WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR NEW YORK'S 1,000,000 NEGROES?

by Nathan Glazer & Daniel P. Moynihan

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 intimate link. Historical irnny 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.

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 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 school-children (almost all white) attend parochial and private schools, the Negroes and Puerto Ricans will together exceed the rest of the public school population.

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. 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. 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 Negro would 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 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, "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."

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. 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.

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 individuals and the group.

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.

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.

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 <u>policies</u>, 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 Democrats in Manhattan are Negro. 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.

> 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.

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 homeowning 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 city wide 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.

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. 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, COIK, 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) 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 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-Semetic 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 sterotypes 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.

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 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 most interesting ones.)

A month later the Amsterdam News attacked the Higher Horizons program, and in particular, its director, Daniel Schreiber, and its reporter wrote: "White 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.

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 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. 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 trail 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.

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, sub-consciously, a bit of anit-Jewish feeling helps make them feel more completely American, a part of the majority group. 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 complain 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 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, publicits, 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 <u>they</u> 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, <u>Raisin in the Sun</u>, and the passion of her advocacy of African (and American Negro) nationalism in 1961.

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, is exclusivist, but it exists 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 so great.

It is to this grass-roots nationalism and exclusivism that Adam Clayton Powell and the <u>Amsterdam News</u> 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 policy 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 in 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 creative 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.

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. 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 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 churches 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 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 Muhammad'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 Muhammad'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 problem 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

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 evenhanded 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 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-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. (Ebony, it should be pointed out, is itself rather more self-help oriented than the protest-rooted Negro newspapers, and its 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.

Everywhere in America the argument can be met by the counter-argument--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?

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