issue of the “integration” of Negro and white Catholics in the North does not as yet seem to have greatly concerned whites or Negroes.⁶²

and Congregationalists, Negro from white Baptists. Many Protestant ministers are aware of their responsibility and their failure, and there is a good deal of discussion and soul-searching as to what can be done. Community with the Negro will become more and more a Protestant problem as religion comes more and more to serve as the major legitimate basis for separate communities within the larger community.⁵³

In the center of the city, among the poor, the problem of integration is a very different one. Indeed, the search for a decent place to live is so intense that for most the additional social goal of a mixed community seems a utopian and irrelevant consideration. But ironically enough, it is here, in the center and among the poor, that the goal of integration is most earnestly sought and most widely found, for a great public agency plays an important role today in the housing of the poor in New York. The New York City Housing Authority now controls a major part of the shelter of the poor in the city of New York, and its decisions affect the way they live. In mid-1962, more than 450,000 people lived in the 116,000 apartments of the New York City Housing Authority. Nineteen thousand more apartments were under construction and being occupied, with an estimated population of 72,000, and 17,000 more apartments were being planned. Within a few years, the public housing pool will contain more than 150,000 apartments, and 600,000 people! About 40 per cent of public housing is occupied by Negroes, which means that about one out of every five or six Negroes in the city is living in a project. The project is now beginning to rival the slum as the environment for poor Negroes, and it consequently becomes more and more important to consider what kind of life is lived there, and what kind of communities are created in them.

The projects are of course integrated. There are none without some Negroes and only a few that are entirely Negro. The Housing Authority is concerned over the fact that in many projects there is a strong tendency for the white population to decline. A few years ago, it attempted to keep many projects integrated by favoring the applications of white prospective tenants in some, and of

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Negro and Puerto Rican tenants in others.⁵⁴ Challenged by complaints to SCAD, and by articles in the Negro press, the Authority has limited its integration efforts in recent years to the attempt to recruit a balanced tenant population for new projects. But since the over-all tendency is for the white population to fall, it is largely white tenants that are favored, within of course the over-all maximum income limitations, and the complex system of priorities that the Authority must observe. This is part of the Authority's over-all policy, within recent years, of attempting to make each project a community. Thus the Authority has also tried in many projects to reduce the numbers on relief (for some projects once contained a very large proportion of families on relief), just as it tried to get a mixture of different ethnic groups.

But the creation of a good community is a difficult thing, and the existence of a housing project that is divided between Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and whites may mean (and often does mean) only the physical proximity of groups that have very little to do with each other. In a middle-class community as we have seen, the two races separate, among other reasons, because there are too few elements of community to bind them, and their active social life goes on within racial and religious groups. In the housing project, the situation is generally worse, for the absence of ties across group lines is generally accompanied by the absence of ties even *within* the group. A powerful bureaucracy manages the project, and, whatever its intentions, its mere existence and its large functions inhibit the development of a community. There are few churches or any other kind of organization within the projects. Social isolation of tenant from tenant is common, because after all people have been bureaucratically assigned to projects and apartments, within a limited choice, rather than having located to be near friends, family, or institutions. Suspicion is also common, in part because there is fear of having transgressed one of the many rules of the Authority, and many tenants take the point of view that the less the neighbors know of them the better. The weakness of the bonds of community within the projects is true whether they are all Negro or partly Negro.

The problem of creating a community is an enormous task, and it may seem unfair to demand of a landlord that he undertake this task. But the landlord of 100,000 families is more than a landlord, and the Authority accepts, as the integration policy shows, its responsibility for helping to create community within the projects. And yet one wonders whether the mixing of the races in proper proportions will play much role in creating good communities. The improvement of the projects as communities probably depends on a host of measures that are even more difficult than affecting their racial composition: involving the people of the projects in their management and maintenance, encouraging and strengthening forms of organization among them (even when the main purpose of these organizations seems to be to attack the management), encouraging forms of self-help in them, varying their population occupationally as well as racially by greater tolerance in admissions, reducing the stark difference of the projects from their surroundings by changing their appearance, considering more seriously the impact of their design on the social life that they enfold, all this and more have been suggested. Some of the projects are integrated without any efforts by the Authority. These are the projects that for various reasons do overcome the many drawbacks and become so attractive that whites as well as Negroes want to live in them.

Integration in the projects is probably best achieved not by policies to directly affect the mixture but by policies to create good communities, making them attractive to more families. But in any case, there is not much the Authority can do to affect proportions, for the number of Negroes in public housing will depend on their future economic fate in New York. If most of the poor in New York are Negro, then most of the housing project population will have to be Negro, and the Authority will be helpless to affect the situation, short of radical changes in the entire idea of public housing.

The projects are important not only for themselves; they are also important for their impact on the rest of the city. And perhaps their most important effect has been in upsetting the balance of the slums. Large numbers of normal families living in slums (the chief candidates

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for the projects) have been withdrawn from them, leaving the remaining slums to become the homes of the old, the criminal, the mentally unbalanced, the most depressed and miserable and deprived. The slums now contain the very large families that are not eligible for public housing because they would overcrowd it; the families that have been ejected from the projects (or were never admitted) for being antisocial; those who have either recently arrived in the city and hardly adapted to urban life, or those who may have been here a long time but never adapted; as well as the dope peddlers and users, the sex perverts and criminals, the pimps and prostitutes whom the managers reject or eject to protect the project population. All these are now concentrated in the slums that ring the projects, and areas that were perhaps barely tolerable before the impact of the projects are now quite intolerable. As we tear down the slums, those that remain inevitably become worse. And what after all are we to do with the large numbers of people emerging in modern society who are irresponsible and depraved? The worthy poor create no serious problem—nothing that money cannot solve. But the unworthy poor? No one has come up with the answers.

The structure of the Negro neighborhood and the Negro community means that the Negro middle class, in the city at any rate, rarely escapes from the near presence of the Negro poor, as well as of the depraved and the criminal. The middle-class neighborhoods border on the lower-class neighborhoods, and suffer from robberies and attacks, and the psychic assaults of a hundred awful sights. There are the additional frustrations of the difficulty of getting a taxi to take one home, the saturation of the area by police (whose numbers make it harder to escape a summons for a minor traffic violation). Within the city, it is not easy to escape, for few neighborhoods are pure. In the small suburban towns, with their high-cost houses, strict zoning regulations, informal controls for identification and ejection of the unwanted and the troublesome, the situation is different. There, if the colored middle-class family is successful in entering, it, like the white middle class, is protected from the pressure of the social problems thrown

up by modern society, and most heavily concentrated among the colored. There it can enter into the community activities that encompass both races without being burdened by the problems, social and psychological, of the Negro poor. Its success in integration is there aided by the fact that it is successfully segregated from the Negro poor.

But in the city, no one can protect himself, for the city is free and open, and cannot fence itself off. There is thus scarcely a middle-class Negro area that does not know that close to it, on its borders and in measure in its midst, are all the problems that are so heavily concentrated in the Negro community.

This is the over-all picture, and yet, despite the housing shortage, the segregated new housing, the community problems, New York will very likely in the end be an integrated city—or rather something even better, a city where people find homes and neighborhoods according to income and taste, and where an area predominantly of one group represents its positive wishes rather than restricting prejudice.

We see the signs everywhere. In Manhattan, the western edges of the Harlem ghetto show not only the hardly integrated pattern of Negroes, mainland whites, and Puerto Ricans of different economic levels and different family patterns, close together but not mixing. There is also a large Negro element that is on the same level, economically and socially, as most of the old and new non-Puerto Rican white population. This group has older established people (as in the Morningside Gardens co-ops) and young couples and single young people, scattered through the brownstones and apartment houses. Here Negroes and whites do begin to form an interracial community that is rapidly being taken for granted, and one in which a mixed couple (the West Side is the area where they are most numerous) no longer leads to the turning of heads.

In the higher-income public projects of the City Housing Authority, the so-called middle-income housing, in co-ops like Morningside Gardens, in Title I projects like Park West Village, we find families living together, not in the indifference of forced association but in what are in

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large measure real communities, and where common tastes and backgrounds create interracial groups that are more than a self-conscious demonstration.

Up to now, there has been little Negro interest in co-ops, except for Morningside Gardens. But this is changing. Co-op housing is increasingly becoming the most popular answer to the problems of middle-income housing in the city. It will also draw less and less on the special type of person who is interested in the cooperative idea from an ideological point of view (that pool is becoming exhausted) and become attractive to large numbers. There is also now the model of Morningside Gardens as a successful co-op community. For all these reasons, the new co-ops have somewhat larger Negro contingents. The Negro often buys a house because he cannot get a good apartment. In the discrimination-free co-op housing, Negroes who prefer the city can find a way to stay that is not more expensive than suburban housing.

Even in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens, we find, in addition to the dense all-Negro stretches, lower-income and middle-income, many individual families scattered through the most middle-class neighborhoods. Teachers, social workers, and other white-collar and professional workers may be found living on pleasant tree-lined streets with friendly neighbors.

In Greenwich Village, where few of the young bohemians who crowd the streets and coffee houses can afford to live, established Negro writers and artists live, again without meeting discrimination; and the younger and less successful find relatively easy access to the cold-water flats of the Lower East Side.

Even in suburbia, the stronghold of middle-class values, exclusiveness, and discriminatory behavior, we find the matter-of-course mixing of colored and white in many towns. In 1961 on Long Island and in Westchester and New Jersey, groups sprang up in a number of suburban communities—Great Neck was perhaps the leader—which attempted to break down their all-white character, to get sellers and real estate agents to show houses to Negroes, and to get Negroes to move in. Frances Levinson, of the New

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York State Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, was active in trying to coordinate the work of these varied groups. In places like Great Neck and Scarsdale, though this is only the beginning, it was apparently easier to get houses that the owners were willing to sell to Negroes than to find Negroes who could afford such houses and who wanted to move to such communities. It is perfectly understandable that if one can afford a big house in suburbia, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle and some other towns that already have large middle-class Negro communities have more to offer. For some people and in some places, we are approaching the point where we may discover that discrimination is only the first crude barrier to integration, and that people are more complicated than either racists or those who deny the reality of race believe.

It is still an effort for a Negro individual or family to live in a non-Negro neighborhood, but it is an effort that it is no longer exceptional; we can scarcely guess at the numbers who live in all the situations we have described. These situations in which white and colored live together without tension and without problems, and perhaps even comfortably enough with each other to begin finally to appreciate their real differences, mark the course of the future in New York. The only question is, how fast, and against how much resistance.

LEADERSHIP, POLITICS, INTERGROUP RELATIONS

WHATEVER THE SITUATION IN OTHER COMMUNITIES, THE Negroes of Harlem and other New York communities are deeply involved in politics. They register and vote in substantial proportions, their newspapers keep up a continual flow of political news, they are active in club membership and in the support of political leaders. Clearly politics is seen as an area in which to advance the interests of the individual and the group.⁵⁵

What do Negroes want out of politics? What everyone else wants: jobs, on all levels from the most humble to the highest; recognition and prestige; and the advancement of group interests.

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It is perfectly clear on the national level what policies are necessary to advance group interests. But New York is not Washington and not the South. There is no insuperable problem in getting almost any law or policy against discrimination, in almost any area, adopted, and in getting it enforced. The issue is, will it really be helpful?

If it is a matter of getting the right to register and vote, or integrating the restaurants, political activity can be clear, direct, and effective. But there are no such simple political objectives left for Negroes in New York. There are already laws against discrimination in employment and housing, and while their administration can undoubtedly be improved, the agencies that enforce them (the City Commission on Human Rights and the State Commission for Human Rights) have Negro heads or high officials and Negro staff members—there is not much more to be done along this line. The Board of Education actively tries to integrate the schools. There is no discrimination in higher education. There is probably no discrimination in restaurants and hotels. It is hard to see how it could be maintained in the face of the influx of African emissaries and officials. The Committee on Civil Rights in Manhattan found in a sampling of East Side restaurants in 1950 that more than two-fifths were discriminating. It rechecked in 1952, and discrimination had dropped to 16 per cent. Since 1953 it has had only five reports of discrimination, and it now considers this problem settled, and the main problem to be housing.⁵⁶

In New York City, it seems, there are no easy problems any more, or easy solutions. The improvement of the Negro economic position requires such complex and far-flung operations that it is hard to see how it can be made a simple political issue. It involves such matters as retraining the unskilled, better education all along the line, stronger motivation so that people will take advantage of retraining and education opportunities, changing the structure of New York's economy, changing the role of the unions. Even if New York were to adopt a minimum wage of \$1.50 an hour, the effect might well be to increase the level of unemployment among Negroes to a Midwest level rather than to improve their general economic situation.

In housing, as in wages and employment, the need is for radical policies that make improvement in the situation in general, and these are not particularly attractive to Negro political leaders in the city (or any others, for that matter). They do not urge that low-cost and other government-supported housing be restricted to vacant land sites, which is the one sure way of increasing the over-all supply of low-cost housing in the city. Such a policy would mean that they preside over areas of decaying slums while their supporters escape to greener fields. Instead one finds the popular program of attacking landlords for inadequacy of maintenance, proposing ever harsher measures to enforce good maintenance, demanding more frequent and more severe inspections by city agencies. These are worthwhile policies, but to concentrate on inspecting a declining and aging stock of low-cost housing does little to increase it, or to deal with the conditions that make it possible for landlords to get high rents for crumbling apartments. The kind of political courage that would be involved in tracing out the real impact of rent control on different groups in the city is simply not heard of in American politics.

In effect, there is little public discussion among those active in city politics of *policies*, except in response to the most blatant scandals. There is certainly no more than this low average of discussion among Negro political leaders; there is probably less.

In recent years the emphasis has been on political jobs. All good things are scarce and involve conflicts, and on the question of the proportion of jobs in city elective and appointive posts held by Negroes we find rancor and bitterness, and strains on old political alliances and allegiances. There is nothing really new here—every new group tries to get the nominations and jobs it feels it is entitled to, and these are always more than the older groups, which fought their way up to a certain proportion of jobs and nominations in the past, feel the new group has a right to.

But who is to determine what is the “right” proportion? Congressman Powell in 1960 demanded that Negroes should get 21 per cent of the jobs in a Democratic city administration, since 21 per cent of the enrolled Dem-

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ocrats in Manhattan are Negro.⁵⁷ He said they held only 6 per cent of high political posts—Commissionerships, board memberships, judgeships. Even so, Negroes are doing better at getting political jobs in New York than anywhere else in the country.

James Q. Wilson writes:

Chicago, having about 750,000 to 850,000 Negroes, has only three Negro judges. . . . New York, having about 1,000,000 Negroes, has seventeen judges, two Supreme Court Justices, one General Sessions Judge, four City Magistrates, three Domestic Relations Court Judges, six Municipal Court Judges, and one City Court Judge. [This comes to just about 6 per cent of the judicial offices in the city.] In addition, in New York City (unlike Chicago) many Negroes hold administrative positions at the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet level.⁵⁸

Whatever the strains in politics, the clubs and committees form one of the most important arenas in which the people of different groups meet and test each other's feelings and capacities and powers. New York's politics serves much more as such a meeting ground than its business, certainly more than its formal social life, and probably as much as its cultural life. New York has good race relations, and it has been helped in this by a number of factors. The city does not have politically powerful neighborhood homeownership groups, electing their representatives to the city councils to fight the spread of the Negro community and the tax-supported expansion of social services. In any case, the City Council in New York is weak. It is the Board of Estimate, dominated by officials elected by the entire city electorate, and the mayor, who wield effective power—and these are far more susceptible to the citywide Negro vote. The important role of culture in the city means that talent and genius have a status which transcends group membership and which is not found as commonly in other American cities. And then the remarkably varied group life all through the city's history means that all the groups have been somewhat mellowed in their attitudes toward other groups, and that New York's Irish and Italians are probably somewhat more tolerant in their outlook than Irish

and Italian groups in other cities. This mellowness is aided by the large proportion of Jews, who traditionally (and probably because of their traditional lack of power) have learned to eschew violence and favor negotiation and conciliation and live-and-let-live policies.⁵⁹

And yet, within this context of over-all good relations, it is just in relations with the Jews, despite their generally liberal outlook, nonviolent temperament, and their similar experience as a minority facing problems of discrimination, that an observable level of tension has recently developed.⁶⁰ It would be easy to exaggerate this tension. Sensitive, just as the Negroes are, and also timid and vulnerable, Jews inflate small incidents. Then, contributing to our awareness of this tension, there is the fact that the Jewish community supports (as Italians and Irish do not) professional organizations devoted to good intergroup relations. This means that any sign of tension immediately becomes the focus of specialized professional concern (sometimes from several different Jewish groups) and is rapidly brought to the attention of leaders in the Jewish and Negro groups, and appropriate governmental agencies—SCAD, COIR, the police, the mayor's office, the governor perhaps. So it is easy to exaggerate the degree of tension that exists between Negroes and Jews. And yet it exists; its existence at all is paradoxical; and since it also involves to some extent the somewhat frayed relationship of the Negroes to political liberalism in general, it is worth examining.

To begin with, anti-Jewish feeling is endemic among Negroes (as Professor Kenneth Clark and novelist James Baldwin have at different times observed in the Jewish magazine *Commentary*⁶¹) because the Negroes keep bumping into the Jews in front and ahead of them. Expanding into Jewish neighborhoods in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn (less so in Queens), Negroes become the customers of the many Jewish shopkeepers that have remained behind. They become the tenants of the Jewish owners of property. Whatever the personal qualities of shopkeepers and landlords, Negroes are thus often in contact with Jews who are making a living from them. The tension between landlord and tenant in New York, and particularly

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landlord and low-income tenant, is in any case extreme, and it is understandable that it takes very little for it to become tinged with anti-Semitic feeling.

But in addition to this large range of unfortunate contacts, the Negro also meets the Jew as an employer. This is likely in a city that is one-quarter Jewish; the likelihood is increased because of the heavy Jewish concentration in the city's small manufacturing. In garment factories, in small plants assembling electrical products, toys and novelties, plastic products, and the like, the Negro operative in low-wage jobs is likely to find he has a Jewish employer. Once again, here is a situation in which a natural conflict of interests can be interpreted in group terms, and is likely to contribute to the strengthening of traditional stereotypes of Jews to boot. The Negro is even likely to find, in many of the New York industries in which he is employed, that the union has a Jewish leadership and Jewish staff, and he resents this. Thus, in the low-wage laundry industry a Negro and Puerto Rican working force is represented by a union whose top leadership is Jewish. The worker does not know, nor perhaps is it relevant, that these men may have built this union at great sacrifice twenty and thirty years before. All he knows is where his dues are going, and who is on the payroll.

There is one particular form of Negro-Jewish conflict which is too important not to mention, trivial as it may appear, and that is the large number of Negro women engaged in domestic labor for Jewish housewives. Many of these contacts have produced good relationships, but they have also led to the feelings of exploitation and resentment that are almost inevitable in the master-servant relationship in a democratic society. One can hazard the guess, too, that the democratic ethos of Jewish life—which explains why Jewish waiters are the worst in New York—probably also helps to make many Jewish women poor employers of domestic help. The democratic camaraderie of the Jewish housewife with her Negro servant, alternating with the uncomfortable haughtiness of someone not used to a servant, might both tend to create more resentment than the steady formal relationship maintained by housewives with a longer tradition in the use of domestic help.

Perhaps, too, the liberal Jewish housewife feels guilty in relationship to her Negro servant, and this, too, might lead to the complementary feeling that the guilt is justified. In any case, it is interesting that one study which has gone into this matter shows a stronger feeling of anti-Semitism among Negro women than Negro men, and the authors suggest that this master-servant relationship may be the cause.⁶²

Even the middle-class Negro often meets the Jew in a situation in which one is formally an inferior, the other formally a superior. As Negroes move into the governmental agencies, which are one of the most important areas of employment for the upwardly mobile, they come into contact with all the groups that have preceded them. But in particular they come into contact with the group that got there before them—Jews, who in the 1930's entered government service in large numbers. This means that the Negro schoolteacher now often works under a Jewish principal, that the Negro social worker very often has a Jewish supervisor. (The top social worker, James Dumpson, Commissioner of Social Welfare, is a Negro.) On the whole, these relationships between teachers and social workers, whose training and work tend to develop a high degree of tolerance and insight, have been productive of some of the healthiest and most satisfying interracial relationships that one may find anywhere. Nevertheless, the relationship between inferior and superior in a hierarchy is inevitably tension-producing, and the conflict between different people is always subject to interpretation in group terms.

Thus, the dissatisfaction over social services for Negroes, and in particular the fact that they are run by whites and do not give sufficient jobs to Negroes, often takes the form of complaints against Jews and Jewish agencies, an inevitable by-product of the distribution of wealth, teachers, doctors, and social workers in the city.

For example: Under a banner headline, "They Let Them Die," the *Amsterdam News* reported on February 4, 1961: "Dr. Raphael Gamso, the new superintendent of Harlem Hospital, admitted to the *Amsterdam News* that he ignored Dr. Aubrey Maynard, director of surgery, when he permitted resident doctors from Mt. Sinai to enter Harlem Hospital and pick out a number of Negro

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patients whom they carried off to Mt. Sinai for experimentation.” (What actually happened was that service at the city Harlem Hospital almost collapsed as a result of a shortage of physicians, and Mt. Sinai, a Jewish voluntary hospital, agreed to take a number of cases. It seems to have selected, over Dr. Maynard’s protest, some of the more interesting ones.)

A month later the *Amsterdam News* attacked the Higher Horizons program, and in particular, its director, Daniel Schreiber, and its reporter wrote: “While the program experiments with Negro children there is a dearth of Negro teachers connected with the program, particularly at the administrative or policy making level” (*Amsterdam News*, March 4, 1961).

Disproportion in wealth and power introduces a hazardous element into the best relationships. Our Latin American neighbors, who know us so well and in so many ways, seem capable of turning in the twinkling of an eye from friends to enemies. So, too, in the case of Negro-Jewish relationships. The good relationships cannot help but be affected by the disproportion in power, whatever the good will on both sides. Just as in underdeveloped countries governments insist that the foreign investor take on a certain proportion of native employees, so have the political organizations of Harlem insisted that the Jewish storekeeper have Negro employees, and so, too, they now demand that he use Negro salesmen. They lack only the ultimate power of expropriation, but if they did, Jewish and other white business might fare as badly in Harlem as the American investments in Mexican oil, or in Cuba.

We can press our colonial analogy a bit further. For, if the Jews, in an earlier parallel to colonialism, may be seen as exploiters, they are also, paralleling the later development of colonialism, those who help and assist the deprived group. This role is if anything more exasperating than the former one. Negroes know that in New York Jews play a disproportionate role in pushing for the kind of policies that help Negroes. It is true that these policies—fair employment practices, fair educational practices, fair renting practices—had their origin on the agenda of Jewish organizations at a time when they were as important for

Jews as they were for Negroes; but the fact is that as times changed, as they became more definitely policies in which Jewish self-interest was less clearly involved, Jewish organizations, with their rich resources in money, staff, and contacts, continued to press for them. Very often Negroes were drawn into these activities. And while they played an important role, the (largely Jewish) liberal organizations pushing for these policies soon became aware of the very different levels of participation, organization, and money-raising capacity in the two communities. James Wilson tells the story of the most effective of these organizations which had their origin in the activities of Jewish liberal civil rights agencies:

The fight for an open occupancy ordinance in New York City [the bill banning discrimination in housing] was led by the New York State Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NYSCDH). . . . It was created largely at the instigation of the leading Jewish organizations in New York in 1949 after the failure of a court attack on the Stuyvesant Town anti-Negro policies. . . . Four major state laws and two New York City ordinances were passed in large part due to the efforts of this and related organizations. White (primarily Jewish) groups have been the most important single factor in the Committee. From the first, an effort was made to involve Negroes in its work, and a sizeable number of prominent Negroes have played important roles and occupied top positions. Most of this Negro support has come from the ranks of Negro professionals who are officers or executives of other organizations (public and private) with an interest in . . . housing. . . .

Some important white leaders of the Committee, however, . . . wish in addition for Negro grass-roots support.⁶³

Those who work together in such organizations represent part of that alliance of liberal and minority forces which has played such an important role in the city for thirty years. But on the other side there are the grass-roots elements who are relatively distant from such activities, and the press and political leaders who talk to them, and it is as easy to arouse resentment and prejudice against a more advantaged group that is being helpful, particularly

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if there are other contributing factors, as against another that is more distant, more powerful, and more hostile.

Finally, there is, and again the colonial analogy is helpful, the central problem of political representation. Jewish (and of course non-Jewish, too) political leaders who have for years represented neighborhoods that have changed to Negro and Puerto Rican occupancy have discovered that regardless of their votes in civil rights and other issues, the Negroes want the job for themselves.

It is against this background that the exposure in 1960 of Borough President Hulan Jack's connection with a (Jewish) real estate developer, and his trial for accepting a financial favor from him, was particularly exasperating. For it so happened that it was the crusading *New York Post* that uncovered this relationship in the course of a long-extended investigation into public policies affecting housing. The *New York Post* had a Jewish publisher, a Jewish editor, and a large Jewish readership. It is also true it has the most distinguished Negro reporter in the city, it had the only Negro columnist (on a non-Negro newspaper), and a large Negro readership. But all this did not matter.⁶⁴ The *Post* became the villain of the case, of what was referred to darkly as the "plot" to drive Negroes from public life and it was implied, too, that it was a liberal and Jewish plot—in view of the prevailing political outlooks in New York, a Jewish plot would have to be a liberal plot, and vice versa. Meanwhile, about the same time the long-delayed trial of Adam Clayton Powell for income tax evasion came up. Even though Jews had little to do with this, and even liberals had little to do with it, the threat to the top elective jobs which Negroes held touched such sensitive spots that this was irrationally also considered part of the Jewish and liberal betrayal of the Negro.

And indeed, there is a strong element of rationality in the irrational amalgam. For whatever the attitudes of liberals on civil rights, in New York City they are tied up with good government forces (represented best by the Jewish-owned *New York Times*), and a large part of the Negro community will not feel very sympathetic toward those who search out every example of financial gain from public office. While no leader in the group will

openly favor illegal gain, it may seem unfair to Negroes that their representatives in public office do not get the gains from it that members of other groups have in the past. Alas, times have changed, and it is harder and harder to make anything from public office. In any case, whatever some Negroes thought privately about Hulan Jack's dealings with Unger, hardly a voice was raised against him. Everyone supported him—even the ministers.⁶⁵

Now admittedly everything we have to say to explain Negro-Jewish relations is also true (to some extent) of Italian-Negro and Irish-Negro relations. And yet there is less feeling expressed against the Irish and Italians. Perhaps for many Negroes, subconsciously, a bit of anti-Jewish feeling helps make them feel more completely American, a part of the majority group.⁶⁶ There are probably other irrational bases for this anti-Jewish feeling—anti-Semitism is a complicated thing—and yet the special tie-up of Jews with liberalism is certainly important.

But political issues, as well as personalities, symbols, and the fate of private attempts at gain, do play a role in the developing tension between Negroes and liberals. Despite the fact that the battle over civil rights is a regular occasion for Northern liberals to match themselves against Southern Democrats at national political conventions, Negroes cannot help feeling that liberals do not quite do enough. The liberals are part of the same party that includes the South (as well as most of the New York Negro voters) and are always open to the charge of holding back in the fight for civil-rights bills. How much of one's time and influence should one devote to this issue? How much else should one let go? From the Negro point of view, whatever time and effort one devotes are hardly enough. What this means then is a steady strain between the liberal and the Negro which can often become quite bitter.

The bill of complaint then is that the liberals frame the Negroes, they don't put up enough of them or give them enough recognition, they don't fight hard enough for civil rights—in fact, they hypocritically fight just hard enough to get Negro votes. And the reaction has been a new rise of Negro exclusivism and nationalism: the feeling that Negroes have to go it alone and should trust no

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one but themselves, and the idea that any disinterested common action with democratic-minded whites for public policies to improve the condition of Negroes is an illusion.

An extremist element has been a permanent part of Northern Negro life since the 1920's; it has recently rapidly increased in strength, stimulated by frustration over the South and the rise of independent African states. The Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) and similar groups are not likely, in view of the much higher level of education and sophistication among Negroes today, to be anywhere nearly as successful as Marcus Garvey was in the 1920's. More important, however, is the adoption of this exclusivist feeling by a wide range of Negro leaders, publicists, and intellectuals. This development has been as rapid and sudden as the leap in the number of independent states in Africa—and the two phenomena are not unrelated. The impact of twenty independent Negro states, all with representatives at the U.N. in New York, is already striking, and while some of the Africans are patronizing the beauty parlors of Harlem, many American Negroes, going the other way, are discovering that *they* can leave their hair unstraightened. There is quite a difference between the subtle and complicated early essays of James Baldwin on the relationship of Negroes to America, and his writing in 1961—scarcely less subtle, but envisaging the possibility of a much more radical divorce of the Negroes from white America than he had earlier contemplated. There is an even sharper difference between the subtle and somewhat amused treatment of African nationalism in Lorraine Hansberry's play, *Raisin in the Sun*, and the passion of her advocacy of African (and American Negro) nationalism in 1961.⁶⁷

There are obviously many types of exclusivism, and even so, this is only one part of the spectrum of opinion to be found among Negro leaders. A. Philip Randolph's American Negro Labor Council, organized in 1960, was established primarily to exert pressure on a labor movement from which he does not wish, if possible, to isolate himself. The leaders of the National Urban League and the NAACP and CORE resist the exclusivist trend and still include many whites, though the proportion of whites in leadership and on the staffs declines as men of ability

and training in the Negro community grow more abundant. These organizations still represent the old Negro-liberal alliance. The local NAACP branches in New York, and elsewhere, include few whites and are far more exclusivist in their outlook. And the gap between them and the new nationalist groups is not great.

It is to this grass-roots nationalism and exclusivism that Adam Clayton Powell and the *Amsterdam News* appeal. Here, when an attack is made on liberal allies, the assumption is that they are not allies at all but enemies. What the future of this exclusivist outlook and feeling will be, it is hard to say. But it does not seem that it can be more than a temporary tendency. No group or interest gets very far alone in American politics. Particularly in New York City, there are too many groups, too many interests, for anyone to adopt the attitude that its strength, its numbers, require little cooperation with and accommodation to others. Whatever the psychological satisfactions of the present mood, it is doubtful that it is the way to get gains for the Negro community, in jobs, in influence, in prestige, or in practical policies. One can reject white standards of beauty, one can devote oneself to the study of African history and culture, one may support the policies of African states. There will be more and more of this, and this is all to the good. But Africa and nationalism and exclusivism will have as little to do with changing the conditions of American Negro life as Israel and Zionism have to do with the conditions of American Jewish life. Emigration is only for the few. The problems are here, and they must be solved here, and the main impact of the nationalist mood (sincere and passionately felt as it is) will be to serve more flexible politicians and leaders in getting gains and concessions.

We have indicated often enough our feeling that Negro communal organization is weak, and insufficient to make much impact on the great needs of the poorer and disorganized part of the community. As Oscar Handlin wrote in his study of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in New York:

. . . the ability [of new groups] to develop an adjustment that would assure the individuals involved a healthy cre-

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ative life depended both on the nature of the hurdles to be surmounted and on the resources available for doing so. The hardships of the Negroes and Puerto Ricans arise from the fact that the hurdles are unusually high and the resources unusually meager.⁶⁸

One must read the Negro New York newspaper, with its regular appeals to the community to raise pitifully small sums for the local Y or other institutions, to discover how fantastically difficult it is to raise money in the Negro community. Handlin points out that when Sydenham Hospital was integrated, it also shifted from a voluntary to a municipal hospital.⁶⁹ Two sets of institutions manage to raise money: those fighting segregation and for equal rights (NAACP, NUL, CORE), though they raise less than they need, and much of that comes from whites; and the Negro churches.

In the Negro communities of New York, as elsewhere in the country, it is difficult to underestimate the importance of the Negro churches. When one says "Negro church," it is possible the image of the storefront sect, stomping and hollering, taking outlandish names, and twisting the common heritage into strange forms, still comes to the mind of many whites. It is not these churches that we speak of, though they of course exist, are important in the lives of the people involved, and are also of some weight in politics. We have in mind the large institutional churches, in well-equipped buildings, with various group activities, with associated social services, with a large membership and a prominent minister. These churches, which elsewhere in America, for most groups, and for most vital areas of concern, are fifth wheels, are in colored America, and in colored New York, in the center of things. And they play a role in politics that the churches of no other group can aspire to, or would dare to.

It is not unimportant that Adam Clayton Powell, New York's first Negro Congressman, is a minister; that Gardner Taylor, the only Negro member of the New York Board of Education in 1960, was also a minister—and that both men lead particularly large churches (Baptist), claiming 10,000 members. It is also not without significance that Milton Galamison, former head of the NAACP of

Brooklyn and one of the most prominent figures in the fight to “desegregate” schools, is also a minister of a large church (Presbyterian). James H. Robinson of the Presbyterian Church of the Master ran for borough president on the Liberal Party ticket and was spoken of as a successor to Hulan Jack. There are other ministers who play some role in politics, and the New York Negro minister is in general far less cautious in indicating his preferences from the pulpit than the white minister.

The Negro newspapers regularly devote a great deal of space to church activities and report on the politics of the national denominations in the greatest detail. In 1960 and 1961 there was a bitter struggle going on in the National Baptist Convention for leadership between Gardner Taylor of New York and J. H. Jackson of Chicago. It was headline news in the Negro press. (It is not untypical of Negro church politics that after a wild convention in 1960 the matter ended up in court—but the court refused to take jurisdiction.) This battle involved the fundamental question of the attitude of the church to the new militancy of Negroes in South and North. But the main point to notice is that it is not often that an issue that is as central as this to a group becomes the basis of struggle in white denominations. (When J. H. Jackson was victorious in 1961, one of his first steps was to remove Martin Luther King from a position in the Baptist organization.)

We have magnificent descriptions of the old fundamentalist storefront church in literature (for example, James Baldwin’s *Go Tell It on the Mountain*), and we have good sociological descriptions of these churches. No one has yet described the Negro middle-class churches which seem often to make up for the loss of fundamentalist fervor by becoming as heatedly involved in the secular political struggles that affect Negroes. It is this kind of church that is rapidly becoming the dominant type of church. We find, as part of the middle-class development among Negroes, that the same social changes that have made the city church a problem for white Protestants may begin to make it a problem for Negroes. Members are beginning to move away from the areas in which the big churches are located to the suburbs; the church becomes to some degree the institution

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of an absentee membership; and new ethnic elements move into the neighborhood around the church, with no relationship to it. And just as the white churches long ago had to consider what to do as their neighborhoods changed—and the majority sold out and followed the membership, with a few remaining to serve a peculiar function as city churches—so we find some Negro churches considering the problem of a new Puerto Rican group around its doors. Here and there, in Brooklyn and the Bronx, Negro ministers are beginning to think in terms of a mission to the Puerto Ricans, just as some white churches are finally beginning to think in terms of a mission to the surrounding Negroes. And just as conservative members of the white Protestant churches find it hard to think in terms of a universal church, open to all, so do some Negroes, used to the comfortable community church, the only institution that is entirely theirs, find it hard to envisage bringing in Puerto Ricans.

But the mere fact that Negro churches must begin to think in these terms shows to what an extent they have become part of American Protestantism, participating in its intellectual and theological development and its problems. (Gardner Taylor has served as head of the Protestant Council of New York; J. Archie Hargraves, minister of Brooklyn's Nazarene Congregational Church, became secretary of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Church in 1961.) Since the same factors affect them that long ago made their impact on white Protestants, one may see the signs of the time when secularization and specialization will affect the Negro churches, as they affect the older Protestant denominations, and when these churches will be less flamboyant, but also very likely less influential. The day will come in the Negro church when the minister is not wealthier than his parishioners, and at that time, the minister will not wield the influence that he does today.

Interestingly enough, even the development of Elijah Muhammed's Temples of Islam suggests the change in Negro religion and politics. It does not have the flamboyance of either Marcus Garvey or Father Divine. It emphasizes traditional virtues, as do all storefront churches

(no smoking, drinking, women), but less because these are sinful than because by saving his money and devoting himself to his business the Negro may make himself wealthy and successful. This is indeed a nationalist and racist movement. But it is surprising how much of Horatio Alger there is in it, too—and that reflects a great change in the Negro community. Elijah Muhammed's young men remind some people of fascists, and yet they wear dark business suits and are proud of their self-restraint and their discipline. The Temple of Islam service, an admirer of the movement tells us, is sober and restrained—only hand-clapping greets a point well made. Thus, even the most extreme of present-day Negro movements suggests the extent of the shift to middle-class patterns, and the power they now possess.

In a community of a million people, one can see pretty much what one wants, and this is as true for Negroes as for any other group. One can see the large mass of problems that are high up on the agenda of city government and civic groups—crime, delinquency, the breakdown of family responsibility. And one can see the increasing numbers who achieve middle-class status, and for whom the only problems are those created by the prejudiced and discriminatory behavior of others. One can see demagogic self-serving leaders in politics and church and civic activity, incapable of seeing any problems except those created by the white man; and one can see an increasing body of competent leaders, very often professionals on the staffs of private and public agencies, quite up to facing directly and squarely the problems of the group and who yet give no ground in their insistence on equality. One can see the huge ghetto concentrations, and one can see the ever larger areas of integration in work, civic activity, politics, housing. One can dole out an even-handed justice, saying, on the one hand there is this, on the other, that, and it is true among a million people there will be enough examples for any argument.

And yet, how do we cast the final balance, how do we envisage the future? Here there are no agreed-on scales, there is only the judgment of those who try to see the whole picture, in the light of past history, and to discern future trends. Our own judgment is that, in the North,

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a new phase in Negro leadership must begin. The era of the leaders who sought “accommodation” to an exploitative white world has come to an end everywhere, even in the South. The era of the leaders of “protest” has been in full swing in New York for a good twenty-five years, though it has only recently arrived in the South. Its achievements in the city have been great, but it is now entering an era of diminishing returns. And because there are as a matter of fact few additional gains to be made in New York City by protest, the protest leadership shows a tendency to become irrational, shrill, and ineffective. (The situation in other cities—for example, Chicago—and in the South is entirely different.)

But the worst of it is that important tasks, necessary ones on the agenda of American Negroes, are shirked and ignored. These are tasks that conceivably no one but Negroes can do. It is probable that no investment of public and private agencies on delinquency and crime-prevention programs will equal the return from an investment by Negro-led and Negro-financed agencies. It is probable that no offensive on the public school system to improve the educational results among Negroes will equal what may be gained from an equivalent investment by Negro-led and Negro-financed groups, and an increase in the numbers of Negro teachers and principals. It is possible that no effort to change the patterns of the Negro lower-class family will be effective at a time when the white family is in disorder, when strong families of whatever kind, native and ethnic, show signs of disintegration; but if anything can be done, it is likely that Negro agencies will be far more effective than public agencies and those of white Protestants.

Succeeding the period of accommodation, then, and the period of protest, one can detect the need for a period of self-examination and self-help, in which the increasing income and resources of leadership of the group are turned inwards. And already a few voices are raised to make just this point. This is the argument that John H. Johnson, publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet*, suggested at the 1960 Convention of the National Urban League.⁷⁰ (*Ebony*, it should be pointed out, is itself rather more self-help oriented than the protest-rooted Negro newspapers, and its

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circulation in New York is probably greater than that of the local New York weekly Negro community newspaper, the *Amsterdam News*.) This is the argument of Carl T. Rowan, the distinguished Negro reporter, in an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*.⁷¹

Everywhere in America the argument can be met by the counterargument—let the white world reform itself first. Even in New York one can say this, and most Negro leadership does; but the question is: whatever the origins of the burden, on whose shoulders does it fall, and how can it best be overcome?

the Puerto Ricans

PROLOGUE

IF SOMEONE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO HAD LOOKED AROUND AT the potential sources of new immigration to New York City, his eye might well have fallen on Puerto Rico: he would also have concluded that the Puerto Ricans, if they were potential migrants, would have a very hard time adapting to New York City and indeed might well be considered the migrants least likely to succeed.

Puerto Rico in the middle 1930's, after thirty-five years of American administration, was a scene of almost unrelieved misery. Rexford Tugwell, the American governor of the island during the early forties, titled his big book on Puerto Rico *The Stricken Land*. Its 3,435 square miles—a tiny area—held a population of one and three-quarter millions. Its death rate had been reduced from the very high figure of about 30 per thousand at the time of the American occupation at the end of the nineteenth century to about 20 per thousand; but its birth rate remained among