

The **BLACK** Revolution

Bewildered white Liberals are wont to ask: "What do you people want?" Some newsmen recently asked virtually this same question of H. Rap Brown, fiery young leader of SNCC and the Black Power movement. Rap replied: "I want Lyndon Johnson to resign and go to Vietnam and fight--he and his family." Particularly interesting were the varied reactions to this statement; the reporter adds that: "Negro onlookers cheered as he brushed aside newsmen's requests that he be 'more specific.'" Indeed: how specific can one get? Why didn't "Whitey" get the message?

The message, then, the great new fact about the Negro movement in America is that, in the last two years, it has changed drastically its methods and its goals. Until recently, it was a "civil rights movement", led by Liberals and Social Democrats of the NAACP, dedicated to coercing whites into "integrating" all manner of private and public facilities. In short, its goal and its means were statist and Liberal to the core.

Now that this integration has been "achieved", what do they want? But, in the first place, integration has not been achieved at all. In the most blatantly segregated areas, a pathetic "tokenism" has replaced segregation, but in the crucial areas of jobs, housing, power, the country remains the same as it ever was. It is becoming increasingly clear that, as the Conservatives said all along, integration cannot be achieved by law and by coercion; it must first come willingly into the hearts of men. All right, so then what? Negroes began

to see that, not only was integration impossible of achievement, but that the very goal itself is flawed at its root. For what joy, what dignity, what satisfaction is there in forcing someone to eat or work or live with you if he despises you? Who, then, wants to integrate with him?

The Negroes then, began to turn, and turn swiftly, from the old Liberal ideal of compulsory integration to another tradition that had previously lingered, underground and un-respectable, at the core of the Negro community. This was the idea of black nationalism, an idea that had always appealed, not to the educated and articulate Negroes, but to the poorest inhabitants of the ghetto. The black nationalist idea came to the fore in the 1920's with the phenomenally popular Marcus Garvey, who preached a return to Africa. With the death of Garvey, the idea dropped underground again, to re-emerge in the 1950's with the phenomenon of the Black Muslims and its great charismatic leader, Malcolm X.

For a time many conservatives were enthusiastic about black nationalism; forgetting about the ultimate goal of either return to Africa or several Negro states in the U. S., the conservatives were overjoyed with the nationalist and Muslim emphasis on Negro self-help, thrift, dignity, and pride, in contrast to the old ideals of coerced integration from above. But there is one thing that the conservative proponents of black nationalism overlooked: self-help, pride, thrift, Negro businesses, etc. are all well and fine. But they cannot hope to flourish within the context of the black reality in America: permanent oppression by the white "power structure." None of these good and libertarian things can be achieved without, first and foremost, getting the white-run U. S. and local and state governments off the backs of the Negro people.

Thus, the libertarian-conservatives made the same fatal mistake here as in their broader viewpoint on the free market and the free society. Libertarian-conservatives preach the virtues of the free market and individual liberty--without for a moment acknowledging that these great and good things can only be achieved by liquidating the tyranny of the government of the United States, and all other governments throughout the world. In short, these libertarian-conservatives have totally forgotten what the quasi-libertarians of the early nineteenth century: the James Mills, the Bentham's, the Cobden's and Bright's, to say nothing of the William Lloyd Garrison's and John Brown's, full knew: that liberty is a profoundly revolutionary concept, and that it can only be achieved through the liquidation of the oppressor State.

Similarly, the black nationalists came to realize what the libertarian-conservatives forgot: that to achieve Negro freedom and autonomy white rule over Negroes must be brought to an end. Hence, the radicalizing and revolutionizing of Malcolm X, and then, after his martyrdom, of SNCC and CORE. Hence the shift of concepts in the Negro movement from "civil rights" to "black liberation." Hence, also the focussing of black rebellion against the living embodiments of white rule in the black "ghettoes": specifically, and first and foremost, the police. It is the overwhelmingly white police who are the enforcers of racial law and who express the basic racism of their own community by systematic brutalizing of the subject population. It is true, of course, that police are systematically brutal anyway: for the police (a) have a legal monopoly of the guns, and he who is entrusted with such great power will be the one who enjoys using that power to the hilt; and (b) the police are the enforcement arm for all the despotic legislation and ordinances on the government books. The police are the hired thugs who do the dirty work for the bosses of the State apparatus. In confronting poor people, the police are far rougher than with the upper or middle class, because of the lack of social or political power among the poor. But in confronting Negroes, the racist attitude of the polizei reinforces and redoubles their usual brutal role.

It is no accident that virtually every single case of black rebellion in the cities in the summer of '67 was precipitated by police brutality: by beating up a Negro cab driver in Newark, by raiding and beating up an after-hours drinking club in Detroit. It is also no accident that, despite all the press hysteria about sniping and looting, the greatest bulk of the crime committed during the riots was by the enforcement-thugs of the State: the police, the National Guard, the federal troops. Almost all the killings were of Negroes by the police and troops; in fact, the behaviour of these enforcers was clearly reminiscent of the behaviour of U. S. imperial troops in Vietnam, or, in fact, of military occupiers anywhere in their continuing, permanent war against the native colored population. Thus, if a sniper fired from a building, the characteristic response of our police-Guard-army "protectors" was to spray fire into the entire building, heedless of the destruction and the casualties that would have to follow. One of the great lessons of the summer rebellions which we all should absorb is that the black population of the United States is a colonized and subject people.

Thus, newsmen reported that, on the staff of New Jersey Governor Hughes during the Newark and Plainfield

rebellions, there were the "hawks" and the "doves" Terms like "hold and clear", "search and destroy", began to be applicable. Also revealing was the famous interview (New York Times, July 29) with Maj. Gen. Almerin C. O'Hara, commander of the New York State Army National Guard. General O'Hara called for "greater commitment of force" to bring the riots under control, and added the amazing statement that he would "not rule out the use of any weapon." Escalation once again raises its ugly head; will someone soon suggest the use of Tactical Nuclear Weapons on American cities--"clean" ones, of course, so that the fallout does not filter down to white areas? The general, however, assures us that while he contemplates the use of hand grenades, bazookas, and recoilless rifles, the chances of using heavy artillery are "very remote". Well, let us be grateful for small blessings.

General O'Hara insisted that National Guard actions must be under the authority and decisions of the military, including the choice of tactics and weapons, since "civilians are not cognizant" of the delicate fine points. "There are military decisions which should be left to military men." O'Hara also stressed that the National Guard must not be "unduly restrained by civilian authority", because "if the military is brought in and they lose control, then what do you have left?" The answer, it seems, is no control at all, in short, freedom, which is, of course, unthinkable in our "freedom-loving" country.

General O'Hara conceded that the standard riot control techniques--stressing closed formations with bayonets at the ready--are "not really adequate for the kind of guerrilla warfare (this is American cities he's talking about, not Vietnam!!) and snipers we face these days." Instead, he said, "military methods used in flushing guerrillas out of a village in Vietnam could be adapted to guerrilla warfare in the ghettos." "Of course," the general added wistfully, "we can't do just what we would do in Vietnam. Out there if you had a sniper in a room you'd just crank up a tank and fire a shell through the window, destroying the whole room, and much of the building. I don't think public opinion would accept the use of that kind of force here."

Let us also ponder this: if a white neighborhood were rioting and looting, would buildings be pulverized en masse? Would curfews be imposed, and streets blockaded? Would apartment-to-apartment searches be made, as at Plainfield, New Jersey, breaking down doors and destroying furniture without bothering about search warrants? Of the

thousands wounded during the virtual civil war of July, 1967, almost all were Negro, and the vast majority were shot by trigger-happy white troops and police, concerned only to "shoot everything that is black and that moves", in the perceptive words of one officer.

Was there need to stop looting? Looting is certainly unjustifiable, but by what right does the State move in and shoot looters? Shooting amounts to capital punishment, and by any moral standards, death as a punishment for looting is so excessive and barbaric a punishment that it amounts to criminal murder of the looter-victim. A criminal only forfeits the rights which he takes away from another person; and therefore capital punishment for any crime less than murder is itself a criminal murder.

The grisly masterpiece of unconscious humor during the July Days was emitted by President Johnson, who had the unmitigated gall to proclaim, on July 24: "We will not endure violence. It matters not by whom it is done, or under what slogan or banner. It will not be tolerated." Surely this statement is a classic of its kind. It comes from a man in charge of the greatest violence-wielding machine, the mightiest collection of destructive power, in the history of the world. It comes from a man who is ordering, every day, the use of that power to bomb, burn, and napalm thousands of innocent women and children and old people in Vietnam. Yet so "brainwashed" is the American people, so used are they to the irrationalities of our society, that the statement was taken with a straight face by the public, none of whom seemed to include, under "what slogan or banner", the "saving" of the crushed and bleeding people of Vietnam, North and South, from the clutches of "international Communism."

And so while LBJ denounces violence no matter the slogan or banner, H. Rap Brown declares his goal to be the resigning of Johnson and going with his family to fight personally in Vietnam. Which statement was the more rational: the blatant self-contradiction of Johnson's or the perceptive, libertarian revolutionary statement of the supposedly "irrational" H. Rap Brown? And there is another set of statements that the two made that could also be set side by side to compare the devotion to truth, reason, and justice of the two men. Johnson, in his statement, proclaimed: "From its earliest day, our nation has been dedicated to justice, to equality--and to order." About justice and equality there is grave room for doubt; but not about our government's continuing devotion to "order". But what order? And whose order? The order of the exploiter, of the monopolist, of the imperialist, of the con-

troller and ruler of the State apparatus. Let Rap Brown tell it: "The white man makes all the laws, he drags us before his courts, he accuses us, and he sits in judgment over us."

While the polizei are the most blatant and evident example of race rule and hence the greatest focus of black resentment, there are other crucial groups in the ghetto who also serve as despotic "colonial administrators" over the Negro people. One group is the urban renewal planners. All good Liberals, not so long ago, used to admire urban renewal as a means of helping the poor and bringing esthetics to the city. Now, radicals and some conservatives are beginning to agree (in another burgeoning form of "Left-Right" coalition) that urban renewal is really a vast subsidy to the real estate interests at the expense, not only of the taxpayer which was always evident, but also of the poor themselves, who are summarily kicked out of their homes by the urban renewal bulldozer, and forced elsewhere, redoubling the slums there. If they try to move into the new urban renewal housing, they find that there is far less space available, and at much higher rents than they were paying before. And so, more and more people are coming to recognize, "urban renewal" is really "Negro removal"--for urban renewal has been concentrated in the Negro ghetto areas. It is surely significant that one of the great Negro grievances underlying this summer's riot was the plan of the Newark government to liquidate many thousands of Negro homes in the center of the Negro district of the city in order to make way for another campus of the New Jersey State's College of Medicine and Dentistry.

In addition to urban renewal, another large group of colonial administrators dictating to and oppressing the Negro are the administrators and teachers of the nation's urban public schools. The public-school system, again so beloved by middle-class Liberals and again overwhelmingly staffed by whites, is a vast prison-house and chain-gang for the nation's youth. The compulsory attendance laws force all of the youth of the country, regardless of their talents or inclinations, into this vast prison-system, and the teachers and administrators are their guards and wardens. The oppression lies much the heaviest in the urban Negro areas, where so many children are not inclined toward schooling and where racism as well as hatred for working-class mores are given full rein by the school staff, armed with the power of compulsory education to force their charges to stay in school. No wonder that Negro youth are embittered by their enforced stay in the system! Jonathan Kozol has just written

a book about his harrowing experiences in the Boston school system, where Negro youth were systematically beaten physically and degraded and humiliated psychologically by their white guardians. On a more philosophical level, Paul Goodman and Edgar Z. Friedenberg have, in recent years, focussed more of our attention on the evils of compulsory mass public schooling and the consequences for the children that have flowed from it.

Police, troops--and of course, white judges in the courts--and teachers and school administrators; these are some of the colonial administrators over the Negro population. Another large and important group are the welfare workers, again mostly white, who administer the welfare programs in the ghetto. Not only are these workers engaged in setting up unmanly dependence among the Negro "clients" and are resented therefore, they also organize Gestapo-type raids on their clients in the middle of the night--without a search warrant, by the way--to make sure that there are no men in or under the female client's bed, who could serve her as a private means of support.

And so the Negro ghettos are enmeshed in a network of white-run and white-operated despotic colonial agencies. Hence the black revolution. Hence the cry for black power. It is a call for black power in black areas, it is a call for allowing the Negro people at last to run their own lives as they see fit. It is a call for an end to white race rule over the Negro.

A common Liberal objection is that the black revolution cannot hope to win as such because the Negroes are in a minority in the U. S. They are, however, a very large and therefore potentially powerful minority. But more than that, the Negro aim is not to overthrow the U. S. or local governments totally; if that were the aim, then of course the black liberation movement in the U. S. would be hopelessly quixotic. No, the aim is to overthrow white U. S. and local government rule in black areas--in those areas where blacks are a majority; roughly, the Black Belt of the South, and the ghetto areas of the North and West. This would be, in effect, a disintegration of white U. S. rule over these territories. And this is a perfectly feasible objective.

There is another consideration that gives weight to the realistic potential of the black power movement. That is, if the Negroes consider themselves the American cutting edge of the international struggle against the imperialism of the U. S. government. For just as the Negroes within the U. S. are battling white colonialism at home; so is the great majority of the world's population--largely colored peoples

in the underdeveloped world--battling U. S. imperialism abroad. Considering the world as a whole, the colored anti-imperialists are a great majority while U. S. whites are quite clearly a minority. Hence the great achievement of SNCC and CORE in recent years; from being ordinary American patriots unconcerned with foreign affairs, they have become anti-imperialists consciously linking themselves with their colored anti-imperialist brethren abroad. This notable advance is symbolized by Stokely Carmichael's extended stay in the anti-imperialist world. And here once again, the martyred Malcolm X was the pioneer; it was when he had begun to internationalize the Negro struggle that he was cut down by assassins.

Finally, the seemingly far-fetched solution of black nationalism in black areas bids fair to be the only solution to the Negro question that will work. The two alternative solutions; the Liberal and the Conservative--are conspicuously failing to work and will continue to fail. The Conservative therapy for riots is, of course, simply the application of ever-greater force, just as this is the Conservative remedy for practically everything, from pornography to Vietnam. Send more troops, send more tanks, bomb 'em, defoliate 'em!! Etc. But in the Negro rebellions, it was demonstrated that more National Guards, more counter-revolutionary force applied by the State, simply provoked more rebel force, more sniping, etc. It was only, in many cases, when the Guardsmen and the troops were pulled out of the ghetto that calm was restored. Besides, when is the escalation of force demanded by the Conservatives going to stop? With the clean H-bomb? It very much appears that U. S. force will not be able to "win" until the entire Negro population is wiped out, just as U. S. force won't be able to win in Vietnam without the genocidal destruction of the entire Vietnamese population. Is that what the Conservatives want, and is that what they call "victory"?

The Liberal solution has been shown to be little better. The Liberal solution, both at home and abroad, is of course always the same: more Federal money. If it's the American ghettos then more Federal funds, more Federal subsidies, loans, playgrounds, etc., etc. And if it's Vietnam, then more foreign aid, more "welfare planning", etc. Again, both solutions have failed dismally. Detroit, everyone agrees, was supposed to be the great model home of Liberal Race Relations, with plenty of playgrounds, Human Relations Committees and all the rest. And Detroit suffered a week-long civil war with property damage of \$1 billion. As the always scintillating reporter Andrew Kopkind wrote in the New York

Review of Books about the rebellion, Detroit murdered Liberalism. And good riddance. It is no wonder that Liberal solutions cannot succeed; for the Federal funds tactic simply increases the governmental bureaucracy, aggravates the Negro dependence and resentment which inspired the rebellions in the first place. But Liberals, whose entire philosophy is steeped in the coercive creation of dependence, could never understand this truth; if they did, their whole credo would fall to the ground. Only the "extreme Left" and the "extreme Right" can understand.

Increasingly, there are two kinds of "Left-Right" coalitions emerging on the American scene and in American social philosophy. There is the ugly and despotic coalitionism of the "Left Center" and "Right Center", of both the Liberal and Conservative wings of the Establishment. This is the kind of coalitionism that occurs when the current Right lauds the 100% ADA-Liberal Senator Thomas Dodd or when the ADA-Liberal Daniel Moynihan calls for an explicit coalition with National Review-type Conservatism over the two great issues of our day: Vietnam, and the black revolution. There is indeed full scope for coalition here. For, in the final analysis, the social philosophies of Liberalism and Conservatism are as alike as Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Their emphasis and their rhetoric is different; their substance is much the same, and grows closer day by day. For on what can Federal force rest but Federal funds? And how can Federal funds be collected and dispensed without the use of Federal force? In short, money and coercion, emphasized by Liberals and Conservatives respectively, in reality go hand in hand. And that is why the carrot-and-stick approach toward the Negro ghettos, toward Vietnam, and, in truth, toward virtually everything else, can be supported enthusiastically by Liberals and Conservatives alike.

The other coalition looming is the coalition of opposition, the opposition of all those who, whatever their differences of rhetoric, emphasis, or even substance, join in their implacable hostility to the force-and-funds, the coercion wrapped in Liberal rhetoric, the "humanitarian-with-the-guillotine" in the memorable phrase of the libertarian Isabel Paterson, of the U. S. Liberal-Conservative Establishment. The most important call for such a coalition has come in the recent work of the thoughtful and eloquent Carl Oglesby, last year's president of the Students for a Democratic Society:

"The right wing in America is presently in a state of almost eerie spiritual disarray....the conservative right

wing of imperialist, authoritarian, and even monarchist disposition enjoys the fraternity of the libertarian right wing of laissez faire, free market individualism. These two groupings could not possibly have less in common. Why have the libertarians conceded leadership to the conservatives? Why have the traditional opponents of big, militarized, central authoritarian government now joined forces with such a government's boldest advocates?

They have done so because they have been persuaded that there is a clear and present danger that necessitates a temporary excursion from final values. They should know better. They should know that for the totalitarian imperialists there is always a clear and present danger, that it is pre-eminently through the ideology of the Foreign Threat, the myth of the tiger at the gates, that frontier and global imperialism have always rationalized themselves....

It would be a piece of great good fortune for America and the world if the libertarian right could be reminded that besides the debased Republicanism of the Knowlands and the Juds there is another tradition available to them--their own: the tradition of Congressman Howard Buffett, Senator Taft's midwestern campaign manager in 1952....of Frank Chodorov...of Dean Russell....of the tough-minded Garet Garrett....

This style of political thought, rootedly American, is carried forward today by the Negro freedom movement and the student movement against Great Society-Free World Imperialism. That these movements are called leftist means nothing. They are of the grain of American humanist individualism and voluntaristic associational action; and it is only through them that the libertarian tradition is activated and kept alive. In a strong sense, the Old Right and the New Left are morally and politically coordinate."¹

Professor Staughton Lynd, among other Left critics of Oglesby's call for a libertarian Left-Right coalition, protests in Liberation that the positive economic programs of the two wings are completely different, despite their common opposition to racism and war, and their common stand for decentralization and grass-roots decision making. The one believes in communal decisions, the

1. Carl Oglesby, "Vietnamese Crucible", in Carl Oglesby and Richard Shaull, Containment and Change (New York; Macmillan, 1967), pp. 165-167.

other in individualism and private property. True enough; but even if we should ever get to the post-victory stage when this potential divergence should become imminent, Lynd does not realize that there is nothing in the individualist libertarian philosophy that would deny to Lynd or anyone else the option of forming their own voluntary communalist societies. That freedom of action is precisely one of the doctrines championed by the individualist believers in the free market and the free society.

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