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OF BLACK LIBERATION: 1875-1969.

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HISTORICAL SURVEY OF BLACK EDUCATION AS A MEANS  
OF BLACK LIBERATION: 1875 - 1969

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate  
School of The Ohio State University

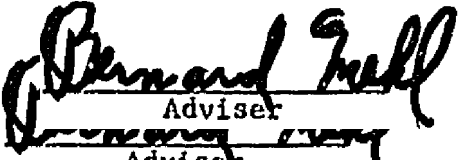
By

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\* \* \* \* \*

The Ohio State University  
1971

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a dissertation has been described by many as a gruesome and agonizing process, which when completed never fully satisfies all persons responsible for its final approval. Nevertheless, I, as many other men, have attempted and completed the task -- as to its worth, I leave that totally to those who will read this study. The experience of writing this dissertation has been for me an invaluable one. Through this experience I became painfully aware, not only of my own intellectual limitations, but my lack of knowledge concerning my people. This study does not begin to tap the wealth of knowledge to be gained from historical and contemporary studies of the Black experience in America. No one is more aware than I that my subject could have been dealt with in a more sophisticated and inclusive manner by a more mature Black scholar. I, nevertheless, hope this study will provide some insights into the Black man's struggle in America.

It would be literally impossible for me to thank all my close friends individually who assisted me in the preparation of the manuscript. To them I extend a warm collective thanks. I also extend a special thanks to Don Bourgeois for his many suggestions and careful reading of the manuscript. My adviser and friend, Bernard Mehl, deserves more than thanks. He made it all possible in the first place.

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## FOREWARD

For some time now the literature about Black Education has been growing to giant proportions. Books on the history of Black Education have kept pace with the hundreds of books on Disadvantaged Youth, Inner City Schools and White Racism, seemingly to either rationalize or abstract the educational plight of Black Americans. Most of the literature has been written by whites and the tendency has been to treat the educational plight of Blacks in a pathological frame of reference, i.e., Blacks are deficient because of cognitive or psycho-social deficits. Consequently, this has led many educators, and laymen as well, to ask, "Why are they underprivileged?" rather than why is a particular group privileged. The wave of thought in the literature also has characterized the lack of educational gains in terms of analogy; that is it has compared Blacks with other immigrants, hence the lack of progress is due to inadequate organizational skills or intellectual leadership, rather than racial prejudice. Such thinking has led to the conclusion that the victim is responsible for his condition, and that the plight of the Black man is a Black problem, not a white problem.

This dissertation will test the thesis that the Black man's failure in the struggle for human dignity through education has had less to do with cognitive or psycho-social deficits than with white racism, and that in terms of where America finds itself today on the

progress continuum, Blacks are essentially no better off relative to their white counterparts than they were in 1875.

Using mainly Black sources, the investigator will compare and contrast, from a Black perspective, what Black educators Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Frederick Douglass experienced and said with what contemporary Black figures in education are experiencing and saying. No attempt will be made herein to give an in depth historical account of a particular period in history or an in depth view of historical figures highlighted. The approach will be mainly descriptive, concerning itself with the two major themes throughout Black history — integration versus separation as seen by Blacks, and white reactions to these positions.

As a variation on the central theme of this dissertation, the investigator will attempt to show that ethical principles and the fundamental values of loyalty and decency did not and do not apply to Blacks. The grave consequences this has had and will have for Black and white America will also be examined.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: THE CHOICES OPEN TO BLACK AMERICANS

As the oppressive state of the Black American is viewed both from an historical and contemporary perspective, both moderates and militants can be found. This despite their ideological persuasion in agreement on the goal of liberation from the psychologically and physically debilitating forces of racism. Historical and contemporary literature reveal two major themes emerging from Blacks' attempts to deal with the dehumanizing forces of racism --- integration and separation. For example, as will be shown later in this work, during the Post-Bellum period there were some Black sentiments favoring a policy of self-styled segregation culminating under the leadership of Booker T. Washington. In the same period was another trend of thought favoring integration and higher education under the leadership of W.E.B. DuBois. Though neither concept exists in its purest form today, almost a century later Black leaders are struggling with the same question, echoing the sentiments of pre- and post-Bellum Black Americans.

Though there have been many analyses of Black thought, little attention has been given to it in terms of the "choices" that have been and are presently open to the Black man. Julius Lester, in an article

"The Necessity For Separation," outlines the only three choices that have been open to the Black man:

- (1) Try to assimilate by adopting the customs, mores, culture values, etc. of the majority as European immigrant groups to America did successfully, and as blacks tried to do;
- (2) try to be as unobstrusive and separate as possible, while remaining a part of and being governed by the political apparatus of the majority, as the Chinese have done in America and Southeast Asia, and as the Indians have done in Africa;
- (3) or separate geographically from the majority and become an independent political and economic unit as in the case of Pakistan, a Moslem state, and Isarel, a Jewish state.<sup>1</sup>

To these choices, a fourth one will be added here, militant integrationism, represented by the struggle of revolutionary minority groups such as the Black Panthers who are attempting to legitimize Black American cultural values within the existing sociocultural matrix of America. This matrix can be viewed as encompassing American economic life, American political life, American social life, and lately American educational life. That is, how to integrate, or separate, or assimilate, or militantly integrate the Black American has been the core of the continuing controversy engaged in by significant Blacks throughout history. These currents were present even immediately after the African was brought against his will to America's shores in 1619 as a menial slave. For example, Ante-Bellum American history shows the Black man struggling with the controversy of integration and separation. Many Blacks chose to die rather than submit to the inhuman forces of a slavocracy, others escaped to other territories, some to Canada, South America, and many even made it back to the African continent. Yet, others

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<sup>1</sup> Julius Lester, "The Necessity for Separation," Ebony, August, 1970, p. 167.

chose to remain rather than struggle against what seemed to be insurmountable odds. Thus, the historical roots of the contemporary controversy over integration and separation unfold deep in the seventeenth century and continue into the twentieth century. Today there can be found such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), advancing the cause of integration as a means for liberation. On the other hand there are such organizations as the Republic of New Africa (RNA), the Black Muslims, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), who advocate either full or partial separatism, if not geographically at least in political, economic, and educational matters related to Black people.

The late twentieth century has seen the emergence of such groups as the Black Panthers. The Panthers contend that integration and segregation per se of Black and white are nebulous concepts and that greedy, exploitative systems such as capitalism keep men, both Black and white, from the realization of their humanity. For them, coalition politics between Blacks and whites on practical goals to achieve liberation of all men is an inevitable consequence if Black people, or any oppressed people, are to realize their human potential. Though the Black Panthers or similar groups may appear as a relatively new phenomenon to Black thought, the writings of such great men as DuBois, Walker, and Douglass anticipated these "new" Black sentiments.

Within this presentation, there will be no attempt to analyze, at least not intricately, the political structure of any particular

Black group except in cases where such analysis would promote or give clarity to the central thesis of the work itself. Based on reading and experience, it is the contention here that political participation has to do with the group's underlying philosophy. This philosophy usually is determined by many factors, among which are self-awareness, political educational level (not necessarily formal), economic level, and religious affiliation. For example, Martin Luther King's theistic approach to liberation was undergirded by the philosophy of nonviolence, the basic tenants of which came from Mahatma Gandhi. Consequently, SCLC, the organization Martin Luther King headed before his assassination, attracted people of similar religious or philosophic orientation. The key point here is that SCLC's goal was "liberation" through "integration," and it utilized a kind of religiously oriented methodology to achieve its ends. A second point of significance is that there were many people who joined King or sympathized with him, but disagreed with his philosophy. However, they did agree on the goal of liberation through integration. The major opposition to King's movement by other groups was not to his philosophy of nonviolence, but to his goal of liberation through integration. This opposition is inherent in the many and varied philosophies of the separatist. It is the history of these two opposing philosophical positions that will be of concern in this work.

The focus here will be on Black American thought from 1875 to the present date as it relates to the controversy of integration and separation. The historical tradition of contemporary thought will be traced, dealing mainly with the "choices" that have been open

to the Black American, either to integrate the mainstream of American life or to separate and function independently of the American government. It is recognized that these two positions of controversy do not stand in isolation of the philosophies and opinions of America in the larger sense and that there are many intricate sociopolitical forces constantly at work that mold and change the thoughts, mood, and actions of persons involved in the past and present. However, the major factor that has been a constant through America's history has been the factor of racism. The U.S. Riot Commission Report included the following comment on the rebellions of 1967:

The events of the summer of 1967 are in large part the culmination of 300 years of racial prejudice. Most Americans know little of the origins of the racial schism separating our white and Negro citizens. Few appreciate how central the problem of the Negro has been to our social policy. Fewer still understand that today's problems can be solved only if white Americans comprehend the rigid social, economic and educational barriers that have prevented Negroes from participating in the mainstream of American life. Only a handful realize that Negro Accommodation to the pattern of prejudice in American culture has been one side of the coin for as slaves and as free men, Negroes have protested against oppression and have persistently sought equality in American society.<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely the "...rigid (racist) social, economic, and educational barriers that have prevented Negroes from the mainstream of American life. ..." <sup>3</sup> What is found is not a circular argument among Blacks over integration and separation; rather, what is found is that each generation of Blacks is forced to ask the same questions as it grapples for the

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<sup>2</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to the President of the United States, Otto Kerner, chairman (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 206-207.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

best means to escape the dehumanizing forces of racism. In the early 19th century Hollis R. Lynch reported that, "Despite the growing discrimination against them, however, many American Negroes continued to assert their rights as American citizens."<sup>4</sup> Here can be found the burgeoning roots of integrationism and the perennial civil rights struggle of many Black Americans. Concurrently, according to Lynch:

While many Negroes in the United States sought to achieve integration within American society, others became pan-Negro Nationalists. Despairing of becoming first class citizens in their own country, they became advocates of Negro emigration to Africa and elsewhere, and held visions of new states on the continent regenerated by their efforts. Prominent among them were Daniel Coker, Lott Cary, and John Russwarm.<sup>5</sup>

During this period of powerlessness and confusion, Black people found themselves a manipulated population subject to the whims and caprices of an unsympathetic white majority— legislative acts sanctioning slavery and segregation were the norm of the day. During this period are also found more overt expressions of varying views about the best course of action against the hostile environment in which Blacks found themselves, especially among free Blacks. Paul Cuffe, for example, despairing over the future of the Black man in America carried thirty-eight Blacks to Africa at his own expense.<sup>6</sup> Following this dramatic demonstration of repatriation, the American Colonization Society, for its own selfish exploitative reasons, began making plans for the

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<sup>4</sup>Hollis R. Lynch, "Pan-Negro Nationalism in the New World, Before 1862," in Black Brotherhood, ed. by Okon Edet Uya (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1971), p. 44.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>John H. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, (3rd ed.; New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 159.

establishment of a Negro Colony in Africa. Although many Blacks wanted repatriation, many did not and they found the motives of white colonizationists' suspect. Louis Mehlinger's research states:

A public meeting of colored citizens of New York, with Samuel Ennols and Phillip Bell as promoters, referred to the Colonizationists as men of 'mistaken views' with respect to the welfare and wishes of the colored people. The meeting solemnly protested against the address of the colonization of the people of color on the ground that it was 'unjust, illiberal and unfounded, tending to excite prejudice of the community.'

To further substantiate their desires to be recognized as full citizens of America, Mehlinger continues:

At a meeting of the free colored people of Brooklyn, promoted by Henry C. Thompson and George Hogarth, it was resolved that they knew of no other country in which they could justly claim or demand their rights as citizens, whether civil or political, but in the United States of America, their native soil; and that they would be active in their endeavors to convince the members of the Colonization Society, and the public generally, that being men, brethren, and fellow citizens, they were, like other citizens, entitled to an equal share of protection from the federal government.

Frederick Douglass, an avid civil rights fighter, became an articulate spokesman against the Colonization Society. While he favored the amalgamation of the races, he felt repatriation should be the choice of Black men desiring to leave the United States. Douglass was accused of vacillating in terms of his ideological position on separatism and integration. The more consistent theme that emerges through the research of Franklin and Bennett is that Douglass represented the many and varied sentiments of Black people, past and present. Bennett writes:

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<sup>7</sup>Louis Mehlinger, 'The Attitude of the Free Negro Toward African Colonization,' Black Brotherhood, ed. by Uya, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

The hard-boiled New Yorkers (Ward, Garnet and after 1851, Douglass) favored ballots, if possible, and bullets if necessary. The New Yorkers were opportunists on the issue of 'complexional institution'. They were in favor of complete integration, but if circumstances made this impossible they unhesitatingly recommended special institutions. Douglass, for example, anticipated Booker T. Washington with his plan for a manual training college.<sup>9</sup>

The above quote reveals that historically it is difficult if not impossible to trace or delineate definite modes of Black thought or to identify in a true way Black personalities by specific characteristics. Categorization of Black leaders or Black thought more often leads to stereotyping and mere analysis based on certain a priori assumptions. The attempt of many historians and contemporary writers to categorize certain Black leaders as integrationists, separatists, or assimilationists can be misleading. Students of history are fond of gathering empirical evidence to support certain hypotheses rather than giving the insight necessary to understand the transitional nature of individual or cultural dynamics. A more appropriate means to understanding Black thought and its leaders would be to view it as an unfolding, multi-dimensional panorama of actions and reactions of far reaching implications within a general framework of racism. Consequently, the only thing that we can find that has functioned with any degree of uniformity and regularity relative to the Black American is racism.

History is more than the recording of facts and events; logical coherence to establish historicity has more to do with certain methodological stances and hidden assumptions than it has to do with

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<sup>9</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., Before the Mayflower, (rev. ed.; Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 148.



the struggle of a people to survive spiritually and physically. Many students of Black thought tend to give superficial treatment to racism and focus in depth on certain Black leaders and their actions. Such narrow focusing shifts the burden of responsibility to the Black man rather than dealing with the pathology of white American thought -- Black thought is treated and experimented with in a pathological fashion. The most objective students of Black thought have not escaped their chauvinism. For them, Black thought is an object of study, not a means of understanding the cultural dynamics of America in order to move Blacks or whites toward liberation from white racism. An example is Edwin Redkey's book Black Exodus, which is an attempt to study Black Nationalism and back-to-Africa movements on the basis of a "rejection of white American society."<sup>10</sup> Such thinking leads to a defense of a particular thesis rather than a scientific study of the dynamics of a human struggle. The concept of nationalism is loosely defined by Redkey. The term does not lead to easy conceptual agreement. Therefore, Redkey sets forth a stipulative definition of Black Nationalism in order to escape an impasse. He contends Black Nationalism is rejection of white American society. However, he turns to John Stuart Mill to legitimize his definition of Black Nationalism and comes up with this twist:

Afro-Americans had a political part of slavery, oppression, and isolation by whites who took special pains to exclude them from American life. As a result blacks had overflowing recollections of humiliation and regret. It may have been harder to find the positive aspects of that heritage, but

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<sup>10</sup> Edwin Redkey, Black Exodus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 6.

Black nationalists stressed the glories of their African ancestors and the American rhetoric which claimed that all men are equal.<sup>11</sup>

This quote reveals quite clearly that Redkey is setting up a model based on white nationalism, not Black nationalism.

Redkey construes slavery and oppression in order to defend the real thesis of his book, the failure of Black Nationalism. In the preface of his book, Redkey asks several questions, one of which is "What conditions in the past had spawned back-to-Africa movements, and why had they never succeeded?" This initial question explains why Redkey has to analyze Black nationalism by analogy. The hidden assumption here is that Black nationalism would have succeeded if it had followed or had the characteristics of a successful model. As revealed later in the book, he compares and contrasts Black nationalism with Zionism, the Jews' return to Israel. Redkey also states "...black nationalists stressed the glories of their African ancestors."<sup>12</sup> Here again Redkey is isolating certain characteristics in defense of a thesis to determine the failure of Black nationalism. Any Black interested in repatriation who does not stress the glories of his ancestor cannot be a nationalist or, more correctly stated, any successful attempts at repatriation are uniquely and intellectually dispelled by categorization and definition. For example, Redkey deals with Paul Cuffe in the following way:

Among the Americans who watched the Sierra Leone experiment with interest was Paul Cuffe, a Black ship captain from Massachusetts. Cuffe, a devout Quaker, decided to open trade between the new colony and the United States.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

The experiment to which Redkey refers was "first carried out" by the British when they set up the colony of Sierra Leone. The British began transporting Negroes to what is now known as Sierra Leone in 1787. To make his analogies fit to defend his real thesis regarding the failure of Black nationalism, Redkey begins isolating Paul Cuffe. Though Cuffe was the first American to transport Blacks back to Africa, Redkey asserts he had to get the idea from white men — the British. Blacks lacked the intellectual leadership and a culture of their own, according to Redkey, of course Cuffe notwithstanding. Therefore, Redkey continues to define and categorize Cuffe right out of the nationalist picture and characteristically shows him as white by asserting that:

Cuffe wanted emigration for the purpose of opening trade with Africa, enriching the settlers and spreading Christianity. Although these goals were also affirmed by the society, the difference was that Cuffe was Black and his efforts could be considered self-help. In no way did he insinuate that black men were inherently inferior to whites, nor did he suggest that they could not achieve success in the United States. <sup>14</sup> he was himself an exemplary and successful business man.

The truth of the matter is that where Cuffe got the idea of repatriation is not clear, however, it is not unique to white people. Redkey's attempt to show nationalism as peculiarly Western is not historically sound. It is obvious that it has been on earth as long as men have been dislocated from their native lands. In the above quote, Redkey states that Cuffe does not insinuate Blacks were inferior but he really means is that Cuffe did not "glorify" his African ancestors as many so-called Black nationalists did. The association of

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<sup>14</sup>  
Ibid.

repatriation with nationalist sentiments makes it possible for Redkey to carve out a facet of a dynamic human struggle and make it stand still for an intellectual operation.

According to Redkey, the Sierra Leone experiment was started in 1787 by the British, and Cuffe was watching this experiment for commercial reasons. According to Franklin, Cuffe's reasons were not limited to commercialization. He writes:

Among the Negroes who were searching for economic independence and self-respect during the post revolutionary period, Paul Cuffe was one of the most outstanding. Very early in his life he developed an interest in commerce, and at sixteen years of age, in 1775, he secured employment on a whaling vessel. In the following year, during his second voyage, he was captured by the British and detained in New York for three months. ...<sup>15</sup>

Franklin continues:

In 1811, he went to Sierra Leone in his own vessel to investigate the possibilities of taking free Negroes back to Africa. The war with England in the following year prevented his carrying out his plans. In 1815, however, he took thirty-eight Negroes to Africa at an expense of three or four thousand dollars to himself. He learned, as colonizationists of a later day were to learn, that the expense of taking Negroes back to Africa was so great as to be prohibitive.<sup>16</sup>

Franklin's picture of Cuffe portrays a total human being. Cuffe is many things: American, businessman, nationalist, integrationist, militant --- in short any Black man, past or present, struggling against oppression. To isolate specific characteristics for thematic development, as Redkey has done, is to fragment the basis out of which the struggle for human dignity grew and to shift the burden to the Black man.

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<sup>15</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 159.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

Blacks throughout American history have been the recipients of oppression. The struggle to deal with their oppression has manifested itself in political, educational, social, and economical forms. However, to look at these manifestations as an end rather than a means has led to confusion, rather than clarity of Black thought. The thoughts, moods, and actions of various Black groups and individuals who have concerned themselves with their plight do not emerge from the natural creative forces of a free people in a viable and flourishing free culture. What is found at the basis of the struggle is a search for the formula that will make the quest for manhood realized. There are no parallels or analogies to juxtapose; the look is inward to understand how the unique form of American racism has affected its Black population and given rise to certain forms of thought.

What the investigator has shown in this chapter is that the delineation of Black thought into neat packages to fit an intellectual schema distorts or gives too narrow a view of a person in history, as was demonstrated in the cases of Frederick Douglass and Paul Cuffe. Douglass was sometimes an integrationist and at other times a separatist. Cuffe was more than a business man. He was a separatist, integrationist, and sailor as well. Both men, however, displayed their total humanness in their struggles with integration and separation as viable solutions for the gaining of human dignity for Black people.

In the following chapter the investigator will look more in depth at Booker T. Washington who adopted a quasi-separatist position labeled "accommodationism." Washington assumed that Blacks were rejected because they had not acquired the skills necessary for total national development. Therefore, the position of "accommodationism" was a formula adopted by Washington.

## CHAPTER II

### BOOKER T. WASHINGTON: THE STRUGGLE AND ACCOMMODATIONISM

Booker T. Washington thought he had the formula— liberation through "accommodation." It should be made clear that to label Washington simply an accommodationist would be inaccurate. Such thinking leads to stereotyping and oversimplification of American oppression in general. For example, C. Vann Woodward views accommodation as submission. He writes:

The resistance of the Negro himself had long ceased to be an important deterrent to white oppression. But a new and popular spokesman of the race, its acknowledged leader by the late 'nineties', came forward with a submissive philosophy for the Negro that to some whites must have appeared an invitation to further aggression. ...<sup>1</sup>

That Black resistance has ever been a deterrent to white racism is a false assumption on the part of Woodward. History shows the revolts of Turner, Prosser, and Vesey led to greater resistance on the part of whites. The calling up of the militia at the slightest sign of resistance to oppression and all kinds of legislative enactments followed these revolts. Paralleled rebellions of Newark, New Jersey; Detroit, Michigan; Watts, California and other cities have brought about the white cry for "law and order" — repressive legislation of the late

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<sup>1</sup>C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (2nd rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 82.

1960's.<sup>2</sup> What is found in Washington's social, educational, and political views is not submissiveness or the choosing of slavery over extinction, as Preston Wilcox calls it, but the adoption of an aggressive bourgeois economic-education policy as a means of liberation for Black people -- a mode of thinking among many Blacks long before Washington's birth. A resolution adopted by the Colored National Convention in Rochester, New York in 1848 expressed some of the sentiments later to be popularized by Booker T. Washington through the white media:

Try to get your sons into mechanical trades; press them into the blacksmith's shop, the machine shop, the joiner's shop, the cooper's shop. Every blow of the sledge-hammer, wielded by a sable arm, is a powerful blow in support of our cause. Every colored mechanic is by virtue of circumstances, an elevator of his race. Every house built by black men, is a strong tower against the allied host of prejudice.<sup>3</sup>

In viewing Booker T. Washington many students of Negro thought have concerned themselves more with pragmatics than with the pragmatism of Black leaders. More often than analysis, what is found in many writings on Booker T. Washington aimed at understanding the involvement of a Black consciousness viciously assailed by inhuman conditions in America, are labels ranging from "accommodationist" to "Uncle Tom". In criticizing the radical students of Negro thought, Harold Cruse writes of Frank Kofsky and Herbert Aptheker:

The trouble with our current breed of American radicals (on the Negro) is that they use their method of analysis

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See John Hope Franklin's description of repressive legislation against Blacks to prevent insurrection. From Slavery to Freedom, Chapter XIII, "That Peculiar Institution."

Howard H. Bell, "Expressions of Negro Militancy in the North-1840-1860," Journal of Negro History XLV (January, 1960), 14.

not to understand the Negro but to make some outstanding black leadership symbol fit the political line of their own preconceptions.<sup>4</sup>

Black thought cannot be limited to particular men. The ideas are and have always been present. Certain human experiences may lead one to adopt one ideological or philosophical position over another. To divorce Washington's belief from his life history seems unreasonable to this investigator. For example, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois had racial oppression in common. However, Booker T. Washington was born into physical slavery and DuBois was not. As a matter of fact, DuBois, in relating one of his boyhood experiences, wrote:

In a wee, wooden schoolhouse, something put it into boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting cards — ten cents a package — and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, — refused it peremptorily, with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or alike, mayhap, in heart and life<sup>5</sup> and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. ...

Booker T. Washington had no such illusion; he knew he was Black and a slave. He wrote:

I had no schooling whatever while I was a slave, though I remember on several occasions I went as far as the schoolhouse door with one of my young mistresses to carry her books. The picture of several dozen boys and girls in a schoolroom engaged in study made a deep impression on me, and I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be the same as getting into paradise.<sup>6</sup>

The above quotes are not meant to rationalize the position of either man. Each man found his social condition offensive. However,

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<sup>4</sup> Harold Cruse, Rebellion and Revolution (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, Soul of Black Folks, Signet Classic, (New York: New American Library, 1969), p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1965), p. 18.



to some extent, the quotes do provide a basis for determining how two men agreed philosophically, but disagreed ideologically. Any attempt to divorce any Black leader from his life's experiences seems unreasonable to this investigator. Even today we hear the phrases "Black Experience" or "Black Power" and upon close scrutiny we find they have as many meanings as there are people to define them. For Booker T. Washington economics came first and for W.E.B. DuBois it was political action. However, as one looks at Washington's life he can readily see why his emphases were primary, not secondary. Every moment of his life was spent overcoming concrete obstacles — getting enough to eat, working hard and doing a job well.<sup>7</sup> Washington, as most Blacks of the South in the late nineteenth century, was to inherit the awesome political, economic and racial pressures of the Post Bellum South.

Donald J. Calista writes of this period:

By the mid 1890's hollowness and despair gripped the nation. Economic collapse cut deeply into all classes. Businessmen, as well as starving immigrants and destitute Negro sharecroppers searched for a way out of the great depression of 1893. Hoke Smith's propaganda sheet glumly reported 'famine and pestilence are making worse ravages than among the serfs of Russia'. The conservative Manufacturer's Record moaned that it was a 'critical time.' The entire nation was torn by everything short of anarchism — more peculiar to the South, bitter race conflict. Lynchings soared to all-time highs in the mid-1890's. At the very bottom of the economic heap Negroes suffered most and miserably. Dependent largely on cotton and tobacco in the South, their incomes approached starvation as farm prices dropped precipitously.<sup>8</sup>

As for the political future of the southern Black man, Calista writes:

Politics for Negroes reflected this confused economic

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Donald J. Calista, "Booker T. Washington: Another Look," Journal of Negro History XLIX (October, 1964), 242-243.

situation. Still, many looked to politics as a cure-all especially as attempts at agitation through the Alliances were hopefully transformed to populism in the early 1890's. Unfortunately, Populism's short identification with silver, Democrats- and Negroes - helped bring on its agonizing death in 1896. Vain attempts by a handful of Negroes to revive Populism failed. Reflecting the confused conditions of the mid-1890's, the Negro who seconded Tom Watson's vice presidential nomination in 1896 asserted: 'He made it possible for the black man to vote according to his own conscience in Georgia'. How soon that changed! Populism's sudden collapse replaced Southern Negro hopes for equality and political leadership with despair and fear of the worst. If direct political agitation in an economic crisis proved awfully painful and costly to Negroes in the mid- 1890's, perhaps a new doctrine or leader — if found — could avoid painful political panaceas and, at the same time lead Negroes out of their depressed economic state.<sup>9</sup>

Though the economic and political future looked very bleak for the Black man this by no means meant the ceasesation of political agitation. Frederick Douglass remained an avid civil rights fighter up to his death in 1895. Charles H. Wesley wrote of Frederick Douglass:

Frederick Douglass suggested in his newspaper, "The North Star", in 1848, that on the next Sabbath the colored members of their churches should leave the churches and 'go in and take seats, without regard to their complexions, and allow themselves to be dragged out by the ministers, elders, and deacons. Such a course would soon settle the question, and in the right way'. This was the first record of a proposal for a Negro sit-in, but there is no record that this was attempted.<sup>10</sup>

Washington, on the other hand, saw conditions in the South that were no worse than his boyhood days of slavery. There were fundamental problems to deal with in a period of physical despair. Washington emphasized his more basic concerns when he stated:

There is still doubt in many quarters as to the ability of the Negro, unguided, and unsupported, to hew out his own

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Wesley, W.E.B. DuBois — The Historian, The Journal of Negro History, L (July, 1965), 150.

path, and put into visible, tangible, indisputable forms the products and signs of civilization. This doubt cannot be extinguished by mere abstract arguments, no matter how ingeniously and convincingly advanced. Quietly, patiently, doggedly, through summer and winter, sunshine and shadow, by self-sacrifice, by foresight, by honesty<sup>11</sup> and industry, we must reinforce arguments with results. ...

E.L. Thornbrough wrote of Booker T. Washington:

His lifetime spanned the period from the Civil War to the First World War. It was an era of unparalleled material growth and change during which the United States emerged as the leading industrial nation in the world. It was the age of 'big business', in which men like Rockefeller and Carnegie were free to exercise their entrepreneurial and acquisitive talents without interference from government. It was the age of the Social Darwinism which defended unfettered competition as indispensable to economic progress. It was the age of the Gospel of Wealth, which preached the God-given right of men of ability to amass as much wealth as they could but also stressed their obligation to give to philanthropic enterprises. It was the age of the Horatio Alger novels, which told the story of poor boys who made good and reiterated the moral that opportunities for success — considered synonymous with material gain — were available to all who were virtuous and hard working. ...<sup>12</sup>

This, of course, was mainly in the North, nevertheless the idea was present throughout American culture.

Thornbrough also wrote of the time of Booker T. Washington:

With few exceptions white Americans assumed that Negroes were inferior. This assumption was constantly reinforced by a voluminous literature — both scholarly and popular — by newspapers, by political speeches, and by sermons. Scientists concerned with problems of evolution and genetics assumed or claimed to demonstrate the existence of innate racial differences and capacities. Both scientists and social scientists warned of the deleterious effects of racial mixing. ...<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Emma Lou Thornbrough, Great Lives Observed: Booker T. Washington (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

As to whether the ideas in America, save those practiced and implemented against Black people, directly influenced Booker T. Washington's philosophy is hard to say. However, there are those who contend that General Samuel Armstrong did have an influence on him at Tuskegee. John Hope Franklin wrote of Hampton Institute and Booker T. Washington:

In 1872 Washington, a lad about sixteen years old, arrived at Hampton Institute, a school molded from the ideas of practical education of its founder, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Armstrong taught his students that labor was a 'spiritual force, that physical work not only increased wage earning capacity but promoted fidelity, accuracy, honesty, persistence, and intelligence'. He emphasized the value of acquiring land and homes, vocations and skills. Washington drank deeply of Armstrong's teaching and, in time became the most eloquent exponent of the ideals he enunciated. By the time that Washington graduated he was convinced that in order for Negroes to achieve success they must do some useful service that the world wanted. It was his great preoccupation from that point on to find out the ways in which his people could be most useful to the world.<sup>14</sup>

If we compared Washington's early childhood experiences with those at Hampton, it would be difficult to determine the greater influence in his life. Franklin contends that, "Washington drank deeply of Armstrong's teachings and, in time, became the most eloquent exponent of the ideals he enunciated".<sup>15</sup> Research shows that most of the so-called virtues of hard work persistence, accuracy, and honesty had already been throughly imbibed by Washington. He sought out Hampton to fulfill an already developed philosophy. Washington writes of himself:

During the period of time I spent in slavery I was not large enough to be of much service, still I was occupied most of the time in cleaning the yards, carrying water to

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<sup>14</sup> Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 190.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

the men in the fields or going to the mill, to which I used to take the corn, once a week, to be ground. ...<sup>16</sup>

... Besides, when I was late in getting home I knew I would always get a severe scolding or a flogging.<sup>17</sup>

... Though I was a mere child, my stepfather put me and my brother at work in one of the furnaces. Often I began work as early as four o'clock in the morning.<sup>18</sup>

From the time I can remember having any thoughts about anything, I recall that I had an intense longing to learn to read. I determined, when quite a small child, that, if I accomplished nothing else in life, I would in some way get enough education to enable me to read common books and newspapers... I induced my mother to get hold of a book for me.<sup>19</sup>

Benjamin Brawley writes of Washington:

One day while he was at work in the mine, Booker heard two men talking about a school, Hampton Institute, that had been founded in Virginia. He gleaned that this was not only for Negro youths but that poor and worthy students could work out all or at least a part of the cost of board and at the same time learn a trade. Inspired by a new hope, he worked a few months longer in the mine; then he was employed in the home of General Lewis Ruffner, owner of the related industries. The wage was only five dollars a month, and Mrs. Ruffner had a reputation of being hard to please, but Booker soon realized she simply wanted promptness and cleanliness.<sup>20</sup>

The point here is not to argue that Washington did not reflect some of his training at Hampton Institute. However, what cannot go unrecognized is the fact that his prior experiences had a great deal to do with the molding of his perceptions on social, political, and

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<sup>16</sup> Washington, Up From Slavery, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Brawley, Negro Builders and Heroes (New York: The University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 148.

educational thought. Washington did achieve certain goals through hard work and intelligence. Though these early childhood goals were limited, they played an important part in the formation of his strong character. "Cast down your buckets where you are" does not belong to General Samuel Armstrong. As was shown earlier in this study, such thinking was prevalent among Blacks long before Washington and Armstrong. For Franklin to argue that Washington was an exponent of Armstrong's ideals is not only a distortion of history, but an obvious attempt to root Black thought in white concepts.

When we look at Washington's life we look for an account of social antecedents — an environmental description of the conditions, of family and community involvement. We look for signal struggles and achievements not only to establish historicity but also a continuity of life. These social antecedents give clarity to the actual choices that were open to Black people of Washington's time. For example, the choice to integrate was not open to Washington — white economic, political, and physical opposition prevented integration as a tactic for liberation. The choice to separate was not open to Washington. The lack of land, capital, and an organized political structure denied separatism as a viable alternative. What was open to Washington, something he has been unduly criticized for, was political agitation in the Frederick Douglass tradition — agitation for civil rights. It should be remembered that the phenomenon of political agitation existed mainly in the North. In describing the social condition of Washington's environment Harold Cruse writes:

Does it make any sense to look back into history and expect to find Negroes involved in trade unionism and political action in the most lynch-ridden decade the South has ever known? Anyone reading about the South at the turn of the century must wonder how Negroes managed to survive at all, let alone become involved in political activity when politics was dominated by the Ku Klux Klan. ...<sup>21</sup>

Whether it makes any sense or not, the choice to politically agitate was there. In worse times such men as Turner, Prosser, and Vessey went beyond agitation into actual violence in the South. Though these men paid the highest price— their life— for their beliefs, this historical view affords no real judgement as to the folly or wisdom of their attempts at liberation. If anything, the varying differences in attempts at liberation show corresponding differences in social perceptions by Black people. Booker T. Washington's perception and "choice" reflected more of a total life style than anything else. From early childhood Booker T. Washington learned how to work within a framework of racism. The object lesson for him was to understand what the master was willing to yield and how to take advantage of it. Booker T. Washington's autobiography, Up From Slavery, is full of the signal achievements he made as an individual. What emerges as a theme in his book is a strong belief in self, a belief that nothing is impossible if the individual himself is worth something. Washington wrote:

Every persecuted individual and race should get much consolation out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that merit, no matter under what skin found, is in the long run, recognized and rewarded. This I have said here, not to call attention to myself as an individual, but to the race to which I am proud to belong.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cruse, Rebellion or Revolution, p. 85.

<sup>22</sup> John Hope Franklin and Isadore Starr, The Negro In Twentieth Century America (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 18.

At the basis of Booker T. Washington's philosophy on politics, economics, and education a strong feeling is found for the idea of rugged individualism — a step by step approach to the liberation of Blacks from servitude. Washington deliberately avoided politics publicly, not because of fear or accommodation, but due to emphases in the primary order of needs according to his philosophy. Should one proffer a description of Washington's philosophy it would fall in the realm of pragmatism. He had little concern for metaphysical speculation that did not bring practical value. Theories or instruments for Washington were to be employed in order to solve problems within the realm of the Blacks man's experiences — those experiences he could control or on which he could capitalize. As he wrote when speaking of the practical value of education:

In our industrial teaching we keep three things in mind: first, that the student shall be so educated that he shall be enabled to meet conditions as they exist now, in the part of the south where he lives — in a word, to be able to do the thing which the world wants done; second, that every student who graduates from the school shall have enough skill, coupled with intelligence and moral character, to enable him to make a living for himself and others; third, to send every graduate out feeling and knowing that labour is dignified and beautiful - - to make each one love labour instead of trying to escape it.<sup>23</sup>

More than anything, Booker T. Washington's educational views as his other, views were an outgrowth of his conception of the Black race. In the main he did not view the relationship between Blacks and whites as oppressor and oppressed, as did many of his critics. He believed the horrible conditions wrought by racism were due to ignorance rather than to any conscious malice on the part of whites against Blacks. "Friction between the races will pass away", Washington felt, "in

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<sup>23</sup>Thornbrough, Great Lives Observed, p. 38.



proportion as the black man, by reason of his skill, intelligence, and character, can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world."<sup>24</sup> Washington's philosophy is based on two major premises, reason and materialism. Progress of the mind would lead to the social and economic amenities in accordance to its development. Washington felt that the removal of mass ignorance would not take place through agitation for integration or alteration of existing white institutions, but by learning through doing -- building one's own institutions.<sup>25</sup> Washington learned early that in America the pillars of freedom rest on an economic foundation. Thus, for Washington, everything began at the bottom. In his last address to the National Negro Business League, of which he was president, he stated:

The price of success means beginning at the bottom; it means hunger, it means planning and sacrificing today that you may possess and enjoy tomorrow; and if you sit idly by and let the other fellow think and plan and lie awake at night, you can rest assure that the other fellow is going to control business everywhere.<sup>26</sup>

The realization of Washington's materialistic dream was sought through a materialistically based educational program which would lead to a sound economic program for the race. In his ideology (one might almost say his theology) Washington's conception of the Black man was economic. In other words, he believed that the satisfaction of economic desires was primal and, if achieved, the good life would

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>25</sup>Washington meant by ignorance the lack of educational skills necessary for becoming self-reliant not the innate inferiority assumed by many students of Black history.

<sup>26</sup>Thornbrough, Great Lives Observed, p. 48.

come as a result. Harold Cruse writes of that: "Washington's position was that the Negro had to achieve economic self-sufficiency before demanding his political rights."<sup>27</sup> This brings us to the crux of Washington's economic-educational philosophy — which has largely been misunderstood or unnoticed by students of Negro thought.

The educational policies of Washington and his economic philosophy are inseparable. For Washington, the school was the center of economic activity. When one looks at what Tuskegee meant to Washington, it is found that it meant the basis of self-sufficiency — a means of racial "uplift". Contrary to the thinking of many authors, Washington's educational philosophy did not contain the long range goal of integration, but rather racial cooperation. There is a fundamental difference between the two goals in terms of how he organized the curricula at Tuskegee Institute. First, the long range goal of integration means preparation of the students to enter existing white institutions— it has little to do with "self-help". Close review of Washington's educational policies shows that (though he was influenced by the tenor of the times — the age of industrialism) he was not directed by the goal of integration, that is, social intermingling. His famous speech at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta in 1895 made this clear when he said "... In all that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hands in all things essential to mutual progress. ..."<sup>28</sup> Throughout this particular speech

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<sup>27</sup>Cruse, Rebellion or Revolution, pp. 81-82.

<sup>28</sup>Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address," Booker T. Washington and His Critics, ed. by Hugh Hawkins (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1962), p. 16.

we find references that lead more toward the concept of imperium in imperio, rather than notions of integration. For example, Washington talked of "interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life..."<sup>29</sup> and of purchasing "surplus land", tenants found in the present day Black Muslim philosophy. Also, when one hear Jesse Jackson, leader of Operation Bread Basket, an economic wing of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, demand more jobs for Blacks in the skilled trades and at the same time say to Black audiences, "It's Nation Time", we cannot help but think of Booker T. Washington.

Racial cooperation denotes interdependence rather than integration. In the Atlantic Monthly, Washington was quoted as saying,

This is another reason why at Tuskegee we push the industrial training. We find that as every year we put into a Southern community colored men who can start a brickyard, a sawmill, a tin-shop, or a printing office, --men who produce something that makes the white man partly dependent upon the negro, instead of all the dependence being on the other side, --<sup>30</sup> a change takes place in the relations of the races. ...

Therefore, in the organization of Tuskegee Institute's curricula we find major emphasis on those skills aimed at making Blacks producers and skilled laborers; it is an education that would lead to a Black economy interrelated with a white economy, of course; this was not the total basis of the curricula organization. According to Washington himself, based on a survey he had taken:

We found that most of our students came from the country districts, where agriculture in some form or other was the main dependence of the people. We learned that about eighty-five per cent of the colored people in the Gulf

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Thornbrough, Great Lives Observed, p. 44.

states depended upon agriculture for their living. Since this was true, we wanted to be careful not to educate our students out of sympathy with agricultural life, so that they would be attracted from the country to the cities, and yield to the temptation of trying to live by their wits.

We wanted to give them such an education as would fit a large proportion of them to be teachers, and at the same time cause them to return to the plantation districts and show the people there how to put new energy and new ideas into farming, as well as into the intellectual and moral and religious life of the people.<sup>31</sup>

Though other motives existed, one cannot help but feel that Washington had visions of producing a solid group of middle class Blacks, made invaluable through their learned skills. Harold Cruse writes "... Washington sought to develop a Negro Bourgeoisie..."<sup>32</sup> Thus, Washington rarely spoke publicly about integration; his major goal was establishing a strong Black economy that would make the white race dependent, to some extent, on the Black race. From this would emerge a kind of cooperative interdependence or "mutual progress."

After witnessing several examples of the change of racial attitudes of whites toward Blacks who had "learned to do a common thing in an uncommon manner," Washington began pushing industrial education more strongly. Though he was criticized by many for not emphasizing higher education, on a few occasions he did state that he was not opposed to it. However, for Washington Tuskegee Institute was not to be something for mere abstraction. It was to be the training ground for the development of a Black economy. Contemporary Black educational philosophers such as Preston Wilcox and others talk of the development of a communiversity, where the school and

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<sup>31</sup>Brawley, Negro Builders and Heroes, p. 151.

<sup>32</sup>Cruse, Rebellion or Revolution, p. 84.

community form integral parts of a whole, which the people can control. As early as the late 1800's we find Washington coming to grips with the same problem. He wrote in his autobiography:

From the first I resolved to make the school a real part of the community in which it was located. I was determined that no one should have the feeling that it was a foreign institution, dropped down in the midst of the people, for which they had no responsibility and in which they had no interest. I noticed that the very fact that they had been asked to contribute toward the purchase of the land made them begin to feel as if it was going to be their school, to a large degree.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the school for Washington was to be intricately woven into a total Black economic network, providing well trained tradesmen who would form the backbone of a Black middle-class. This group, because of its technical strength and moral character, would, in Washington's eyes, achieve a kind of quasi-autonomy within the larger white society. This position forced Washington to avoid political agitation and higher education, at least publicly. Therefore, his major interest was in industrial education for Blacks. Many critics of Washington found this position narrow, delimiting, and above all a position of permanent subservience to the larger white society. With the benefit of hindsight, and more than likely with an integrationist philosophy, Saunders Redding criticizes Washington's position on industrial education as being:

... naive thinking, giving no evidence that Washington knew of the broad currents then running deep through American life -- the increasing importance of organized labor, the potentials of planned political participation. Or if he knew of them, he had no sympathy for the Negroes' urge to try them. He opposed labor unions, which only tended to compound the race's habit of laying 'too much stress

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<sup>33</sup>Washington, Up From Slavery, p. 102.

on its grievances and not enough on its opportunities'. He disliked politics and deplored the Negroes' participating in them except as they went to 'Southern white people ...for advice concerning the casting of their ballots.' He was suspicious of intelligent inquiry, more especially in that it was likely to lead to conclusions differing from his own. His thinking had no future in it only the present and past. He saw the white-patron-Negro-suppliant relationship as the salvation of his people. In this Washington was very sincere.<sup>34</sup>

Redding's criticisms are certainly not without basis; however, because of emphasis and contrusion, he tends to place the onus of the Black man's plight on Washington's shoulders. For example, of this period John Hope Franklin writes:

The end of Reconstruction brought little improvement in the economic and social status of the Negro. Meanwhile, their political gains rapidly disappeared before the vigorous, all-out efforts of Southern whites to wipe them out all together. Negroes could be certain of an improved status only in the field of education. ...<sup>35</sup>

Joanne Grant writes:

In the years 1882-1927, 3,513 Negroes were known to have been lynched. Economic conditions, disfranchisement and murder drove thousands of Negroes to the North.<sup>36</sup>

Donald J. Calista comments on the political scene of Washington's time:

... Populism's sudden collapse replaced Southern Negro hopes for equality and political leadership with despair and fear of the worst. If direct political agitation in an economic crisis proved awfully painful and costly to Negroes in the mid-1890's, perhaps a new doctrine or leader — if found — could avoid painful political panaceas and, at the same time lead Negroes out of their depressed economic state.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Saunders Redding, They Came in Chains (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1950), p. 196.

<sup>35</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p.382.

<sup>36</sup>Joanne Grant, ed., Black Protest (Greenwich: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 99.

<sup>37</sup>Calista, "Booker T. Washington: Another Look," p. 243.

Thus, what Redding calls naive seems realistic for Washington in terms of the racial and economic conditions he faced. Washington, as well as all Black men of this period, did not have the freedom to choose separation or integration. The only thing open to the Black man during this period was education, and Washington tried to take advantage of this only avenue. However, what emerges as significant is the polarization of Negro thought or the sectionalist philosophies of the South and North -- called accommodation in the South and integration in the North. Redding seems to disregard the economic basis of these divergent philosophies. For example, the implicit assumption in Redding's criticism that the wiser course of action for Washington was political agitation does not square with Black powerlessness and the racist times of the Post Reconstruction South. However, what does seem logical was the emphasis on land and education for self-development -- the only course open to Blacks in the south. The concept of land was seemingly inconceivable to many Northern Black intellectuals because their preoccupation was of a different kind. They were trapped in segregated housing and restricted by "Jim Crow" laws<sup>38</sup> -- being constantly reminded of their inferiority in their daily contacts with whites and, above all, left with only integration as a means for economic and educational improvement. The South, on the other hand, being equally as racist, did provide a land potential for the provision of an economic educational base for an already segregated people. The Blacks, North or South, did not have the kind of capital to compete

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<sup>38</sup> Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, p. 82.

with whites. Samuel Spencer wrote of the condition of Blacks of the south:

Without education, skill, land, or capital they (Negroes) were incapable of seizing the opportunities of their society, and deep racial prejudices consigned them to a permanently inferior place in it. Held to the lowest forms of labor, cut off from the whites by the system of segregation, and devoid of political power, the Negroes seemed condemned to a hopeless servitude that made a mockery of legal emancipation.<sup>39</sup>

Here again one sees not only a relationship between Blacks and whites on the basis of color, but a power relationship between the controllers and noncontrollers of land, capital, and education. The Blacks were without choice. In other words, to be forced to integrate or to separate is not a choice when the controlling segment of a society has the determining power for the marginal segment of society — the Blacks in the north were forced to agitate for integration, and the Blacks of the south forced into accommodation. Therefore, when the bi-polar positions of "Negro Thought" are set in opposition, it should be realized that they are more reactionary than actionary. The reactionary differences taken by Blacks have their roots mainly in the region in which Blacks found themselves. Whether the reactionary tactics were for integration or accommodation, both were aimed at gaining Black Power for survival and some form of cultural expression within a society that rejected people on the basis of skin color.

It was within this cultural context that the Black man strove to change the power relationship between the whites and Blacks. When Redding criticizes Washington as having a dislike for politics, one

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<sup>39</sup>Samuel Spencer, Jr., Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. vii.



is forced to ask exactly what he means. Though he never fully defines political action, it is quite clear what he means by it. He criticizes Washington's thinking as "giving no evidence that Washington knew of the broad currents then running deep through American life." Redding, like Washington's contemporary, DuBois defines political action mainly from an integrationist's perspective, that is, forcing local, state, and national governments, as well as private enterprise, to let Blacks join as Americans. In the main, the integrationist's struggle has been one of "let me in" rather than one of pushing for political, economic, and educational conceptual and structural changes. As was mentioned earlier, this position was mainly held by the Northern Black intellectual. Again, it should be mentioned that Washington wanted the same thing; however, because of the "broad currents" of racism running through American society, Washington felt that Blacks, with some assistance from whites, could achieve the same goals alone. Consequently, politics for the so-called accommodationists assumed a different posture -- one of political action among Blacks, rather than political interaction between whites and Blacks.

As Washington surveyed the condition of the Black man in the south it was revealed to him that the basic needs of the Black people of the Gulf states were fundamental ones. In order to achieve self-sufficiency, he felt, Blacks first needed land as a basis to launch an economic and educational program. Without land or capital, Washington began moving in the only seemingly open direction -- white philanthropy for land and tools for development. Though other political, economic, and social activities were taking place in the larger white

society that affected the Black man, he was helpless in terms of intervening or manipulating capital or control for his own advantage. Consequently, what has been called Washington's policy of appeasement or accommodation is in reality the result of white America's wheeler-dealer corporate capitalists, who exploited land and labor.

DuBois, in Black Reconstruction in America, describes the inheritance of Blacks in terms of white political and economic activity:

How, after the war, triumphant industry in the North coupled with privilege and monopoly led an orgy of theft that engulfed the nation and was the natural child of war; and how revolt against this anarchy became reaction against democracy, North and South, and delivered the land into the hands of an organized monarchy of finance while it overthrew the attempt at a dictatorship of labor in the south.<sup>40</sup>

Washington, prior to his being literally thrown into national Negro leadership by white media and its supporters, had little knowledge of the mood and temperament of his Northern Black counterparts—at least during his developmental period in the South. He assumed national leadership with a mainly rural philosophy. This is not to say that he did not receive some opposition from his southern Black fellows, but it was not of the influence nor fervor of DuBois and his supporters. At this time much of his northern Black opposition vacillated on Washington's positions on politics, education, and economics. DuBois, a critic of Washington, in his more conciliatory moments, reflected Washington's position:

I freely acknowledge that it is possible and sometimes best, that a partially underdeveloped people should be ruled by the best of their stronger and better neighbors for

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<sup>40</sup>W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction In America (New York: Russell and Russell, 1935), p. 380.

their own good, until such times as they can start and fight the world's battles for themselves.<sup>41</sup>

This is by no means an attempt to stereotype DuBois or identify him with the Washingtonian camp, but to point out the complexity of decision-making for Black leaders without real power amid a period of confusion and turmoil — a period when whites exercised total literary and physical powers over Blacks. In terms of the "better neighbor" ruling the "partially underdeveloped people," Washington himself said in an appeal to the Louisiana Constitutional Convention:

The negro agrees with you that it is necessary to the salvation of the south that restriction be put upon the ballot. I know that you have two serious problems before you; ignorant and corrupt government on the one hand, and on the other a way to restrict the ballot so that control will be in the hands of the intelligent without regard to race. With the sincerest sympathy with you in your efforts to find a way out of the difficulty, I want to suggest that no state in the south can make a law that will provide opportunity or temptation for an ignorant white man to vote and withhold the same opportunity<sup>42</sup> from an ignorant colored man without injuring both men.

Washington's mild protest did not stop the enactment of racist legislation that effectively disfranchised the majority of the Black south. The mood and temper of the white racist made Washington turn more steadfastly toward industrial education. Charles Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael, in reference to Washington and his lack of political aggression, point out:

A most ironic aspect of Booker T. Washington's career is the context in which that career started. Tuskegee Institute itself was established because in 1880 the black people of Macon County possessed political power. As we have already stated, blacks then constituted the great majority of the county population. A former Confederate

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Thornbrough, Great Lives Observed, pp. 67-68.

Colonel, W.F. Foster, was running for the Alabama legislature on the Democratic ticket. Obviously needing black votes, he went to the local black leader, a Republican named Lewis Adams, and made a deal: if Adams would persuade the Blacks to vote for him, he would -- once elected-- push for state appropriation to establish a school for black people in the county. Adams delivered; Foster was elected and a sum of \$2,000 per year was appropriated to pay teachers' salaries for a school. Adams wrote to Hampton Institute in Virginia for a person to come and set up the school. The head of Hampton recommended one of his best teachers, Booker T. Washington.

Thus the Black people of Tuskegee used the ballot effectively to gain their goals. They were not begging, relying on sentiment or morality; they traded their votes for a specific and meaningful reward. If Foster had not kept his part of the bargain, they could have "punished" him with their political power in the next election. This kind of strength could come only from organization and recognition of their interest. Foster respected their Black Power. This historical fact seems to have been forgotten by many people today who counsel black people to follow the teachings of Washington in regard to mitigating political activity. If Mr. Adams and the black people had not acted politically, Washington might never have acquired the influence he did.<sup>43</sup>

The above quote is interesting in that Carmichael and Hamilton do show that Blacks did exercise some political power, mainly local, in the South; however, a deeper look reveals the basic political powerlessness of Blacks and their total subjection to the white racist forces of compromise between the North and the South of that time. This point is also significant in present day Black politics. Though Blacks have been able to exercise political power on the local level, they have been made ineffective on a state and national level. Lewis Adams and other Blacks did yield their Black votes to their advantage; this was local politics within the confines of Macon County. However, when one looks at what took place on state and national levels,

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<sup>43</sup>Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation In America (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 125-126.

it is easily seen how white racists were able to subvert and nullify any political actions of Blacks. Franklin comments on what happened nationally:

When Hayes thus became President, the South was soon assuaged in its grief by his prompt withdrawal of troops. At last the South could rule itself without Northern interference or Negro influence.

With troops out of the South and in a spirit of great conciliation, Congress removed other restrictions. In 1878 the use of armed forces in elections was forbidden. In 1894 the appropriation for special federal marshals and supervisors of elections were cut off. In 1898 the last disabilities laid on disloyal and rebellious Southerners were removed in final amnesty. Before the dawn of a new century there had been complete recognition in law of what the South had itself accomplished in fact even before the election of 1876.<sup>44</sup>

Here Franklin shows political action taking place on a national level that would inevitably affect the local politics of the Blacks in Macon County. In other words, it made little difference as to how Washington counseled Blacks about the ballot. Franklin again shows the impact of national politics on local politics:

After the Democrats returned to power in the South, they confronted the problem of finding ways either to nullify the political strength of Negroes or to disfranchise them altogether. Complete disfranchisement by state legislation was viewed with some misgivings as long as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments remained a part of the fundamental law. Until it was feasible, the Democrats contented themselves with other methods — some extra-legal, others incorporated in state codes — of preventing the Negro's participation in politics. There continued to be intimidation on an extensive scale. Earlier it had been justified in order to wrest political control from the unworthy Republicans, both white and black; but once control was secured, it appeared irresponsible to the more sensitive Southerners to depend upon night riders and Red Shirts to maintain them in power. For many Southerners, however, violence

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<sup>44</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 332.

was still the surest means of keeping the Negroes, politically impotent, and in countless communities they were not allowed, under penalties of severe reprisals, to show their faces in town on election day.<sup>45</sup>

DuBois wrote of the systematic moves by white racists to disfranchise the Black man on the state level:

First, there was systematic disfranchisement of the Negro. He was kept from voting by force, by economic intimidation, by propoganda designed to lead him to believe that there was no salvation for him in political lines but that he must depend entirely upon thrift and the good will of his white employers. Then came the series of disfranchisement laws discriminating against poverty and ignorance and aimed at the situation of the colored laborer, while the white laborer escaped by deliberate conniving and through the "understanding" and "Grandfather" clauses. To make assurance doubly sure, the "White Primary" system was built on top of this, by which the "Democratic" party confined its membership to white voters of all parties. The "White Primary" was made by law and public pressure the real voting arena in practically all Southern states.<sup>46</sup>

Washington's faith in his ability to make the education and economic system work for Blacks is paralleled almost a century later by the faith of Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in the political system. They found themselves frustrated by the same decitful racist policies on the state and national levels despite the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Just as Washington had attempted to develop new economic and educational forms for Black people, Carmichael and Hamilton attempted to develop new political forms for the development of Black Power. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) led by Carmichael in 1961 began a voter registration campagin among Blacks in McComb, Mississippi. The emergence of this type of

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>DuBois, Black Reconstruction in America, p. 694.

political faith can be traced to Washington's failure to effect significant changes in the economic status of the Black masses and to the heavy migration of Blacks to the North, where political agitation by Blacks has a deep rooted history, highlighted by such men as Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois. It should be noted here, however, that "any gains" or "set backs" that Black people have experienced in America have been largely the result of the political or economic interests of whites, i.e., providing an exploitable voting population or labor force. Therefore, when one negatively criticizes Washington's position, he should first examine the American political system and understand that political systems are designed to maintain power. This country was founded on the power of violence and slavery. America did not play political games with England. To seek the ballot and then power may be a legitimate position; however, it is no more legitimate than Washington's position of seeking power, then the ballot. To this investigator, Washington seemingly had a notion, though not realized, of real politics; that is, political action from a power base of land and capital. Whites in this country deal with power and then politics. No group has ever gained power by getting the vote first. However this may point out the peculiar colonial status of the Black man in America and Carmichael's move to Pan Africanism, which was anticipated, at least in the modern sense, by Martin Delany and W.E.B. DuBois.

Probably the largest or most incisive criticism ever leveled at Washington, in terms of leadership, was the mass migration of Blacks from the South. Despite his insistence that the most opportunities for

Black men were within the Southern borders, Blacks headed North. Appeals to the white racists of the South did little to stem the tide of violence against Blacks and economic conditions continued to worsen. Redding documents the Black man's plight under Washington's leadership:

Meantime the number of Negro farm wage hands increased by 23,397 to 1,500,000, and more than a million Negroes were share croppers. At the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century, 2,883,216 Southern Negroes were illiterate, and ten years later 2,717,666 were still illiterate. In the same period the death rate for Negroes showed no appreciable decline, and 34.2 per thousand (34.4 in 1890) was still nearly double the figure for whites. Of every ten thousand Negroes in the South in 1890, twenty-nine were convicted of crime, as against six in ten thousand for whites. The crime figures were more disproportionate in the North: sixty-nine to ten thousand for Negroes, twelve to ten thousand for whites. In the 1890's North Carolina had a Negro representative in Congress. By 1910, 'with the withdrawal of the Republicans from the political arena in the South and the consequent development of the one-party system, the exclusion of Negroes from the Democratic primary provided the coup de grace by which Negro suffrage was nullified from Virginia to Texas.' In 1890 the American Federation of Labor encouraged Negro membership: in 1910, it was actively opposed to it. In 1890, ninety<sup>47</sup> Negroes were lynched: in 1900, one hundred and seven.

John Hope Franklin writes:

In counseling Negroes to remain in the rural areas Washington not only failed to see that the advent of expensive farm machinery put the impoverished Negro farmer at a serious disadvantage, but also that the industrial urban community was infinitely more attractive to Negroes as well as to whites. There were, on the surface at least, innumerable economic opportunities in the city. Furthermore, the city offered incomparable economic opportunities in cultural and intellectual growth. If Washington wished for his people educational and economic opportunities that would facilitate their assimilation and acceptance, the urban centers seemed to be, by far, the oases in the desert of despair. Indeed, it would seem that nothing represented more vividly the Negro's reflection of a typical American reaction than his inclination to move from

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<sup>47</sup>Redding, They Came in Chains, p. 203.



the county to the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>48</sup>

Though the fatal statistics mounted, Washington continued his educational and economic philosophy of uplift for Black people through Black and white news media. Surprisingly, he was able to bridge a sectionalist gap between Northern and Southern Blacks — a gap that heretofore no other Black leader was able to bridge. Since that time only Martin L. King with his Southern Christian Leadership Conference has been able to operate on either side of the border with a high degree of Black favor. There are some striking parallels between Washington's and King's rise to national prominence. Both men were able to wield an instrument that deeply touched large numbers of Black people North and South. For example, Washington emphasized the economic man and appealed to the Black "Bourgeoisie" and the common laborer through his farm and industrial programs and his National Negro Business League. Martin L. King, on the other hand, emphasized the spiritual man and was able to penetrate sectionalist differences with his religious and nonviolent philosophies. Both men were Southerners and began their rise in Alabama, Washington with Tuskegee Institute and King with the Montgomery bus boycott. The careers of both men were unplanned and began with Black individuals who are seldom heralded. Spencer wrote of the stage setting for Washington:

The new institution had been founded through a mixture of altruism and self interest. Lewis Adams, the leading Negro citizen of Tuskegee, had learned the trades of tinsmithing, shoemaking, and harness making as a slave; when free, he had built up a successful hardware and leather business. Adams was eager for a school which would give Negroes not only 'book learning' but a means

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<sup>48</sup> Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, pp. 396-397.

toward bettering their economic conditions. With Colonel W.F. Foster, a former slaveholder now angling for the Negro vote in his campaign for the legislature, Adams secured from the lawmakers an annual appropriation of \$2,000 to pay instructional salaries of an industrial school for freedmen of Tuskegee.<sup>49</sup>

Martin Luther King's rise to national prominence began with Rosa Parks who one day was simply tired and refused to obey the Jim Crow law of Blacks' having to ride in the rear of local public conveyances. C. Eric Lincoln wrote of this historic occasion:

Mrs. Rosa Parks was comfortable in the bus seat she occupied on December 1, 1955. Her refusal to move to a segregated seat in the back of the vehicle signaled one of the most successful campaigns for dignity Negroes have ever waged in the South. It also brought into existence the Montgomery Improvement Association, headed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. With Dr. King and Rev. Ralph Abernathy providing leadership, the Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, mounted a hundred per cent effective boycott against Montgomery's Jim Crow city bus system.<sup>50</sup>

Both Washington and King received wide support from the Black and white media. Without that support it is doubtful that they would have ever become as influential as they were. This point is of interest because the white support and publicity to a great extent defined and determined the parameters within which each man would function. In a classroom survey, one hundred Black freshman and sophomore students at Ohio State University were asked to identify Malcolm X and Martin Luther King by giving a brief verbal description of either man. Only ten per cent were able to identify Malcolm X, mostly with vague descriptions ranging from a teacher of hate to the leader of the second emancipation. All one hundred were able to identify Martin Luther King and were able to give an in depth description of the man

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<sup>49</sup> Spencer, Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American Life, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, The Negro Pilgrimage in America (New York: Bantam Pathfinder Editions, 1967), pp. 141-142.

and his philosophy. The support of white media determines to a large extent which Black leaders will lead or at least be made known to the Black masses. Control over the media, to some extent, accounts for DuBois' relative obscurity and Washington's popularity. This was felt by many of Washington's contemporary critics. In questioning Washington's leadership, William Monroe Trotter discusses how Washington gained his popularity and was chosen leader of the Black people in America:

If Mr. Booker Washington is in any sense the leader of the colored American people he certainly has been chosen for that position by the white American race. Everyone will admit that the colored people never have chosen or indeed acclaimed him leader... He has been kept in a position as leader by the active work of the white race, with whom he has been extraordinarily popular, North and South. Their churches, their clubs, their pulpits, their press have boomed him and insisted he was the leader of the race.<sup>51</sup>

Opposition to Washington's leadership also came from the Black media which was owned by Blacks described by E. Franklin Frazier as the Black Bourgeoisie. This group, according to Frazier, demanded integration and equality, not separation or "accommodationism". This was reflected daily in the Black media. Seldom did the Black media express the concern Washington had for the masses of uneducated Black people. Frazier writes of the Black media:

Although the Negro press declares itself to be the spokesman for the Negro group as a whole, it represents essentially the interests and outlook of the Black Bourgeoisie. Its demand for equality for the Negro in American life is concerned primarily with opportunities which will benefit the Black Bourgeoisie economically and enhance the social status of the Negro.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Thornbrough, Great Lives Observed, p. 118.

<sup>52</sup>E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 174.

As Frazier points out, the major Black media of the North, especially the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were pro-integration. The cover pages of "Crisis", organ of propoganda for the NAACP, would lead one to believe that it went beyond integration to assimilation. Nathan Hare, writes of W.E.B. DuBois, first editor of "Crisis":

... in his effort to promote the idea that black is beautiful, he ran afoul of contemporary fashion when he used a dark Negro's picture for a "Crisis" cover. For this he was accused of accepting racism.<sup>53</sup>

The bourgeoisie-integrationist ideals of the Black intellegentsia ran counter to Washington's public philosophy on integration. It should be recognized that this group contested Washington's leadership and his attitude toward civil rights, though many were in accord with his economic and educational programs. However, one man who highlights the opposition to Washington's educational views, as well as many of his economic views, was W.E.B. DuBois. For Washington, education had to have a practical value. This concept of education was too narrow and delimiting for DuBois.

In this chapter the investigator has shown that it is extremely difficult to separate a Black man's total life experiences from his philosophical or ideological position, and to do so leads more to stereotyping than to an accurate analysis of the man himself and the dynamic cultural forces affecting him throughout his life. As was demonstrated in the case of Booker T. Washington, it was shown that his life experiences influenced his basic philosophy on what Blacks

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<sup>53</sup>DuBois, The Soul of Black Folk, p. xxv.

needed in order to gain human dignity. Industrial education and self reliance was the means to achieving this end for Washington. However, many Blacks began to disagree with Washington's philosophy of noninvolvement in politics and civil rights, a policy directly related to the rising struggle for integration.

In the following chapter the investigator will examine W.E.B. DuBois and the struggle for integration. DuBois, an avid civil rights fighter, chose to wage the struggle for human dignity on the political level. He, therefore, saw the needs of Blacks initially from a different perspective from Washington. Consequently, he differed in his educational views, carrying on the age old argument of classical education versus vocational education.

### CHAPTER III

#### W.E.B. DUBOIS: THE STRUGGLE AND INTEGRATIONISM

DuBois outlined what he thought to be the ideal educational philosophy for Black people.

First: To conserve and select ability giving their best minds higher training. Second: They should endeavor to give all their children the largest possible amount of general training and intelligence before teaching the technique of a particular trade, remembering that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, but carpenters of men.<sup>1</sup>

DuBois' philosophy led to the development of the Talented Tenth concept, whereby the more talented of the Black population would be spokesmen and interpreters for the masses of Blacks in America. His later experiences with the Black bourgeoisie led him to renounce this position. In his book Dusk of Dawn he felt the Talented Tenth concept was "flight of class from mass". DuBois, on one level, introduced a new concept of leadership based on race consciousness, whereas Washington spoke in terms of race "uplift." This is not to argue that Washington's ideas would not have led, if realized, to an elite class of Black capitalists. However, he felt need on the part of DuBois was that the masses of Blacks needed spokesmen, interpreters, and leaders who would instruct the masses. Francis Broderick writes

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<sup>1</sup>W.E.B. DuBois, ed., "Editorial," The Crisis IV (June, 1912), pp. 74-75.

of DuBois' early educational theory of the Talented Tenth:

DuBois' theory of the Talented Tenth was the striking product of his own total experience and training. It singled out a select minority, enriched it with the finest education, and then bade it lead the masses. They were to be the thinkers, educators, ministers, lawyers, editors, political leaders. To the ears of DuBois' opponents, the theory, from the mouth of one who was undoubtedly a member of the Talented Tenth, had a selfish, self-serving ring, and its echoes of the heroic vitalism of Carlyle and Nietzsche do not recommend it to modern ears.<sup>2</sup>

Though DuBois' Talented Tenth theory did have a self-serving ring to it, he had the interests of the masses at heart, and above all he realized the dangers as he later expressed in his book Dusk of Dawn. In discussing his theories of planned uplift for the Black Americans, he wrote of the Talented Tenth:

There can be two theories here; one that the rise of a talented tenth within the Negro race, whether or not it succeeds in escaping to higher cultural classes of the white race, is a threat to the development of the white race, is a threat to the development of the whole Negro group and hurts their chances for salvation. Or it may be said that the rise of classes within the Negro group is precisely a method by which the level of culture in the whole group is going to be raised. But this depends upon the relation that develops between these masses and the cultural aims of the higher classes.<sup>3</sup>

DuBois' theoretical approach may be viewed from varying perspectives: as he differed from Washington educationally, economically, and politically; and, in terms of what he envisioned for the Black man in America based on the trends of capitalism and racism. It should be recognized that the two men (Washington and DuBois) are representative, to some extent, of the cultural differences that exist among Black people

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<sup>2</sup>Francis L. Broderick, "The Fight Against Booker T. Washington" in Booker T. Washington and His Critics, ed. by Hugh Hawkins (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1962), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>W.E.B. DuBois, Dusk of Dawn (1st ed.; New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 189.

in America despite the tendencies of professional scholars and others to lump all Black people together. The word "cultural" here is being used to differentiate the varying outlooks on life, and not as a means of identifying a group of people by physical or life style similarities. Because of America's racism, Blacks in America have been forced to live and interact together socially regardless of their varying cultural outlooks on life. Washington gave little attention to these variations, and rightly so in terms of his philosophy on race uplift. DuBois on the other hand, a sociologist, considered the cultural differences among Blacks quite significant in terms of total race consciousness.

It is not an easy task to account for the differences between Washington and DuBois though many historians and scholars use experience, formal and informal as an instrument for explanation. This position is certainly not ill-founded. However, it does not take into account insight and social dynamics affecting either man throughout his life. For example, Washington for a long time was considered an "Uncle Tom" by many. However, because of new findings, especially his private correspondences, a new picture is emerging. DuBois, who was originally labeled as an avowed integrationist is now emerging as a Black nationalist. Therefore, any attempt to categorize these men or others would only show a facet of their personalities. This is not to say, however, that education and other experiences were not important factors in determining the development and direction of either man. Living in a country where their futures were uncertain, a country where racism was the dominant theme of society, forced these men to



assume varying postures throughout their lives. For example, Washington's glorification of the Economic Man was due in part to the economic trends of the nation at that time, and in part to the racial situation in which Blacks found themselves. Therefore, economics became a tool or instrument of liberation. For Washington and many others it became an end in itself. DuBois differed from Washington in terms of educational and life experiences. DuBois saw the Black man's plight from two perspectives; one of being culturally robbed, and the other the need for the development of an all embracing educational program to restore the Black man culturally, economically, and politically. Again, a trap that many historians and scholars fall into is that they tend to view outstanding Blacks as individuals rather than as part of a collective in constant dialogue with each other, criticizing one another, and constantly struggling for new insights and methods for liberation. Blacks learned early that the thoughts and actions of any one of their members affected the total group in some way.

DuBois saw the necessity of Washington's philosophy as well as its limitations, and as a counterbalance he began emphasizing the intellectual man or the cultural man. DuBois functioned more as a complement to Washington's position than an enemy. DuBois realized that racial barriers would prevent Blacks in America from being fully integrated into the mainstream of American life. In terms of Washington's segregated capitalism he felt:

It is of course impossible that a segregated economy for Negroes in the United States should be complete.

It is quite possible that it could never cover more than the smaller part of the economic activities of Negroes. Nevertheless, it is also possible that this smaller part could be so important and yield so much power that its influence upon the total economy of Negroes and the total industrial organization of the United States would be decisive for the great ends toward which the Negro moves.<sup>4</sup>

This statement of course was made by DuBois much later in his life. Nevertheless, it does reveal a marked change in his philosophy related to tactics for liberation, and brings him much closer to Washington's notion of Blacks needing an economic base for liberation. However, also revealed in the quote is the totality of DuBois' thinking. He not only spoke of the "total economy of Negroes" but the "total industrial organization of the United States." In essence, DuBois never really changed his long range goal of integration, only his tactics on how it could be achieved. What is revealed in DuBois' thinking is that as the Black man in America goes, so goes the white man. This position was certainly reiterated by two other outstanding Black intellectuals: Martin Luther King, who said that the destiny of white America is inextricably bound to Blacks in America, and Frantz Fanon, who said that liberation had to be bilateral — the Black man from his inferiority and the white man from his superiority.

DuBois' keen interest in the sociological factors of race, as well as its economic factors, made it possible for him to separate the the inherent exploitative characteristics of capitalism and its inability to meet the needs of all the people, and the superior race ideology adopted by white Americans. He, therefore, concluded that:

There faces the American Negro therefore an intricate and subtle problem of combining into one object two difficult

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

sets of facts: his present racial segregation which despite anything he can do will persist for many decades; and his attempt by carefully planned and intelligent action to fit himself into the new economic organization which the world faces.<sup>5</sup>

DuBois continues:

This plan of action would have for its ultimate object, full Negro rights and Negro equality in America; and if would most certainly approve, as one method of attaining this, continued agitation, protest and progaganda to the end. On the other hand my plan would not decline frankly to face the possibility of eventual emigration from America of some considerable part of the Negro population, in case they could find a chance for free and favorable development unmolested and unthreatened, and in case the race prejudice in America persisted to such an extent that it would not permit the full development of the capacities and aspirations of the Negro race.<sup>6</sup>

With the above quotes in mind, and viewing the various Black organizations as a working collective rather than as internal antagonistic forces operating against one another, to some extent the prophetic insights of DuBois may be seen in the race related activities of Blacks today.

DuBois poignantly points out the complexities of the Black man's plight. Of greater significance, however, DuBois shows the multiplicity of socio-psychological differences found among Blacks, ranging from the ideas of separatism through integrationism.<sup>7</sup> What is seen here is a cultural diversity among Blacks that must, to some extent, become complementary to achieve the ends of the varying groups. This kind of social organization for DuBois would emerge only with "planned" and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 173-178.

"intelligent action" by the Black intelligentsia. Their efforts would be directed toward political, economic, educational, and cultural organization. For DuBois in the beginning political agitation was a sound basis for attacking the racist social organization of America. He, therefore, began what became known as the Niagra Movement. This movement was incorporated in the District of Columbia in January, 1906 under the leadership of W.E.B. DuBois.

DuBois wrote:

Its particular business and objects are to advocate and promote the following principles:

1. Freedom of speech and criticism
2. Unfettered and unsubsidized press
3. Manhood suffrage
4. The abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race and color
5. The recognition of the principles of human brotherhood as a practical present creed
6. The recognition of the highest and best human training as the monopoly of class or race
7. A belief in the dignity of labor
8. United effort to realize these ideals under wise and courageous leadership.<sup>8</sup>

The Niagra Movement consisted mainly of articulate intellectual Blacks interested primarily in the right to vote; civic equality and higher education. This intellectual elite group was the new incipient differentiation in Black leadership that set the stage for programmatic protest aimed at integration rather than Washington's economics.<sup>9</sup> Though many historians, Black and white, considered the position of the Niagra Movement an attack on Washington's so-called policy of submission, it in reality was the opening of a new front to protest the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 88-89.

<sup>9</sup> Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, pp. 445-447.

racist practices of white America. Above all, the new movement represented the special interests of a new element of educated Black bourgeoisie aspirants who saw themselves as Americans deserving of all the rights pursuant to white Americans. The Niagra Movement, because of its integrationist platform, lent itself easily to its successor organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Though this new organization was founded by a group of white liberals interested in the "present evils" of American society, it adopted a name that pointed to the specific interests of certain Black people. William M. Trotter, though a member of the Niagra Movement, refused to merge with the new white radicals because he felt their motives were suspect. This new bi-racial group took an aggressive legal approach to mollify the Black man's plight. John Hope Franklin writes of this new organization:

A formal organization was perfected in May, 1910, with Moorefield Storey of Boston as president and William E. Walling as chairman of the executive. Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, as the director of publicity and research, was the only Negro officer. The presence of Dr. DuBois on the staff branded the organization as radical from the beginning. Many feared that it would be a capricious, irresponsible organization that would draw its main inspiration from the dreamings of the Niagra Movement. It was denounced by most of the white philanthropists, and even some Negroes thought it unwise.<sup>10</sup>

DuBois' strong belief in integrationism led him into a coalition with white liberals despite the historical fact that Black "radicals" and white liberals usually wound up at odds with each other. A case in point was that of Frederick Douglass, an avowed integrationist,

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

who broke away from Garrison the leading white abolitionist of his time. DuBois was to later find himself at odds with his liberal white cohorts of the NAACP as his Black consciousness grew. This does not mean, however, that DuBois was in total disagreement with the goals of the NAACP. However, he did bring into question the meaning of integration. The "Crisis" magazine was very bourgeois in content and assimilationist-oriented in its racial philosophy. The burden of proof, which is implicit in almost all the early issues of "Crisis" magazine, rested upon the shoulders of the Black man. Pictures and articles highlighted imitation of the white middle class rather than the former radicalism for liberation that was found in the philosophy of the Niagra Movement. This presented a very delicate situation for DuBois in terms of what Blacks in America could offer to its total character through their experience and creativity.

Earlier he wrote of this delicate situation in The Souls of Black Folk.

He said the Black man in America found himself in:

... a world which yields him no true self consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of the other, of reasuring ones' soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose sogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.<sup>11</sup>

Though DuBois fought for integration, he recognized its ill effects. He wrote:

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<sup>11</sup>DuBois, The Soul of Black Folk, pp. 16-17.

It is almost impossible for a Negro boy trained in a white Northern high school and a white college to come out with any high idea of his own people or any abiding faith in what they can do.<sup>12</sup>

DuBois recognized the inherent negative effects of a totally white curriculum. It forced the Black student to look upon his own race with disdain and the white race as something to be imitated. DuBois elaborates further on this frustrating dilemma when he speaks of the effects of segregated education:

...or for a Negro trained in the segregated schools of the South wholly to escape the deadening environment of insult and caste even if he happens to have the good teachers and teaching facilities, which poverty almost invariably denies him. He may rationalize his own individual status as exceptional. He can well believe that there are many other exceptions, but he cannot ordinarily believe that the mass of Negro people have possibilities equal to the whites.<sup>13</sup>

The frustrating dilemma that plagued DuBois was one of separation and integration at the same time. He strongly advocated the scientific study of "Negro life and culture", not only for cultural development but for the beauty of the Black character. Black scholars and youth today find themselves struggling with the same problem anticipated by DuBois and others; men such as Martin Delaney who marveled at the glories of his African heritage, and Carter G. Woodson who founded Negro History Week. The inability to escape this educational dilemma, as DuBois later discovered was and presently is the lack of economic and political power — de jure and de facto segregation certainly attest to this. For example, in the states where Jim Crow laws were in the state statutes, the lack of political power on the part of Blacks made

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<sup>12</sup>DuBois, Dusk of Dawn, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

possible the gerrymandering of geographic boundaries for educational, political, and racial reasons advantageous to whites. Tuskegee, Alabama is a perfect example of the abuse of political power.

Bernard Taper wrote:

The Alabama State Legislature drew up an ingenious new city boundary, altering the shape of Tuskegee from a simple square to a curious twenty-eight-sided figure resembling a stylized sea horse. The effect was to put Tuskegee Institute outside the city limits, along with the homes of all but four or five of the Negro voters, while leaving all of the white voters within the municipal borders. Thus, continued white control was assured in the city proper, where it had been most threatened. Though the affected Negroes would still be able to vote in county, state, and national elections, there were not enough of them registered as voters to influence the political situation on any scene larger than the municipal one.<sup>14</sup>

Bernard Taper continues:

The bill that accomplished this - Alabama Act 140 - was passed unanimously and without debate by the legislature. If, on its face, it purported to be merely a routine redistricting measure, its central aim not only was transparently obvious but was frankly announced by its sponsor State Senator Sam Englehardt, Jr., of Shorter, a hamlet twenty miles from Tuskegee, who is executive secretary of the White Citizens Council of Alabama. He had long advocated the use of the gerrymander as one sure-fire way for whites to keep control of the ballot box. That was a device that could withstand any court challenge, he had predicted.<sup>15</sup>

Though the Supreme Court ruled the redistricting unconstitutional three and a half years later, it did not alter the pattern of Southern life appreciably -- other subterfuges were instituted ranging from threats of violence to the establishment of private schools to

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<sup>14</sup>Bernard Taper, Gomillion vs. Lightfoot: Apartheid in Alabama (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 14-15.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.



relocation. Tuskegee, again, is a unique example in that the Blacks are numerically stronger than the whites. This does provide political advantage; however, it does not provide an escape from the frustrating dilemma of segregated education that DuBois grappled with years earlier. As a matter of fact for Blacks, segregation is a prerequisite for political power — this merely frustrates those Blacks who wish to use Black political power to integrationist ends. The idea or reality that Tuskegee can control local politics does mean to some extent that they can control the educational system locally. Interracial contact does not seem likely on a massive scale for quite some time even in areas where Blacks have achieved a high economic status.

In many areas where Blacks buy homes in white neighborhoods the whites invariably move to new areas or establish separate municipalities. In a few newly developing neighborhoods, deliberate attempts have been made to achieve racial balance to maintain an integrated setting. Again, this presents another problem for the integrationist in that those who move to integrated settings have to meet the tests of acceptability which fall mainly in the categories of income and/or education. Once admitted into predominantly white areas, Black parents have to send their children to schools that propagandize and indoctrinate them in white nationalism. Not only does this kind of education separate parent from child but causes intra-cultural division.<sup>16</sup> DuBois wrote of the mis-education of the Blacks in white

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<sup>16</sup> See Dusk of Dawn. "The Colored World Within," pp. 173-178 where DuBois discusses the intra-cultural conflicts between the educated Negro and the masses.

institutions in 1935:

...race prejudice in the United States today is such that most Negroes cannot receive proper education in white institutions... many public school systems in the North where Negroes are admitted and tolerated but they are not educated; they are crucified... certain Northern Universities where Negro students... cannot get fair recognition, either in classroom or on campus, in dining hall or student activities, or in human common courtesy... at Harvard, Yale, and Columbia, Negroes are admitted but not welcomed; while in other institutions like Princeton they cannot even enroll.<sup>17</sup>

As early as 1902 DuBois recognized that the problem of the twentieth century would be that of the color line;<sup>18</sup> however, he did not seem to grasp the reality of this insight until his later years. Then DuBois saw that the wall of racism would not recede for some time. In 1940 he again reiterated the point that the Black man's plight "...will persist for many decades..."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, his concepts of education began changing. Earlier in his life he attempted to bring the Black man to education rather than education to the Black man. This point is significant in DuBois' perception of the Black man as totally inadequate as opposed to seeing a capitalistic racist system that forced him and kept him in a disadvantaged position. He, therefore, began turning his attention to the existing realities of the Black man's plight. His concerns turned to mass suffering from segregation. He wrote:

...For any building of a segregated Negro culture in America in those areas where it is by law or custom

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<sup>17</sup>W.E.B. DuBois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?", Journal of Negro Education IV (July, 1935), 328-329.

<sup>18</sup>DuBois, Souls of Black Folk, p. 54.

<sup>19</sup>DuBois, Dusk of Dawn, p. 199.

the rule and where neglect to take positive action would mean a slowing down or stoppage or even retrogression of Negro advance, unusual and difficult and to some extent unprecedented action is called for.<sup>20</sup>

DuBois further contended:

At any rate it is the duty of American Negroes today to examine this situation not with hysteria and anger but with calm and forethought. Whether self-segregation for his protection, for inner development and growth in intelligence and social efficiency, will increase his acceptability to white Americans or not, that growth must go on. And whatever the event may bring, it must be faced as men face crises and not with surprise and helpless amazement.<sup>21</sup>

E.U. Essien-Udom calls DuBois' newer position "a type of pragmatic nationalism" based on survival and "social efficiency" as DuBois himself had said.<sup>22</sup> This functional or pragmatic position led many of DuBois' critics to assail him as advocating segregation and giving up on integration. DuBois denied these criticisms against him, contending that his long range goal had always been and still was integration. He wrote:

It was astonishing and disconcerting, and yet for the philosopher perfectly natural, that this change of my emphasis was grossly and stupidly misinterpreted by Negroes. Appropriating as their own (and indeed now it was their own) my long insistence on self-respect and self-assertion and the demand for every equality on the part of the Negro, they seemed determined to insist that my newer emphasis was a repudiation of the older; that now I wanted segregation; that now I did not want equality; that now I was asking for black people to act as black people and forcibly overthrow the dominance of the white.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>22</sup>E.U. Essien-Udom, Black Nationalism (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964), p. 40.

<sup>23</sup>DuBois, Dusk of Dawn, pp. 306-307.

DuBois articulates with great clarity this delicate position in a discussion of Dr. Louis Wright who had attacked the Rosenwald Fund which wanted to provide separate facilities for training Black doctors. According to DuBois this was an anathema for Dr. Wright who had insisted:

... that what ought to be done was to insist in season and out that Negroes be admitted to medical schools and hospital practice without regard to color.<sup>24</sup>

DuBois continues:

I saw and saw clearly the argument on both sides to this controversy. I was heart and soul with Louis Wright in his fight against segregation and yet I knew that for a hundred years in this America of ours it was going to be at least partially in vain. I was heart and soul with the Rosenwald Fund; what Negroes need is a hospital practice; and to meet their present need, poor hospitals are better than none; segregated hospitals are better than those where Negro patients are neglected or relegated to the cellar.<sup>25</sup>

Again DuBois reiterates that segregation would remain for a long time and that his ultimate goal was the abolition of the color line. He wrote:

What was true in 1910 was still true in 1940 and will be true in 1970. But with this vast difference; that the segregated Negro institutions are better organized, more intelligently planned and more efficiently conducted, and today form in themselves the best and most compelling argument for the ultimate abolition of the color line.<sup>26</sup>

DuBois' penetrating insight into the condition of the Black man and his relationship to white America forced him to a greater action orientation. He realized the colonial status of the Black man

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 309.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 310.

and that the greater the Black struggle against oppression the greater the chances for extermination. He wrote:

As the Negro develops from an easily exploitable, profit furnishing laborer to an intelligent independent self-supporting citizen, the possibility of his being pushed out of his American fatherland may easily be increased rather than diminished. We may be expelled from the United States as the Jew is being expelled from Germany.<sup>27</sup>

The significance of the above quote is made clear when one reads Samuel Yette's account of what is happening 31 years later in America, to the Black Muslims a group striving for the self-sufficiency of which DuBois spoke. In relating the failure of the courts to secure land legally purchased by the Black Muslims for the establishment of an industrial-agricultural complex, Yette writes:

The court suits against the Muslims failed. However, despite the Muslims' insistence that they had come merely to provide for themselves economically, the county's 20,000 whites (60% majority) were not through. They were determined that such an effort must fail. So, in mid-March of 1970, the Muslims found scores of their cattle lying dead in the pasture, victims of poison which authorities said was cyanide. With that, the Muslims put the poisoned land up for sale, loaded up what live cattle remained and, under threats to their own lives, departed St. Clair County.<sup>28</sup>

In this chapter the investigator has examined DuBois and the struggle to achieve integration and his reactions to his failures. The investigator also examined many of the complex psychological factors affecting DuBois as he came to grips with the realities of what it meant to be Black in America. Within the scope of this

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Yette, The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival In America (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), pp. 128-129.

chapter, the many sides of DuBois were pointed out, and that to label him as purely an integrationist is incorrect and shows only one facet of his life in his struggle for human dignity.

In the following chapter the investigator will examine the relationship between ideological position and educational perspectives and the faith Blacks have in education.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDEOLOGICAL POSITION AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE FAITH IN EDUCATION

It should be made clear at this point that the interchange of economics, politics, and education is intentional. Since integration of America's Black people into the mainstream of American life has been a failure, the political and economic positions taken by Blacks have been linked directly to their educational positions. Roy Wilkins, executive secretary, of the NAACP, writes:

Given the position of the Negro American population as a numerical minority of one-tenth and an economic, political and social minority of far less than one-tenth, the only tactical road for the black minority is integration.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently the position of the NAACP on education has been one of integration. Without a doubt the NAACP has been instrumental in many historic decisions made by the Supreme Court relative to education. In the same article, Wilkins continues:

The long struggle toward basic integration begun when the illusion of the Reconstruction Era became apparent. It ended - theoretically - in 1954 with the Supreme Court's decision in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. For the Brown decision ended an era in which the Negro population had been neither fish nor fowl. Despite the 14th Amendment, the Negro was only as much of a citizen of the United States as each individual state or court permitted. The Brown pronouncement, at long last raised the umbrella of the U.S. Constitution over the black citizen. Although

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<sup>1</sup>Roy Wilkins, "Integration," Ebony, August, 1970, p. 34.

it dealt specifically with the cases of five segregated school systems, it had the effect of forbidding states and subdivisions thereof to differentiate between citizens on the basis of skin color.<sup>2</sup>

Andrew Brimmer, a member of the Board of governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington D.C. writes:

As a general rule, the more an industry or occupation is based on highly sophisticated technology or advanced educational achievement, the smaller is the participation of Negroes.<sup>3</sup>

Brimmer contends mainly in this article that the solution to the economic plight is complete integration in the American economic system. "...black people", according to Brimmer, "must get inside the corporate structure to learn how basic decisions are made and how genuine economic power is exercised."<sup>4</sup> Though Brimmer does not speak specifically to education, except to document the "impressive" gains in terms of Black college graduates (2% in 1950 to 4.25% in 1968) it would follow that in order for Blacks to learn how to make educational decisions they must get inside those institutions as well.

Mrs. Elizabeth Koontz, former president of the National Education Association writes:

Whether it is in education or in other aspects of life, complete integration must become the goal of all Americans. Especially this must be the goal of the black, the chicano, the Indian and the Oriental. The alternatives are simply not viable. To settle for less than complete integration will invariably perpetuate a superior - inferior social dichotomy. Racism can exist only if we believe

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 121.



and thus behave as if there is more than one human race. Any form of apartheid is anti-humanitarian and thus basically evil and it would be particularly appalling if those who have been the victims of human debasement should in their diligent quest for rights as human beings imitate the debasers. Separatism is a philosophy of self-defeating desperation, and worse, it flies in the face of reality in a world crying out for a new morality in social leadership.<sup>5</sup>

Posing a striking contrast to the positions of Wilkins, Brimmer and Koontz, integrationists, is the position of the separatists, that is, those Blacks believing in complete or partial separation from white America. Contrary to the thinking of many, not all separatist movements are based on "white rejection." Many of those persons who tend to characterize it as such usually are in defense of other ideological positions or are merely trying to discredit separatist movements as not having a philosophical base or ideological direction. Such thinking seems common in America especially when it comes to Black people. In short, any time a Black man refuses the glad hand of whites he is rejecting them. The Black Muslims, for example, would not integrate under any circumstances. The dictates of their religious belief calls for separation - educational, political, and economic. The Muslims, according to their teachings, contend that the white man is different by nature, and because of this different nature he cannot get along with the other darker races. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad writes:

We see now in the revelation of teachings to us of the making of the White Race and the essence of which they were made out of, and the teachings that were given to them by their maker, made it impossible in such making, for the man

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<sup>5</sup>Elizabeth Koontz, "Complete Integration Must Be The Goal," Ebony, August, 1970, p: 138.

to be just and righteous. He was not made of one atom of righteous material. Though, the white race knows righteousness and justice, they are unable to do it because of the very nature in which they were made.<sup>6</sup>

In his book, Message to the Blackman, Muhammad contends education must be done by the mentally resurrected Black man — the man who has submitted to the will of Allah. He writes of the present education system:

Today with all our white civilized schooling, we have not been taught of our own. They will never teach us of our own.<sup>7</sup>

E.U. Essien - Udom writes:

Parochial education among the Muslims is almost as old as the Nation of Islam. The first Muslim school, styled the University of Islam, was established in Detroit in 1932, and the second in Chicago in 1934. Both schools have been in continuous operation ever since. The distrust of conventional educational institutions by black nationalists was noted previously. No other nationalist group has attempted to establish a parochial school.<sup>8</sup>

Essien - Udom continues in his discussion of the Muslims' perception of the educational systems of America:

Negro education has not enabled him to think for himself, to inquire into his past, to be proud of his heritage prior to slavery, and to have a desire to become independent, economically or otherwise. Above all, the educated Negro-elite is irresponsible; their education has not made them feel responsible for the community or for the people.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Muhammad Speaks, Vol. XX (April 16, 1971).

<sup>7</sup>Elijah Muhammad, Message to the Blackman (Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam No. 2, 1963), p. 48.

<sup>8</sup>Essien - Udom, Black Nationalism, p. 253.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 253-254.

The Black Muslims of America form one type of separatism. It differs from other separatist movements in several respects. One such difference is that it is founded upon a religious base. It does not call for the submission of the Black man to the will of the white race, nor does it call for this submission which seems necessitated by a short-range tactical perspective as advocated by Dunbar McLaurin.<sup>10</sup> It sees the liberation of the Black man in his devotion to Allah and the principles of Islam. Muhammad writes:

The number one principle of Islam is a belief in Allah (God); the belief in a power higher than man...

He is the Lord of the creation of the Universe, and since He has no equal, He demands universal recognition and complete submission to His will.

First, and most important, Islam is actually our religion by nature. It is the religion of Allah (God), not a European organized white man's religion.

Second, it is the original, the only religion of Allah and His prophets. It is the only religion that will save the lives of my people and give them divine protection against our enemies.

Third, it dignifies the black man and gives us the desire to be clean internally and externally and for the first time to have a sense of dignity.

Fourth, it removes fear and makes one fearless. It educates us to the knowledge of God and the devil, which is so necessary for my people.

Fifth, it makes us to know and love one another as never before.

Sixth, it destroys superstition and removes the veil of falsehood. It heals both physical and spiritual ills by teaching what to eat, when to eat, what to think and how to act.

Seventh, it is the only religion that has the divine power to unite us and save us from destruction of the War of Armageddon, which is now. It is also the only religion in which the believer is really divinely protected. It is the only religion that will survive the Great Holy war or the final war between Allah (God) and the devil.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dunbar McLaurin, "Short Range Separatism," Ebony, August, 1970, pp. 123-128.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad, Messege to the Blackman, pp. 72-73.

Another form of separatism moves mainly along economic and secular lines. This is yet to be distinguished from those Black nationalist-separatists who advocate separation along political lines. This, however, is not to say politics are not considered; nevertheless, the distinction is made on the basis of the concentration of the organization's activities. Roy Innis of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) deals with the question of priorities related to economics, politics, and culture rather swiftly:

In the struggle toward self-determination, there has been a great deal of argument about the order of the steps to be taken. Should we be talking first about politics, about culture, or should we be talking about economics? Let me suggest that we can resolve this dilemma by understanding first of all that these three stages of liberation are virtually inseparable. There must be some sort of socio-cultural renaissance if there is to be movement in any other direction. There must be some sort of politico-economic development if the cultural movement is to have any base on which to acquire significance.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, I am saying there is no way we can divorce economic development from political imperatives. You cannot have economic development unless you have certain supportive political realities, one of which is a degree of self-determination.<sup>13</sup>

The form of separatism advocated by Roy Innis would be more properly called partial autonomy, i.e., control over existing institutions affecting Black people and the development of new ones. It differs from the Black Muslims in that it does not call for a separate nation state and that it is the result of white rejection. What this position proposes is a capitalizing on segregation, earlier advocated by W.E.B.

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<sup>12</sup>Roy Innis, "Separatist Economics: A New Social Contract," in Black Economic Development, ed. by William F. Haddad and Douglas Pugh (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 52.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

DuBois, a plan he called the "economic cooperative commonwealth."<sup>14</sup> Innis feels that "black people at this state of their development" must begin immediately controlling all institutions that directly affect Black people. He writes:

We must control our schools if we are to upgrade education and pass on positive values to our children. We must control health facilities if we are to cut down our mortality rate. We must control law enforcement in our areas if the police are to serve their proper function - which is protection, not oppression. In short, we must control every single institution that takes our tax moneys and is supposed to distribute goods and services equiably for us.<sup>15</sup>

One main characteristic inherent in every separatist ideology is autonomy — yet, this term calls for more qualification when one is making distinctions between the varying separatist positions. The literal definition means self-government. To approach an understanding of separatism from a literal standpoint leads only to confusion and rigidity — facts and analyses are not enough for knowing. The NAACP in the early 1900's was considered radical; today it considered by many Blacks as more than conservative — it is a reactionary right-wing body to groups such as the Black Panthers who are also integrationists. Therefore, to know and understand any movement in the larger historical sense, contextual definitions must emerge in terms of how the varying separatists groups see themselves in relation to their own Black experiences. Since separatism has not yet occurred in America, any analysis would have to be based on rhetorical differences. For example, members of R.N.A. (Republic of New Africa) are considered separatists. They

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<sup>14</sup> See DuBois, Dusk of Dawn, "The Colored World Within."

<sup>15</sup> Innis, "Separatist Economics: A New Social Contract," p. 55.

say their ultimate goal is a separate nation state, i.e., R.N.A. is seeking five southern states for a homeland.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Charles Hamilton advocated political control for Blacks and by Blacks wherever they find themselves. He writes:

The northern urban ghettos are in many ways different from the black-belt South, but in neither area will substantial change come about until black people organize independently to exert power. As noted in an earlier chapter, black people already have the voting potential to control the politics of entire southern counties. Given maximum registration of blacks, there are more than 110 counties where black people could outvote the white racists. These people should concentrate on forming independent political parties and not waste time trying to reform or convert the racist parties. In the North, it is no less important that independent groups be formed. It has been clearly shown that when black people attempt to get within one of the two major parties in the cities, they become co-opted and their interests are shunted to the background. They become expendable.<sup>17</sup>

In an interview contained in the newspaper, Muhammad Speaks, Georgia State Representative Julian Bond expressed sentiments on separation similar to those of Charles Hamilton. In response to the question posed by Muhammad Speaks, "Could you give some of your views on separation?", Bond replied:

Well I think that long range physical separation that is the establishment of a separate Black state is a long range prospect for us and what we need to strive for is economic and political separatism, the kind of things, say, the Muslims are doing in Chicago with the 'Your Supermarket'. We can have an economy that is responsible and responsive to us. I think the physical separation is a long range prospect and that you need to work on the economic and political separatism now.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Brown, "Separation," Ebony, August, 1970, pp. 46-52.

<sup>17</sup> Carmichael and Hamilton, Black Power, p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Speaks X (April 23, 1971) No. 32.

The kind of separatism advocated by Innis, Hamilton, and Bond moves along vested interest, economic and political lines. In essence, this position is not calling for the complete destruction of the present political and economic systems. It is what this investigator calls "higher order integration," that is, making a wedge in the existing economic and political systems by taking advantage of existing segregation and using it as an instrument of power.

Carter G. Woodson spoke of the use of segregation as a viable instrument for gaining power. He wrote:

Our minds must become sufficiently developed to . . . segregation to kill segregation and thus bring to pass that ancient and modern prophecy, 'The wrath of man shall praise thee.' If the Negro in the ghetto must eternally be fed by the hand that pushes him into the ghetto, he will never become strong enough to get out of the ghetto. This assumption of Negro leadership in the ghetto then must not be confined to matters of religion, education, and social uplift; it must deal with such fundamental forces in life as made these things possible. If the Negro area, however, is to continue as a district supported wholly from without, the inept dwellers therein will merit and will receive only contempt of those who may occasionally catch glimpses of their plight.<sup>19</sup>

The more pragmatic the attitude of the Black man toward his salvation, the more vivid the evidence the decline of the old faith in religion and the emergence of a new theology -- education. Education, despite the ideological persuasion of any Black group or leader, became the new faith, the unshakable instrument of change. The origins of this new faith, certainly as indicated, antedate the emancipation.

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<sup>19</sup>Carter G. Woodson, The Mis-education of the Negro (Washington D.C.: The Associated Publishers Inc., 1969), pp. 109-110.

However, among the first to achieve national prominence as its new advocate was Booker T. Washington. He wrote:

Of one thing I felt more strongly than ever, after spending this month in seeing the actual life of the coloured people, and that was that, in order to lift them up, something must be done more than merely to imitate New England education as it then existed. I saw more clearly than ever the wisdom of the system which General Armstrong had inaugurated at Hampton.<sup>20</sup>

This faith is no less expressed by one of Washington's arch critics, DuBois, who wrote:

The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races. Now the training of men is a difficult and intricate task. Its technique is a matter for educational experts, but its object is for the vision of seer.<sup>21</sup>

Though he espouses a total separatist philosophy many years later, the faith in education is found in Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims, who stated; "I am for the acquiring of knowledge or the accumulating of knowledge - as we now call; education."<sup>22</sup>

Whitney Young, the late Executive Director of the National Urban League, felt "The best schools and best teachers are needed." In his book, To Be Equal, he set forth a comprehensive program for overcoming the "discrimination gap." Young felt a major step in this direction would be:

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<sup>20</sup> Franklin and Starr, The Negro In 20th Century America, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad, Message to the Blackman, p. 39.



...to instill in Negro children and other educationally disadvantaged youth a desire for excellence; - to motivate them to achieve and prepare them to advance up the economic ladder with full understanding of the rewards they will receive.<sup>23</sup>

Leon Sullivan, director of Opportunities Industrialization Center (O.I.C.), views the school as the "key to opportunity." Though recognizing that, in the main, the schools in America have failed the Black, Sullivan, nevertheless, expresses a deep faith in education as a vital means to self-determination. He writes:

Since education is the key to opportunity for Black masses in the nation and around the world, interest in educational institutions that serve black youth is a vital necessity. New teaching methods and new incentives must be found to inspire our young people and keep them in school. If public education could begin now to do its job, particularly in our large cities, the need for O.I.C. would end within twelve years. That day is not in view.<sup>24</sup>

The disenchantment or the anti-establishment moves reflect a firm faith in education. Rarely is education as a process ridiculed; the fault is mainly with the controllers of the process, according to many critics.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, to achieve certain goals individuals as well as groups begin manipulating existing educational administrations in order to control the balance of line and staff powers. No question is raised concerning the rewards gained through education. The struggle by citizens for community control of schools reflects faith in the process and not the controllers:

We citizens of the Black community of Detroit,  
fully conscious of the fact that our children

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<sup>23</sup> Whitney Young, To Be Equal (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1964), p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> Leon H. Sullivan, Build Brother Build (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Co., 1969), p. 153.

<sup>25</sup> Naomi Levine, Schools in Crisis' (New York: Popular Library, 1969).

are not receiving a decent education, viewing the increasing deterioration in the educational situation in this city, and after innumerable presentations to the Board of Education to no avail, have finally come to the conclusion that Community Control of Schools is the only way to establish real accountability of the school system to the Black community.<sup>26</sup>

Naomi Levine writes:

Basic to the argument in behalf of a decentralized school system is the belief - indeed, the conviction - that the involvement of the local "community" (particularly the parents) in administering the schools that is essential in raising the quality of education and strengthening the child's motivation to learn.<sup>27</sup>

The faith Black people have in education is the same faith expressed by Washington and DuBois. The use of education as an instrument of change or liberation still remains a dominant characteristic in Black thought. This does not mean, however, that Blacks have not become disenchanted with the school system, it merely reflects a deep and abiding faith in education as a means of gaining human dignity.

The investigator in this chapter examined the various ideological positions held by Blacks and their related educational postures. Examined also were the various forms of separatism to distinguish what the various organizations see as a means of liberation for Blacks. The final part of this chapter pointed out the faith Blacks have in education in general.

In the following chapter the investigator will briefly examine the origin of the American school system as a cultural instrument and the role it played in relation to Blacks. This chapter will also

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<sup>26</sup> Foresight, Vol. I (February, 1969) No. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Levine, Schools in Crisis, p. 24.

deal with the emergence of a dual reality in American education, that is, the education whites perceived for Blacks and the education they perceived for whites. It will also be pointed out in this chapter the various rationales white educators used to determine the kind of education for which Blacks were best suited.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DUAL REALITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION: INTERIORITY AND SUPERIORITY.

The faith of Blacks in American education reflects to some extent the substantive thinking of white America. Jeffrey Herold writes of white America's faith in education:

The United States has no nationwide system of schools run by a central authority, but as Robin Williams notes, there is an 'American system' clearly different from the educational systems of other cultures. Its unity derives from the common assumptions and values which underlie actual educational practices across the nation. Despite the strong outward tendency among Americans to deprecate the value of formal education, one of the central cultural themes is widespread 'faith in education.' Education in particular is often the object of disdain, education in general is widely acclaimed. To many Americans, education is a panacea, the foremost agency of progress, and America's faith in universal public education is regarded as the nation's greatest asset.<sup>1</sup>

Herold continues:

For well over a century, essayists, educators, and foreign observers have noted this phenomenon. Education has been offered as the cure for most political, economic, social and moral ills throughout American history... The most striking aspect of this phenomenon, however, is that Americans identify education largely with the work of the school. Their faith in education is thus a faith in the school, and they regard the school as a miracle worker.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey Herold, "The American Faith in Public Schools As An Agency of Progress and Fulfillment." (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2.

The origins of the faith in education are not exactly known; its history certainly antedates the settlers' arrival.<sup>3</sup> However, at least in the formal sense, the emergence of this faith, it has been argued, dates back to the Puritan experiment in America. In discussing the origins of the faith, Herold writes:

The origins of what C.A. Bowers has called the "messianic tradition" of American education may be found within the Puritan experiment. Bowers points out that while this tradition has largely escaped the attention of educational historians, it has played a large role in shaping the thinking and rhetoric of American educators.<sup>4</sup>

After the Puritans' arrival in the new world and settlement in New England, the family was no longer to be trusted in its previous educational role. It became necessary, therefore, to guarantee the transmission of learning. This guarantee was to be first initiated through legislation.

The famous Massachusetts statute of 1642, prefaced by its sharp condemnation of 'the great neglect of many parents and masters in training up their children in learning and labor,' was one of a series of expedients aimed at shoring up the weakening structures of family discipline. It not only reminded parents and masters of their duty to provide for the "calling and imployment of their children" and threatened punishment for irresponsibility, but added to this familiar obligation the extraordinary provision that they see also to the children's ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country."<sup>5</sup>

The move toward institutionalization of learning and the removal of family responsibility is further seen in legislation.

In New England a high cultural level, an intense Biblicism concentrated settlements, and thriving town institutions

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<sup>3</sup>See William Boyd, The History of Western Education (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1966).

<sup>4</sup>Herold, "The American Faith in Public Schools...", p. 21.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

led to a rapid enhancement of the role of formal schooling. The famous succession of laws passed in Massachusetts and Connecticut after 1647 ordering all towns to maintain teaching institutions, fining recalcitrants, stating and restating the urgencies of the situation, expressed more than a traditional concern with schooling, and more even than a Puritan need for literacy. It flowed from the fear of the imminent loss of cultural standards, of possibility that civilization itself would be "buried in the grave of our fathers."<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that:

The Puritans quite deliberately transferred the main functions of the family to formal instructional institutions, and in so doing not only endowed schools with a new importance but expanded their purpose beyond pragmatic vocationalism toward vaguer but more basic cultural goals.<sup>7</sup>

What is reflected in the above quote is that school became an even broader instrumentality for the solidification and transmission of cultural values. The school, then, was an outgrowth of existing cultural values — the instrument of preservation rather than innovation. The educators who became the new ministers and theoreticians of the school became the purveyors of Americanism. Black men, therefore were relegated to schools designed to preserve the status quo of Black people in America. In the development of schools for Blacks, Addison Gayle writes:

They founded normal schools in the South and community colleges in the North. The aims of both were similar: train Blacks to be servants and lackeys of white America. In the South this meant education designed to produce carpenters, maids, agricultural workers and petty businessmen; in the North, to produce nurse's aides, orderlies, clerical helpers and lab technicians.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Addison Gayle, Jr., The Black Situation (New York: Horizon Press, 1970), p. 102.

Gayle continues:

In addition, to conforming to the ideals prevalent in the society outside its walls, the men from the universities developed not only the theories to justify their proposed educational program for Blacks, but also the theories which tended to validate the Black man's inferiority.

A summary of the many arguments from university professors, North and South, was supplied by the educator, Thomas Pearce Bailey in 1913. Bailey wrote: 'The white race must dominate. The Teutonic peoples stand for race purity. The Negro is inferior and will remain so. This is a white man's country. No social equality. No political equality. In matters of civil rights and legal adjustments give the white man, as opposed to the colored man, the benefit of the doubt; and under no circumstances interfere with the prestige of the white race. In educational policy let the Negro have the crumbs that fall from the white man's table. Let there be such industrial education of the Negro as will best fit him to serve the white man.' The status of peasantry is all the Negro may hope for, if the races are to live in peace. Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest Negro.<sup>9</sup>

The point here is not to take the testimony of a single individual as substantial evidence reflecting generally the racist character of the schools. It is used to show that scholars carried with them to the academic institutions the values of society in general. Gayle writes:

By the end of the nineteenth century, the university had ceased its attempt to become an independent agency for the dissemination of creative, independent thought. Outwardly it maintained its appearance of a cloistered monastery where wise monks, devoted to the pursuit of wisdom, discoursed with eager, inquisitive students. However, in reality, the university was the home of men whose political and religious attitudes were merely, replicas of those in the world outside. The appraisal of American universities as liberal institutions remain one of the purest, examples of the elasticity of the English language.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the influential doctrine of Darwinism dominated the thinking of many scholars, creating greater possibilities for codifying Black inferiority. In an address to the Senate of 1899, Albert T. Beveridge seems to express the spirit of the times:

God has not been preparing the English-speaking people for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-admiration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish systems where chaos reigns ... He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savages and senile peoples.<sup>11</sup>

Senator John W. Daniel of Virginia expressed similar views on racial supremacy:

There is one thing that neither time nor education can change. You may change the leopard's spots, but you will never change the different qualities of the races which God has created in order that they may fulfill separate and distinct missions in the cultivation and civilization of the world.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that prior to the rise of the scientific method, and during the period when religion and science were ideologies in competition for the domination of American thinking, God is frequently referred to as the ultimate authority in any dispute be it race, politics or economics. God is rarely used in finalizing arguments after the new theology of education is established. The point here is that when it came to racial supremacy it made little difference which school of thought was in vogue, Black inferiority could be documented whether the dominant thought was secular or nonsecular.

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<sup>11</sup>Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 180.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 192.



Rhett Jones delineates three nonsecular approaches used by academicians to document Black inferiority; the sociological, the psychological, and the physiological. The sociological according to Jones:

...generally relied on observations and commentaries on social life. Most of these are naive according to contemporary canons, but they impressed thinking men of the time. These observations on society may be divided into three areas. First, a number of scientists sought to demonstrate that whites had a natural antipathy toward Blacks. This itself proved the inferiority of Black... A second group of scientists proved Blacks inferior by citing the conditions of Black life. The way in which Blacks lived "proved" their inferiority to whites. A third group proved Blacks inferior by examination of personal characteristics and character traits. ...<sup>13</sup>

The psychological method in proving Blacks inferior:

...was at the same time more and less complex than the sociological. It was more complex in that it relied heavily on the experimental method. The scientists who employed psychological techniques attempted to control variables, and in a few cases to establish control groups. It was less complex in that there was one dominant method of demonstrating the inferiority of Blacks: Psychological IQ testing. An attempt was made to be impartial. ...<sup>14</sup>

The physiological approach to proving Blacks inferior, according to Jones, is more irrational than the sociological and the psychological. He says:

No matter how concrete these results might appear, the beliefs of whites of the time compelled them to argue them away. This is perhaps most clear in the physiological approach. The methods of the social scientists utilizing experiments in measurement. The controls exercised not infrequently resulted in conclusions contrary to the beliefs of the time. The scientists, however, managed to explain such findings away. This was difficult to do. For the physiological data had to do with concrete, real, physical measurements. Unlike sociological data, its conclusions could not be easily refuted.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Rhett Jones, "Proving Blacks Inferior," Black World, February, 1971, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

Jones points up clearly the role played by educators in the development of theoretical bases to justify the maintainance of sub-social status for Blacks in America.<sup>16</sup> Though Jones' article only deals with the methods of proving Blacks inferior from 1870-1930, the trend has not changed significantly to date. In the ivy towers of academia, it is presently found that scholars such as Arthur Jensen of Berkeley, William Schochley of Stanford and Henry Garrett, formerly of Columbia, to name a few, who are presently influencing American thinking in and outside educational institutions. Newsweek carried an article, "Is Intelligence Racial?" Its opening paragraph reads:

For years the controversy had simmered along, often behind the scenes, making headlines only when one set or another of the various protagonists had a new study to report. The reason for the reticence was always that the question is not only a cruel one, but also one to which there is for the moment no answer at all. The question is: are Negroes (and perhaps certain other races) genetically deprived and therefore less intelligent than whites?<sup>17</sup>

The question as posited by Newsweek can be misleading, misleading in the sense that it impressionistically gives the illusion that it is a scientifically objective question being discussed in a general and liberal framework, i.e., the question is without political, socio-economic or genocidal ramification. Information, both historical and contemporary, has been used to answer the unusual question of Negro inferiority. It is merely a problem of substantiating hypotheses with empirically sound data. It also is misleading in that it

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid:

<sup>17</sup> "Is Intelligence Racial," Newsweek, May, 1971, p. 69.

gives the impression that there is a general consensus on the definition of intelligence among the masses as well as scholars. Nevertheless, Newsweek quotes Schockley as arguing:

Diagnosing will, I believe, confirm that our nobly intended welfare programs are promoting dysgenics - retrogressive evolution through the disproportionate reproduction of the genetically disadvantaged. This probably occurs for whites as well as blacks but is so much more severe for blacks that it constitutes a form of genetic enslavement. ...if those Negroes with the fewest caucasian genes are in fact the most prolific and also the least intelligent, then genetic enslavement will be the destiny of their next generation. The consequences may be extremes of racism and agony for both blacks and whites.<sup>18</sup> (Emphasis mine)

Much of the consternation over the documentation of Negro inferiority centers mainly around the lack of evidence, the emotional impact of such scientific pursuit, the broad generalizations, or the perennial argument of heredity versus environment. Seldom is the question questioned. For example, what kind of culture would raise such a question and take definite action on, at best, obscure evidence? What kind of culture would question its methodological stance rather than its values? What kind of relationships exists between the economic system and racism? In other words, the idea of Black inferiority is not contingent upon a particular school of thought, but the values inherent in American culture sustained by an organized bureaucracy such as the school system, the courts of law and the economic system. Bernard Mehl writes:

We all remember how certain schools of psychology rose and fell in educational favor in terms of whether or

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

not the particular psychological school, be it Behaviorism or Gestalt, served to uphold patterns of educational power. It didn't matter whether the theoretical stance was right or wrong. Experimentation, which could be given credence to one or another camp, was too often laid aside and in its place grew a kind of pseudo-research which sought to prove the benevolence of a particular socio-political system of education. ...<sup>19</sup>

Mehl continues:

As can be seen, the liberal and conservative are for "the system" except that the methods used to keep "the system" going are somewhat different except at the point of programmatic involvement. The liberal would want to deculturate the poor and save them from their background before it becomes too late and evils grow, i.e., crime, disease, sexual perversion, and violence. The conservative, too, wants to eliminate the children of poverty by making sure they don't get born into the world. In the conservative mind children born into poverty will grow up to act according to the values of the culture of poverty. That is, they will have little or no respect for property or for law and order. The world will be better off with out them.<sup>20</sup> (Emphasis mine)

Mehl's description of the conservative mind aptly describes Schockley who concludes that the solution to "dysgenics - retrogressive evolution" is birth control and special education. According to Newsweek, one viable program set forth by Schockley:

...is the payment of Federal cash bonuses to intellectually substandard blacks and whites who agree not to have children. He also favors the establishment of special educational and social programs geared to substandard individuals of both races.<sup>21</sup>

In essence, what is being propounded by racist educators is the notion that if the school has failed the Blacks it has more to do with inherent inferiority than with the school system itself.

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<sup>19</sup>Bernard Mehl, "Is There A Culture of Poverty," Educational Perspectives, VI (May, 1968), 3.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Newsweek, p. 70.

The liberal mind, as described by Mehl, approaches the problem methodologically. The liberal mind agrees with the conservative mind on inferiority, but for different reasons. The liberal mind contends the failure is due to environment, consequently it becomes the function of the school to compensate for environmental deficiencies. This is seen in such sloganeering as "culturally deprived", "disadvantaged," "underprivileged," "inner city children," or "culture of poverty." In an address given at the Fifty-fourth Annual N.C.T.E. Convention, Edgar Dale stated:

Let me point out first that nearly all writers dealing with the underprivileged child believe that environmental rather than genetic factors account for the general differences that are found, and find no evidence in the science of heredity to cause them to think otherwise. We start, therefore, with the hypothesis that sharp changes can be made in the background of experience of these students, in their school and out-of-school learning, and consequently in their IQ's or other tests of mental and educational development.<sup>22</sup>

Though Dale's central thesis is that the school must re-evaluate itself and direct more attention to the creation of broader experiences for cognitive development, Daniel Moynihan contends that this is impossible until the "family environment" is straightened out. Moynihan contends:

At the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro Society is the deterioration of the Negro family. ...It is the fundamental source of weakness of the Negro community.<sup>23</sup>

In describing the "tangle of pathology," Moynihan continues:

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<sup>22</sup>Edgar Dale, Address given at the 54th Annual NCTE Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, November 27, 1964.

<sup>23</sup>Daniel Moynihan, "The Tangle of Pathology" in Blacks in White America, Robert C. Twombly, ed. (New York: David McKay Comp., Inc., 1971), pp. 440-441.

There is probably no single fact of Negro American life so little understood by whites. The Negro situation is commonly perceived by whites in terms of the visible manifestations of discrimination and poverty, in part because Negro protest is directed against such obstacles, and in part, no doubt, because these are facts which involve the actions and attitudes of the white community as well. It is more difficult, however, for whites to perceive the effect that three centuries of exploitation has had on the fabric of the Negro society itself. Here the consequences of the historic injustices done to Negro Americans are silent and hidden from view. But here is where the true injury has occurred: unless this damage is repaired, all the effort to end discrimination and poverty and injustice will come to little.<sup>24</sup>

If what Moynihan contends is true of the Black family, why does he dismiss the root cause by merely stating it as the result of "three centuries of exploitation" or "the consequences of historic injustice?" Another illusion created by Moynihan is that the injustice is historic, not contemporary, giving further illusion that the victim is to blame for his condition. Since Moynihan admits there has been systematic exploitation of Black families historically, the investigator will treat the exploitation from a contemporary perspective, data gathered from 1960 to the present.<sup>25</sup>

It should be made clear at this point that consideration of Moynihan's views are important because such thinking, when given credence, tends to directly influence educational patterns in America. Just as the launching of Sputnik I and II influenced the school's as well as the American public's thinking, so did the concepts of underprivileged, culturally deprived and family pathology. Therefore,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> See Leroi Jones, Blues People; Lerone Bennett, Before the Mayflower; Rayford Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro; John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, and Andrew Billingsley, Black Families in White America for a detailed account of the history of the Black family.

an analysis of Moynihan's thinking is in order for a clearer understanding of why the public schools have not fulfilled the faith Blacks have in education.

Moynihan writes:

...there is great discontinuity in family structure in in the United States at the present time: that between white world in general and that of the Negro American. ...The family has achieved a high degree of stability and is maintaining that stability. ...By contrast the family structure of the lower class Negroes is highly unstable, and<sup>26</sup> in many urban centers approaching complete breakdown.

As the above quote shows, Moynihan creates a dichotomy, Black and white. The so-called problems belong to "Negro society", not America in general. According to the Report of the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders, one cannot speak of Black society in isolation of America in general:

What white Americans have never fully understood - but can never forget - is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.<sup>27</sup>

The tendency on the part of Moynihan to treat the plight of poor Blacks as a pure class problem which resulted from a "tangle of pathology" in the Black family is not only misleading but a deliberate attempt to avoid the root causes, racism and the ongoing, systematic exploitation of Blacks in general. Systematic exploitation and racism undermine the two major criteria which are necessary to achieve the so-called stability Moynihan finds in white families,

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<sup>26</sup>Moynihan, "The Tangle of Pathology."

<sup>27</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders, p. vii.

education and income. For example, Sexton in her book, Education and Income, found: 1. that pupils coming from families earning above \$7,000 were achieving below grade level; 2. that test scores tended to go up as income levels rose; 3. that in grade four, children coming from families with an average income of \$3,500 were achieving almost one whole year below grade level, whereas children coming from homes with an average income of \$11,055 were achieving at a level two whole years above the lowest income group.<sup>28</sup> The test scores demonstrated, without exception, that income level was directly related to achievement. Jeffrey Herold noted:

While achievement tests indicated that children from homes below a \$7,000 income were reading below level, there were more upper-income children in reading improvement programs. The incredible reason for this was that a score of at least a C on an IQ test was required for entrance into the programs. Since the tests were essentially tests of reading skill, the lower-income children failed to make C scores on them and therefore were not eligible for remedial reading aid. Furthermore, the IQ scores were often accepted as an explanation of the low performance levels of lower income children. They also functioned as a kind of social cement that fixed students into the social classes of their birth.<sup>29</sup> (Emphasis mine)

Further it was found by Baran and Sweezy that:

A nonwhite man who has not gone beyond the eighth grade has very little chance of being anything more than a laborer, a porter, or a factory hand. Nearly 8 out of every 10 nonwhite men with eight grades of schooling worked as laborers, service workers, or operatives at the time of the last census. Among whites with the same amount of education, only 5 out of 10 worked at these lowpaid jobs.

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<sup>28</sup>Patricia Sexton, Education and Income (New York: Viking Press, 1961).

<sup>29</sup>Herold, "The American Faith in Public Schools...", p. 240.



Nonwhite college graduates seem to be able to find professional employment in relatively large numbers. About three out of every four were professional or managerial workers - nearly the same proportion as white college graduates. But, there is one big difference. Nonwhites are concentrated in the lower-paid professions. ...

Nonwhite men earn less than whites with the same number of years of schooling for at least two reasons:  
 a. they are employed in lower paid jobs; and b. they are paid less even when they do the same kind of work. The combined impact of these two factors is shown in...figures on the life time earnings of white and nonwhite men by years of school completed ... The lifetime earnings of nonwhite elementary school graduates is about 64 per cent of the white total. Among college graduates nonwhites have only 47 per cent of the white total. The fact of the matter is that the average nonwhite with 4 years of college can expect to earn less over a lifetime than the white who did not go beyond the eighth grade.<sup>30</sup>

What Moynihan defines as failures of the Black family are in essence failures of the educational institutions to provide a means of entrance into the mainstream of American life. Rather, the school has done the opposite. It has "functioned as a kind of social cement that fixed students into the classes of their birth."<sup>31</sup> Edwina Chavers Johnson sees the education of Blacks in America in this fashion:

The African descendants in America, having passed through three phases of education in America, i.e., de-Africanization, dehumanization, and (finally) an inferior-caste status. ...<sup>32</sup>

Moynihan's premise, that the deteriorating Black family is the "fundamental source of weakness of the Negro community" carried to its logical conclusion would assume that restoration of the Black

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<sup>30</sup> Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, Monopoly Capital (New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1968), p. 260.

<sup>31</sup> Herold, "The American Faith in Public Schools...", p. 240.

<sup>32</sup> Edwina Chavers Johnson, "An Alternative to Miseducation for the Afro-American People," in What Black Educators Are Saying, ed. by Nathan Wright, Jr. (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1970) p. 198.

family, i.e., fitting a so-called white criteria, would mean that the Black man's problem would be solved, at least in part. Such thinking is not shared by many Blacks. For example, Preston Wilcox in commenting on Moynihan's, The Negro Family, writes that a true analysis of the Black family would have revealed:

...how white families maintain themselves economically within white enclaves surrounding the inner city by the exploitation of black men, their families, and their communities. He (Moynihan) would have named his statement The Victimization of Black Families.<sup>33</sup>

In essence, an inability to escape the less-than-human view of Blacks has continuously forced educators and others to see "Negro problems" rather than American problems.

The investigator pointed out in this chapter the role the school and educators played in fulfilling some of the major cultural values in America. Also pointed out was the fact that the Black man became an object of study and various rationales were developed by scholars to show the inadequacy of the Blacks, rather than the inadequacy of the institutions that were supposed to serve him. The importance of the sociological and educational data gathered on Blacks had a tremendous impact on Supreme Court decisions and economic policies in America. The following chapter will concern itself with the legal and economic solidification of Black inferiority.

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<sup>33</sup>Preston Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism: A Way of Approaching It," in What Black Educators Are Saying, ed. by Wright, pp. 5-6.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LEGAL AND ECONOMIC SOLIDIFICATION OF BLACK INFERIORITY

The historical and contemporary viewing of the Blacks as inadequate has led to the documentation of the failures of a people rather than the documentation of racism and institutional failures. A serious question that must be asked is whether or not it is possible for any institution in a racist-capitalist society to provide the good life for the masses of Black people? The investigator recognizes the failures of institutions in America in general, especially educational institutions. But the scope and aim of this study is to deal with Blacks and education because education in America has, as stated by Preston Wilcox, de-Africanized, dehumanized and colonized the Blacks of America. In viewing the history of the American school in relationship to Blacks, one cannot avoid the proposal Thomas Jefferson made to the Virginia legislature for a state educational system for three years of free schooling for every white child of the Commonwealth, or the statement Senator Vardman of Mississippi in the late eighteen hundreds on the vote for Blacks which was and is critical to education.

It matters not what his (the Negro's) advertised mental and moral qualifications may be. I am just as opposed to Booker Washington as a voter with all his Anglo-Saxon re-enforcements, as I am

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to the cocoanut-headed, chocolate-colored, typical little coon, Andy Dotson, who blacks my shoes every morning. Neither is fit to exercise the supreme function of citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly these sentiments were no less expressed, though the jargon was different, by the Supreme Court of the United States when it affirmed the Separate but Equal doctrine in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson. It is interesting to note that though this decision was reversed in 1954 by Brown vs. Board of Education, both decisions reflected the inherent inferiority of Black people. It is also interesting to note that the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision merely legalized what was presently practiced. Mr. Justice Brown in delivering the opinion of the court cited several precedent cases in keeping with the "Separate but Equal" doctrine:

One of the earliest of these cases is that of Robert vs. City of Boston, S. Cash. 198, in which the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts held that the general school committee of Boston had power to make provisions for the instruction of colored children in separate schools established exclusively for them, and to prohibit their attendance upon the other schools. 'The great principle', said Chief Justice Shaw, p. 206, 'advanced by the learned and eloquent advocate for the plaintiff,' (Mr. Charles Sumner), 'is, that by the constitution and laws of Massachusetts, all persons without distinction of age or sex, birth or color, origin or condition, are equal before the law.... But, when this great principle comes to be applied to the actual and various conditions of persons in society, it will not warrant the assertion, that men and women are legally clothed with the same civil and political powers, and that children and adults are legally to have the same functions and be subject to the same treatment.... It was held that the powers of the committee extended to the establishment of separate schools for children of different ages, sexes and colors....

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie, p. 143.

Similar laws have been enacted by Congress under its general powers of legislation over the District of Columbia, Rev Stat. D.C. 281, 282, 283, 310, 319, as well as by the legislatures of many of the states, and have generally, if not uniformly, been sustained by the courts.<sup>2</sup>

The case of Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas not only sought to change the law but custom. It attempted, at least theoretically, to legislate morality. The Separate but Equal doctrine followed a basic sociological principle in that it grew out of the folkways and mores of the people. This was more clear in the Dred Scott case wherein it was adjudged that descendants of Africans imported into America and sold as slaves were not included as citizens under the constitution. A Black was classified in the Constitution as 3/5ths of a man. What this in essence means is that once the state rules, as in the 1954 decision, at a different level of consciousness than that which is found with the majority of the people, that state will be considered totalitarian by those people. If the documentation of racism as found in the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders is correct, civil rights legislation is civil repression legislation for the majority of whites. The South, for example, saw school integration as federal intervention despite the Supreme Court ruling on desegregation. The North sought to ignore the ruling. For example, it was found in 1968 that the "Separate but Equal" ruling was still in effect and on the rise:

We have cited the extent of racial isolation in our urban schools. It is great and it is growing. It will not easily be overcome.

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<sup>2</sup>Plessy vs. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) at pages 544-545.

Nonetheless, we believe school integration to be vital to the well being of this country.<sup>3</sup>

Again, the findings of the Kerner Commission merely reiterated the findings revealed in the 1954 ruling on desegregation, i.e., that the inferiority of Blacks was the result of racism. For example, it was held by the United States Supreme Court that:

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to retard the educational and mental development of Negro children and deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated system.<sup>4</sup>(Emphasis mine)

The Kerner Commission reports:

The bleak record of public education for ghetto children is growing worse. In the critical skill - verbal and reading ability - Negro students fall further behind whites with each year of school completed. For example, in the metropolitan Northeast Negro students on the average begin the first grade with somewhat lower scores on standard achievement tests than whites, are about 1.6 grades behind by the sixth grade, and have fallen 3.3 grades behind white students by the twelfth grade. The failure of the public schools to equip these students with basic verbal skills is reflected in their performance on the Selective Service Mental Test. During the period June, 1964 - December, 1965, 67 per cent of Negro candidates failed the examination. The failure rate for whites was 19 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

It is imperative to note in the above quotes that the Supreme Court of Kansas, as well as the Kerner Commission, sees Negro inferiority from a totally white perspective, that is, Blacks not fitting

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<sup>3</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission, p. 438.

<sup>4</sup>Brown vs. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) at page 583.

<sup>5</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission, p. 425.

white norms. The detrimental effects of segregation are on the Blacks not the whites. Such notions as these are misleading and deliberately avoid the real question of racism. What invariably emerges from such thinking is that "white society" is normal and "Black society" abnormal. Herein it is found that the human condition is quantified and placed on an empirical plan as shown in the latter quote — Blacks 1.6 years behind in the first grade. Such thinking led to the development of Head Start programs, which, of course, based on the belief in Black failure, lead further into the home of the Black child. The logical conclusions of social thinking predicated on the "rightness of whiteness" can only lead to furthering the continued justification of the enslavement of the Black man or to extermination. The "rightness of whiteness," simplistically translated, means a way of "being", a total existence predicated on a level of consciousness that screens in and out in accordance to a particular white value schema. The white man's level of consciousness related to race seems to have changed very little since slavery. Grier and Cobbs write:

The culture of slavery was never undone for either master or slave. The civilization that tolerated slavery dropped its slaveholding cloak but the inner feelings remained. The 'peculiar institution' continues to exert its evil influence over the nation. The practice of slavery stopped over a hundred years ago, but the minds of our citizens have never been freed.<sup>6</sup>

Grier and Cobbs in the above quote point out how the level of consciousness in America has changed very little in relation to the perceptions whites have of Blacks. Though Blacks are no longer kept

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<sup>6</sup>William Grier and Price Cobbs, Black Rage (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 20.

in slave quarters on plantations, they are now found isolated in ghettos, attending separate schools and churches — in essence living a separate existence. Kenneth Clark in his *Doctrine of Powerlessness* contends separation and powerlessness invariably breeds discontent and despair. In the following chapter the investigator will examine what Black educators are saying and doing in an attempt to gain power or control of the educational institutions in the Black communities.



## CHAPTER VII

### WHAT BLACK EDUCATORS ARE SAYING

As long as the master-slave mentality remains in America, integration can never succeed. Where there has been "integration" there is growing dissatisfaction among Blacks who claim that the curriculum is irrelevant and that teachers are racists. Blacks invariably wind up in a so-called integrated system which amounts to segregation in an integrated setting. DuBois' keen intellect and prophetic views anticipated this more than thirty years ago. He stated:

...race prejudice in the United States is such that Negroes cannot receive proper education in white institutions. ...many public school systems in the North where Negroes are admitted and tolerated but they are not educated; they are crucified ...<sup>1</sup>

The growing distrust in white educational institutions has been realized by many other Black educators through their own experiences. Grier and Cobbs write:

The systematic discrimination against black academicians and intellectuals is a dreary tale well told by many voices. Let us add only this: The paths beyond scholarly excellence may lead to positions of power in government, in industry, or in the administrative hierarchy of major educational institutions. But the black man who has breached so many barriers to achieve academic status must at this writing realize that further doors are open to all save him. His is a blind alley. His achievements are circumscribed by the

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<sup>1</sup>DuBois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools," pp. 328-329.

same impediments of discrimination as are those of his less gifted brother.

If education truly freed the brother from his peculiarly American latter-day bondage, the transition from black to white might actually be approached by means of the refinement of skills. But there is no prospect of this and no one realizes it more keenly than the black intellectual.<sup>2</sup> (Emphasis mine)

Many Black educators are realizing, mainly through experience, that the failure of educational institutions to fulfill the faith that Blacks have in education has less to do with the inadequacies of the Blacks themselves than with the inability of educational institutions, 'similar to the rest of American society, to come to grips with their own racism and need for exploitation. Grier and Cobbs write:

Whatever its source, faith in education has been a disappearing commodity among the most fortunate black beneficiaries of the educational system. Black intellectuals are a disenchanted lot. ...<sup>3</sup>

Grier and Cobbs are correct when they speak of a decline, however, the decline has not been in the "faith in education," but a decline in "faith in schools" controlled by insensitive white administrators, teachers and unions. The recent decline in faith in whites controlling Black institutions, oddly enough, did not begin in the educational institutions but in the civil rights movement, a movement that touched on the racism in all institutions in America. It was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee that first challenged white control and involvement in Black institutions and movements, that is, outside of the Black separatists. SNCC reasoned that white people who were part of a racist and oppressive society could

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<sup>2</sup>Grier and Cobbs, Black Rage, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

not participate in Black liberation and oppression at the same time;  
therefore:

It must be offered that white people who desire change in this country should go where that problem (racism) is most manifest; the problem is not in the black community. The whites should go into white communities where whites have created power for the express (purpose) of denying blacks human dignity and self-determination.<sup>4</sup>

Mario Fontini and Gerald Weinstein write:

Never before has it been so vehemently expressed to the white professional that he is incompetent and should therefore give up his authority because so many black children are failing in school. When in our past history has the white citizenship been told by so many that it is going to burn if it doesn't shape up.<sup>5</sup>

Preston Wilcox writes of the challenge to whites made by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee:

SNCC was offering whites an alternative: to become either a part of the problem or a part of the solution, but not both. One sees in this white do-gooder behavior a linking of capitalism and racism. For too many whites - and black-skinned people -- are "doing well by doing good" -- exploiting by getting paid to keep blacks in their places. ...<sup>6</sup>

Black educators, parents, and community members also challenged whites who were sincere about the education of Blacks. This was seen in the demand for Black curricula and community control of schools. Armed with data documenting the failures of integration, Black identity crisis, and deteriorating ghetto schools many Black educators began attempting to redefine education and establish new priorities with humanism at the core of its curriculum and total community involvement

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<sup>4</sup>Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism," p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Mario Fantini and Gerald Weinstien, Making Urban Schools Work (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism,"

in a collective educational process aimed at the survival of Black people mentally and physically. Preston Wilcox, in describing the activities of the National Association for African-American Educators, captures the essence of this mood:

One example is seen in the work of the National Association for African American Education. At its first meeting in June, 1968 it engaged the following issues: higher education, blackening the curriculum, black educator, black student, school and black community, materials of instruction. When it met in August, 1968 in St. Louis, it followed through on the above themes but in a context of nation building: internal relationships, external relationships, and the role of the N.A.A.A.E. Unlike most organizations, the N.A.A.A.E. does not exclude on the basis of ideology, social class, age, occupational status, and/or organization affiliation. It defines the Black educator as follows:

Students, parents, community leaders, clergymen, businessmen, activists, moderates, college professors, teachers, educational administrators, and all those who are actively in the educational liberation and survival of black people.<sup>7</sup> (Emphasis mine)

Wilcox continues describing the purpose of the convention; he writes:

Stated in functional terms, an effort was undertaken to codify on the collective basis the intellectual and technical requisites to promote the physical and mental health of black people.<sup>8</sup>

As is clearly seen, Wilcox's description of the educational concerns of Blacks encompasses the totality of the Black community. The school is redefined; though an important instrument for learning, it occupies equal status with other institutions within the Black community. The necessity for such a move grows out in part from the need to counter racist and dehumanizing forces of educational institutions as they presently function. The school as seen by

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Wilcox becomes an agency of inclusion rather than exclusion -- not one designed to seek out the gifted and leave the masses to fend for themselves or to the exploitative capitalist looking for cheap labor. The necessity behind this protective notion is readily seen when one reads Senator Fred R. Harris' description of the impact of racism:

To be sure, there are many evils which derive from racism that are more easily identified, including the existence of ghetto neighborhoods, joblessness, stultifying classrooms and poor health...<sup>9</sup>

Paul Henry comments on the necessity of Blacks to deal with racism:

The moral imperative involved is apparent. When a society is organized to destroy other cultures and it is also willing to destroy its own culture to save the system, this madness must be stopped. Therefore, it is the Afro-American who must oppose this dehumanization policy simply because it is black people who are first to be annihilated.<sup>10</sup>

Leslie Campbell in discussing the role of the Black teacher writes:

Black teachers must protect black children against injustices and systematic genocide. We must begin to speak out and weed out the incompetents who are using our children to pay their rent. Any black teacher who sits back and allows miseducation to continue without speaking out is as guilty as those who are actually conducting programs of miseducation.<sup>11</sup>

Operating from the premise that all children are educable leads the Black educator directly to the conclusion that if Black children are not succeeding in school the fault rests with the educational system, not the child. Black children score lower on national exams than any other racial or ethnic group. Blacks have the

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<sup>9</sup>Grier and Cobbs, Black Rage, p. vii.

<sup>10</sup>Quoted in What Black Educators Are Saying, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Leslie Campbell, "The Black Teacher and Black Power," Ibid., p. 24.

highest dropout rate. This is due to a system designed against the Black child. "Our youths," writes Campbell, "become easily discouraged by the oppressive educational system."<sup>12</sup>

James B. Conant's research revealed that in one slum, 70 per cent of the boys and girls ages sixteen to twenty-one were out of school and unemployed.<sup>13</sup> This in itself questions the value of school for Blacks. In a survey of cities, the National Advisory Commission listed the major grievances in the Black communities:

First Level of Intensity

1. Police practices
2. Unemployment and Underemployment
3. Inadequate housing

Second Level of Intensity

4. Inadequate education
5. Poor recreation facilities and programs
6. Ineffectiveness of the political structure and grievance mechanism

Third Level of Intensity

7. Disrespectful white attitudes
8. Discriminatory administration of justice
9. Inadequacy of federal programs
10. Inadequacy of municipal service
11. Discriminatory consumer and credit practices
12. Inadequate welfare programs<sup>14</sup>

Though these latent discoveries were "new" to much of the white populus, they are age old complaints that have been leveled against white institutions of America by Blacks for many years. For example in 1787 Blacks petitioned the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for equal education. In the petition they stated:

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<sup>12</sup>Campbell, "The Black Teacher and Black Power," p. 27.

<sup>13</sup>James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs (New York: Signant, 1961), p. 34.

<sup>14</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission, pp. 143-144.

The petition of a great number of blacks, freemen of this Commonwealth, humbly sheweth, that your petitioners are held in common with other freemen of this town and commonwealth and have never been backward in paying our proportionate part of the burdens under which they have, or may labor under; and as we are willing to pay our equal part of these burdens, we are of the humble opinion that we have the right to enjoy the privileges of free men. But that we do not will appear in many instances, and we beg leave to mention one out of many, and that is the education of our children which now receive no benefit from the free schools in the town of Boston, which we think is a great grievance, as by woeful experience we now feel the want of a common education. We, therefore, must fear for our rising offspring to see them in ignorance in a land of gospel light when there is provision made for them as well as others and yet can't enjoy them, for <sup>no</sup> other reason can be given this they are black. ...<sup>15</sup>

The above appeal to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for equal education reveals not only a faith in education but the illusion under which Blacks were operating; that is, Blacks thought that educational success meant vertical occupational mobility. To some extent this is true; however, for the vast majority of Blacks the correlation between educational gain and economic rewards is not high at all. For example, in a study of ten major cities where there is a high concentration of Blacks, James Schnur discovered:

Even though more blacks in several of the cities achieved the accomplishment of a year or more of high school, their ratio of reward was much less than that for the whites.<sup>16</sup>

Schnur continues:

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<sup>15</sup> Grant, Black Protest, p. 59-60.

<sup>16</sup> James O. Schnur, "Is Education a Panacea for the Disadvantaged," Changing Education IV (Spring, 1969), p. 29

...it can be seen that educational achievement, in terms of high-school education, is improving for blacks. This phenomenon is not, however, significantly contributing to vertical occupational mobility, especially for members of a minority group. The segments of American society in power seem to be saying, on the one hand, 'get the education and your lot will improve,' and then the other, saying, 'who wants to hire a Negro for a good job.'<sup>17</sup>  
 (Emphasis mine)

It is interesting to note that though Schnur points out these facts, he, like most white educators, moves in total disregard of the reality that there is a very low correlation between education and vertical occupational mobility for Blacks. Rather than deal with the racism of the educational and economic institutions he concludes:

The disadvantaged child's educational experience could be improved by being: more concrete and less abstract; more inductive and less deductive; slower-paced with emphasis placed upon cognition rather than subject-matter mileage to be covered.<sup>18</sup>

This quote is not to show that Schnur does not recognize the real problem, because he does. However, it does point up the fact that many white educators are trapped by analysis and because of deep seated beliefs in Black inferiority are powerless when it comes to translating thought into action based on reality. Black educators are attempting to break the paralysis of analysis and place education in its proper perspective.

As was pointed out by Campbell and Wilcox, Black educators are redefining education and teacher roles in light of the Black experience and existence. Blacks according to these "new ideas" realize that the relationship between Blacks and whites is a colonial

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 30.



one. "The inseparability of capitalism and racism," according to Wilcox, "has had educational consequences for Blacks." The colonial relationship is seen when one examines the various job levels Blacks occupy regardless of education, living space allotted to Blacks regardless of income, and the lack of power for self-determination regardless of income or education. As a result of this experience, Blacks have taken two major views of the present educational system: one based on racism and the other based on economic exploitation.

In terms of racism, Edwina Johnson writes:

Although the system of enslavement, which dehumanized the African in America, failed finally, a malignant caste system developed which has mitigated against the progress in education for the Afro-American right up to and including the present time. As summarized in the U.S. Riot Commission Report,

The Negro is in the United States by the very reverse of the democratic principle of free choice. He was seized in his native Africa by force, transported free of charge ... and compelled to labor as a slave for white masters. He was denied the most basic kind of education, and was separated from his family throughout slavery. (He was denied the most basic kind of education, and was torn from his family throughout slavery.) The racism in the country against the Afro-American casts blame on him for those very characteristics the slave owners imposed by rule upon him during the three hundred years of slavery. Any effort on his own part to better his condition educationally is cut down by malignant racism which has developed over the centuries. The Dred Scott decision formalized his inferiority through courts, the Supreme Court decision in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson established segregation by law and custom.<sup>19</sup>

Baran and Sweezy point out the cast status of Blacks which helps the Black educator develop new educational concepts based on reality:

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<sup>19</sup>Johnson, "An Alternate to Miseducation for the Afro-American People," p. 204.

... It thus happens that a special pariah group at the bottom act as a kind of lightning rod for the frustrations and hostilities of all higher groups, the more so the nearer they are at the bottom. It may even be said that the very existence of the pariah group is a kind of harmonizer and stabilizer of the social structure - so long as the pariahs play their role passively and resignedly. Such a society becomes in time so thoroughly saturated with race prejudice that it sinks below the level of consciousness and becomes a part of the "human nature" of its members. The gratification which whites derive from their socio-economic superiority to Negroes has its counterpart in alarm, anger, and even panic at the prospect of Negroes attaining equality. Status being a relative matter, whites inevitably interpret upward movement by Negroes as downward movement for themselves.<sup>20</sup>

The past and present racism in American society has led to vehement rejection of white control of educational institutions serving Blacks. Black educators such as Leslie Campbell contend:

1. All devils must go!

The colony must begin to build a school system free of any influence or contact with the devil's system. I hear some of you crying now, "But he is qualified, he has the qualification needed to educate our children." But I bitterly question the ability of the "qualified" devil who despises our children, our community, our culture, and, most of all, the goals and aspirations of our people.

If the devil is so well qualified, why hasn't he been using these qualifications positively heretofore? The truth is that the only qualifications he does possess lie in his ability to keep the system of miseducation alive and kicking.

Some of you often cry about "good and well-meaning" devils. Well, I have been in the system for eight years and for each "good" devil that I have encountered I have seen a hundred murderers of our children's minds. I am not willing to gamble that kind of odds against me.<sup>21</sup>

Though racism has been the major complaint or the reason for the failures of Black children in school, many black educators contend

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<sup>20</sup> Baran and Sweezy, Monopoly Capital, p. 255-256.

<sup>21</sup> Leslie Campbell, "The Devil Can Never Educate Us," in What Black Educators Are Saying, p. 29

that another reason is economic interest, in the form of Black community exploitation which points up more sharply the colonial relationship. For example, in New York City alone over 500 million dollars is spent on education annually. The school buildings represent valuable real estate holdings. The extent of the investment can be measured, for example, in that salaries are paid to about thirty-thousand people. Thirty-seven million dollars is spent on transportation. The unions have an unchallenged monopoly of the multi-million dollar contracts through the Board of Education. There is yet to be counted the monies spent on school lunches, recreation programs, after school services, remedial and extracurricular programs.<sup>22</sup> Leslie Campbell writes of the percentage of monies and per cent of Blacks who benefit from the economic end:

Less than 2 per cent of the administrators of New York City schools are black.

Only 8 per cent of the teachers employed by the devil's board are black.

Only ten schools out of 950 have black custodians. The unions and companies holding fat contracts for goods and services in the schools are all owned and operated by devils.

Conclusion: only a minute percentage (1 per cent) of all monies spent for education ever finds its way into the black community. What we have operating here is a colonial educational system where the goods and services are being supplied to the colony by outsiders (devils.) Outsiders reap the benefits (\$) and privileges (pensions and other goodies) of this system and all the colony receives is a yearly flow of functionally illiterate youths who fulfill the need for a cheap labor force and for the Vietnam War cannon fodder. The primary motive of the devil's miseducation system is economic, and let us never forget this fact.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Campbell, "The Devil Can Never Educate Us," p. 28.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

Harold Baron writes of the economic exploitation of Blacks:

...While it is true that the present-day urban corporate culture nature of American society could endure without an elaborate structure of racism, there are still many groups and individuals who reap direct advantage from the exploitation of blacks. Therefore, in the answer to the question cui bono, for whose benefit, it must be said that there is a fragmentation of interest in the exploitative aspects of urban racism.<sup>24</sup>

The realization that the problems of education for Blacks are inextricably bound to racism and economics was articulated by Stokely Carmichael in 1966. He stated:

The history of every institution of this society indicates that a major concern in the ordering and structuring of the society has been the maintaining of the Negro community in its condition of dependence and oppression. This has not been on the level of individual acts of discrimination — individual whites against individual Negroes — but total acts by the white community against the Negro community. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized — that racist assumptions of white superiority have been so deeply ingrained in the structure of the society that it infuses its entire functioning, and is so much a part of the national subconscious that it is taken for granted and is frequently not even recognized. It is more than a figure of speech to say that the Negro community in America is the victim of white imperialism and colonial exploitation.<sup>25</sup>

Though many may consider the statements of Wilcox, Campbell, and Carmichael as emotional, they are, however, not without reason. The hidden assumptions of America's value structure are revealed by the "human waste" due to racism and economic exploitation. As was discussed earlier, racism and exploitation are elemental values in the total value structure. Earl C. Cunningham wrote:

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<sup>24</sup>Harold Baron, "The Webb of Urban Racism," in Institutional Racism in America, ed. by Louis L. Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 169.

<sup>25</sup>Stokely Carmichael, Stokely Speaks (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 36.

Outline for me the major assumptions in a man's world-view and I will outline for you the patterns which his institutions are most likely to be like.<sup>26</sup>

Cunningham's statement provides an accurate philosophical insight for understanding the nature of the relationship between the educational institutions and Black people, that is, a racist culture's institutions will be patterned on the racism found in that culture. In essence, unless total cultural values change it is futile to attempt small institutional changes. Because of racism and exploitation throughout American history many Blacks are asking the same questions and posing the same solutions. For example, in 1966, Stokely Carmichael wrote:

SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) proposes that it is now time for the black freedom movement to stop pandering to the fears and anxieties of the white middle class in the attempt to earn its "good will", and return to organize these communities to control themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Carmichael's statement, at this point in his history, sounds much like a tone-downed echo of Frederick Douglass, who stated almost one-hundred years earlier (1875):

We must stop these men (white men) from begging for us... We must stop begging for ourselves. If we build churches don't ask white people to pay for them. If we have banks, colleges and papers, do not ask other people to support them. Be independent ...I am here today to offer and sign a declaration of independence for the colored people of these United States.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Earl C. Cunningham, "First Principles for a Modern Philosophy," Philosophy of Education, ed. by Herbert W. Burns and Charles J. Brauner (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1962), p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> Carmichael, Stokely Speaks, p. 40.

<sup>28</sup> James McPherson, "White Liberals and Black Power in Negro Education," American Historical Review, LXXV (June, 1970) 1358.

Wilcox, also almost one-hundred years later, only reiterates the same clarion call for independence of Blacks from the dependence on whites. He writes on self-liberation:

Ultimately the education of black people must free them from psychological dependence on others: it must teach them to think and act on their own. This ability does not rest solely on intellectual talents but on one's ability to rid himself of a need to be controlled by those who have power over him.<sup>29</sup>

Albert Vann in a Presidential Address to the Afro-American Teachers Association of New York City in 1969 stated:

Involvement usually connotes participation. However, the black community must redefine participation to mean control. When we speak of community involvement, we must mean that black people must control their schools and school system.<sup>30</sup>

The desire for community control of schools by Blacks to a large extent, as indicated earlier in this chapter, grew out of the failure of the existing educational institutions to meet the psychological as well as the educational needs of the Black communities. This inability of the educational institutions to keep pace with the evolving Black consciousness of Black educators as well as Black community people has also been a contributing factor in the struggle for Black control of Black schools.

In the following chapter the investigator will examine briefly the historical roots of the continuing controversy over Black control of Black schools and the impact the evolving Black consciousness has had on the struggle.

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<sup>29</sup>Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism," pp. 13-14.

<sup>30</sup>Albert Vann, "Community Involvement In Schools," in What Black Educators Are Saying, p. 231.

## CHAPTER VIII

### COMMUNITY CONTROL AND THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

The struggle for community control is not new as many may think. The controversial issue of Blacks demanding control of the educational institutions seems to have been foreshadowed by the powerful slogan of 1885, "Home rule for our colored schools."<sup>1</sup> It was during this period that Black leaders turned increasingly to the idea of autonomy and black owned institutions following the "overthrow of the Reconstruction and the onset," according to McPherson, "of reaction blocked access to power and achievement in white American society."<sup>2</sup> E.K. Love speaking at a Black National Baptist Convention in 1896 stated; "There is not as bright and glorious future before a Negro in a white institution as there is for him in his own."<sup>3</sup>

Much of the desire for Black control of institutions serving Blacks goes beyond economic exploitation centering on the inability of whites to establish human relationships, and finding its historical roots in racism alone, that is, the inability of those whites working

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<sup>1</sup>McPherson, "White Liberals and Black Power," p. 1369.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1358

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

in Black institutions to move beyond the attitudinal barriers of paternalism and patronage. This is not to say, however, that many Blacks did not desire control of their institutions merely because they were their institutions. Nevertheless, it is found historically that many Blacks resented the patronizing attitudes of whites.

McPherson writes:

Some Negroes resented the patronizing attitude often expressed in the missionary rationale for freedmen's education. 'The colored people are yet children, and need to be taught everything,' proclaimed the secretary of the Methodist Freedman's Aid Society in 1874. 'They need that those more favored should take them by the hand and lead them ... up from debasement and misery into purity and joy.'<sup>4</sup>

Frederick Douglass angered at this kind of paternalism later stated, "We have been injured more than we have been helped by men who have professed to be our friends."<sup>5</sup> In 1883, this theme is reiterated in the Peoples Advocate, a Black newspaper:

...there are very few white men who possess the qualifications of a president of a college where colored men principally are educated.<sup>6</sup>

Carter G. Woodson in 1933 related a personal experience concerning the patronizing attitudes of whites in Black schools.

He writes:

When the author once taught in a school with a mixed faculty the white women connected with the institution would bow to him in a patronizing fashion when on campus, but elsewhere they did not see him. A white president of one Negro school never entertains a Negro in his home preferring to shift such guests to the student's dining-room. Another white president of a Negro college maintains

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Ibid.



on the campus a guest cottage which Negroes can enter only as servants. Still another such functionary does not allow students to enter his home through the front door. Negroes trained under such conditions without protest become down-sight cowards, and in life will continue as slaves in spite of their nominal emancipation.<sup>7</sup>

DuBois, an avowed integrationist, because of the attitudes of whites, was compelled to admit in 1935 that:

... a separate school where children are treated like human beings, trained by teachers of their own race, who know what it means to be black in the year of their salvation 1935, is infinitely better than making our boys and girls doormats to be spit and trampled upon and lied to by ignorant social climbers, whose sole claim to superiority is ability to kick "niggers" when they are down.<sup>8</sup>

It is imperative to note that, as will be later shown in this chapter, the core of the issue over community control of schools changed very little, and that the statements of Douglass, DuBois and Woodson have only been updated by the advocates for community control today. It is found in history as well as today that the basis of the controversy is not education per se, but control over the destiny of Black people by Black people in their struggle for human dignity.

After a long period of suppression, disenchantment, and institutional as well as individual failures, the late 1960's witnessed the resurgence of the struggle for Black Community Power. The spiritual disciples of Bishop Turner, Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, and

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<sup>7</sup>Carter G. Woodson, The Miseducation of the Negro (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 27.

<sup>8</sup>DuBois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools," pp. 328-329.

Malcolm X pierced white and Black public apathy with the dynamics of Black Power. Many ill-informed whites found this expression of socio-economic, psychological, and race struggle frightening and began crying "Black racism." Many Blacks saw it as a badge of dignity. The phrase, "Black Power to you brother" became common. The hair of Black men and women went au naturelle or back to Africa as some Blacks claimed. The phrase "Black is Beautiful" made the once-scorned dark-complexioned Black woman walk proud and pimps began washing out their processes. This period, in essence, was for many a new consciousness, one developed by Elijah Muhammad and his followers in the late 1930's and maintained to the present date. This new Black consciousness finds its roots in the failures of white America to fulfill the rising expectations of Blacks and the struggle for humanity that grew out of the 1954 Supreme Court decision that essentially promised the African-American a share of the pie if he cleaned himself up as opposed to the 1896 Supreme Court decision which said, "You are dirty, Black man stay away."

This new-found Black consciousness is more than Black Power. Black Power essentially is an outgrowth of Black consciousness — it is the more pragmatic facet which functions as the major instrumentality that provides the means of keeping Black consciousness alive. Black consciousness is a totality, an embodiment of the metaphysical and the ontological — it is a way of being, constituting the Black experience in America. Frantz Fanon expressed the essence of Black consciousness when he wrote:

We must leave our dreams and abandon our old beliefs  
and friendships from the time before life began.

Let us waste no time in sterile litanies and nauseating mimicry. Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience. Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Black Power has been the primary concern to date that is controlling institutions to keep Black consciousness alive. The contention of many social analysts is that the "new" Black demands are the result of unfulfilled rising expectations. This analysis may in fact be correct, however it is too narrow because it only speaks to material needs. The piece of the pie-in-the-sky assumption presupposes that once the colonial is "given" a slice he will be happy. It does not take into account what not only has happened to many Blacks, but what is happening to many whites as well in the dehumanizing process of the total technological society. Consequently, the demands of Blacks move beyond the material. This is expressed in the title of Preston Wilcox's article, "Education for Black Humanism: A Way of approaching It". In this article Wilcox writes:

To fail to educate for humanism is merely to gradualize the destruction of black people and to turn black people against each other. To fail to respond to this imperative is to educate blacks to participate in the destruction of their own identities and cultures - and to substitute the oppressor's values for their own.<sup>10</sup>

The struggle for control of educational institutions by Black moves beyond the material realm into the human realm and confronts the

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<sup>9</sup>Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 311.

<sup>10</sup>Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism," p. 11.

American value realm where it is sorely lacking. Realizing this, many Blacks contend that they are the only ones who care about what happens to them or their children; therefore, they must assume full responsibility. The rhythmical phrase of 1885, "Home rule for our colored schools" was replaced with community control of schools. After their experience in the South, Carmichael and Hamilton wrote in 1967:

Black parents should seek as their goal the actual control of the public schools in their community: hiring and firing of teachers, selection of teaching materials, determination of standards.<sup>11</sup>

This mood had certainly begun to spread among Black educators. At the third annual Black Power Conference in 1968, the following position paper was submitted:

**Position Paper: Community Control**

The present educational system, dominated and controlled by racist concepts and values is dehumanizing. The present educational system has failed to achieve its own goals which include literacy and the development of marketable skills for the masses of American youth. The only viable solution to the problem facing Black youth is that the Black community must exercise the power to control the education processes through local community control of:

1. Expenditures of funds - local, state and federal
2. Hiring and firing of all staff - including training and re-programming
3. Site selection and naming of schools
4. Design and construction of schools - awarding and supervising contracts.
5. Purchasing power for books, supplies, equipment, food services, etc
6. Setting up education policy, school and community - curricular and educational programs and activities
7. Merit pay to staff - increments and salary based on effective performance alone.

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<sup>11</sup> Carmichael and Hamilton, Black Power, p. 47.

These measures can be achieved through joint efforts in:

1. Mobilizing community concern in regard to the need for community control, and
2. Training of community people to effectively participate in the new process of community control of our schools.

Specific strategies must be defined by local communities and strengthened through a national network of communication for strategy, support and action.<sup>12</sup>

At the Black Ministers - Teachers Conference in Detroit, Michigan the following Declaration of Black Teachers was adopted on April 27, 1968:

We maintain that the present system of education is not organized for the benefit of Black youth. We have collectively dedicated ourselves to the following commandments which we recommend to all Black teachers:

1. We shall know no other loyalty than to the children we teach
2. We shall create no false images of loyalty for them
3. We shall not defend our own inadequacies by blaming our children
4. We shall labor six days and nights devoting our talents and energies to our responsibilities to the children we teach
5. We shall honor the mothers and fathers of our children
6. We shall not kill the minds and bodies of our children with underestimations of their worth and the worth of Black people
7. We shall not adulterate our instruction but shall enrich it with the aim of developing Black youth who will be of service to the Black community
8. We shall not steal their time and energies in busy work or in activities designed to promote middle class white values and goals
9. We shall not bear witness against our children nor against our fellow Black teachers but shall do our best to lift from the hell of ignorance, confusion and despair in which a racist society has placed them
10. We shall not covet that status in society which will serve to isolate us from our goals and those of the Black community.

We earnestly seek the cooperation and assistance of those

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<sup>12</sup>Foresight, Vol I (February, 1969) No. 3.

who work with Black youth in the formulation and immediate implementation of a program to achieve these goals.<sup>13</sup>

The demand for community control per se is not new to the general American scene. Historically, it can be found to have played an important part in the development of American education. Many of the earliest laws pertaining to education in America made it mandatory that communities of the Massachusetts Bay Colony establish publicly supported, community controlled schools. For example, in 1647 one such law stated:

It is therefore ordered, that every towneship in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to a number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their towne to teach all such children as shall resort to write and reade, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general.<sup>14</sup>

Jack E. Williams writes:

Two centuries later, Horace Mann is echoing the same sentiments in the midst of a rising number of immigrants and the true beginnings of industrialization and urbanization. He states, '... in every district of every town in the Commonwealth, there should be a free district school, sufficiently good, for all the children within its territory.' Mann, and other advocates of the common school movement were less fearful of local community involvement than they were of community apathy.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the idea of community control or involvement is not new. Its roots grow deep into American history and the attempts on the part of Blacks to gain control of schools are deeply imbedded in the American tradition. This being true, why, then, the opposition to Blacks'

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> David B. Tyack, ed., American Educational History (Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1967), p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Jack Williams, "The Unionization of Teacher," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State Universtiy, 1969), pp. 65-66.

attempts at community control of schools? Is it due to racism? Or to economic interest? Or to job insecurity? Or to the age-old American belief that Blacks are not ready yet? Or due to the idea that in a society, where power is being centralized, local control is an inexpedient tactic for educational improvement? In the following chapter of Ocean Hill-Brownsville an attempt will be made to answer some of these questions.

## CHAPTER IX

### OCEAN HILL-BROWNSVILLE: THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY DENIED

Ocean Hill-Brownsville, located in the middle of Bedford-Stuyvesant, is one of the largest Black communities in America. Geographically and populationwise, it is almost as large as Harlem. Rhody McCoy, elected unit administrator of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, describes it as comprising "two deplorable ghettos". It is peopled by 70 per cent Black and 25 per cent Puerto Rican. Levine writes, "It is a black slum, suffering all the social ills of deprivation, disease, and despair, pockmarked by abandoned buildings and broken storefronts."<sup>1</sup> There are 9,000 students, 540 teachers and 35 administrators in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. In the total system of New York, less than two per cent of the administrators and only eight per cent of the total teaching staff is Black. Of the total 950 schools, only ten have Black custodians. In the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, specifically, the annual income per family head is less than \$5,000 for more than 50 per cent of the total families counted. The average reading level for this area is one or more years lower than that of the state norm. According to Rhody McCoy, "Out of our nine-thousand children, six-thousand are two or three years

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<sup>1</sup> Levine, Schools in Crisis, p. 31.



academically retarded."<sup>2</sup> Attempts have been made to change this situation by both academic and racial means. For example, programs such as Higher Horizons, Reading Readiness, Second Chance, Intensive Reading programs, More Effective Schools (MES) and others were instituted, to no avail. Ten years after the Supreme Court ruling outlawing school segregation, a report submitted by the New York State Education Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community stated:

Nothing undertaken by the New York City Board of Education since 1954 and nothing proposed since 1963 has contributed or will contribute in any meaningful degree to desegregating the public schools of the city.<sup>3</sup>

Not until 1966 did the Board of Education open its new showcase school, Intermediate School 201 (I.S. 201) in a largely Negro and Puerto Rican section of East Harlem (in its original design it was to have been an integrated school). The school was established in accordance with a school reorganization plan, aimed at achieving some degree of integration in the city school system, submitted by New York State Commissioner of Education, James E. Allen, Jr. The traditional six year elementary school, three year junior high school, and three year high school was to be replaced with an elementary school, beginning with prekindergarten through fourth grade, an intermediate school fifth through the eighth grade, and a four year comprehensive

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<sup>2</sup>Rhody McCoy, "Why We Have An Ocean Hill-Brownsville," in What Black Educators Are Saying, ed. by Wright, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup>"Decentralization: Waiting for Something to Turn Up," The Center Forum, Vol. 2, No. 2, August 28, 1967, p. 1, quoted in Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 12.

high school. The elementary schools would remain neighborhood schools, which meant be segregated. The intermediate and high schools were to be zoned to permit some degree of integration. To achieve this, they were to be built in fringe areas on the borders of Black and white neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup>

Integration, however, never came. The recommendation for school construction on the fringe areas went unheeded and took place in the heart of Harlem— again, all Black schools. Various community groups who saw integrated education as the hope for educational improvement for Black students were outraged. They saw segregation being promoted by the Board of Education, not integration. It is interesting that even the United Federation of Teachers, (U.F.T.), which later opposed the community in the call for Black control of schools, supported the Black community on integration. The U.F.T. stated:

Having been promised by the Board of Education that the school would be integrated, parents of children there soon found that they had been betrayed and that the school would remain segregated. Mounting frustration coupled with the increasingly obvious fact that children were not learning soon led to a translation of the original demand for integration into one for "local control!"<sup>5</sup>

Verbally at least, the U.F.T. was ideologically with the community on integration. The split in ideology came in 1966 when

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<sup>4</sup>Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Eugenia Kemble, "New York's Experiments in School Decentralization: A Look at Three Projects," United Federation of Teachers, 1968, p. 2 quoted in Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 13.

the Black community abandoned the idea of integration and began struggling for community control. This could be construed as a kind of limited separatist position, which in fact it was. The rationale was that if Blacks were to have segregated schools, they should also control them.

Because of the anathema associated with segregated education, hopes were high for integrated education. To many Blacks, whites were successful because of the education which they received. To some extent the higher scores achieved by Blacks on educational tests in "integrated" schools lends credence to the above position. Whether or not this is true is not within the scope of this study. However, one comment should be made. Most Black students who perform well in the so-called integrated school would not be impaired in their academic performances in any other school setting, integrated or segregated. This is to say that the question of whether integrated education, as it now stands, is of academic benefit to Black children remains open.

Abandoning the hope for "integration," Black parents in Harlem began a boycott in 1966 of the newly constructed I.S. 201 in an effort to gain community control. The school was closed for a week. To add confusion to an already chaotic situation, a white principal was appointed to the school. Parents began demanding a Black principal for a more suitable image for their children. "From that point on," writes Grace Boggs, "the struggle for Black power in education has centered around the demand for community control of schools."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Grace Boggs, "Toward A New System of Education," in What Black Educators Are Saying, ed. by Wright, p. 189.

The controversy over I.S. 201 forced the central Board of Education to seek "alternative solutions to involve the community."<sup>7</sup>

On October 20, 1966, the Central Board of Education made known its plan "to experiment with varying forms of decentralization and community involvement."<sup>8</sup> As Levine points out in her book Schools in Crisis, the Board used the term "involvement" not "community control."<sup>9</sup>

Levine's recognition of this is noteworthy because the Black community was quite aware of the difference between decentralization and community control. Wilcox, chief consultant to the I.S. 201 community, made the difference clear:

School Decentralization should be distinguished from Community Control; the former turns the school into a subsystem, a branch, that is, with no measurable restructuring of the relationship between it and the central board. Community Control should represent a redistribution of power with a set of exclusive powers being assigned to the local community boards.<sup>10</sup>

The inevitable increased hostility between the central Board and the community was easily predictable because of its initial posture of involvement, not control.

Nevertheless, acceding to the pressures of the Black community, in 1967 the Board of Education began "to explore specific areas and procedures to encourage community involvement in school affairs."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>The Center Forum, p. 1, quoted in Levine, School In Crisis, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Foresight, p. v.

<sup>11</sup>The Center Forum, quoted in Levine, Schools in Crisis.

The Board began examining various proposals on decentralization, acting, however, on none of them. McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation, who on his own had already begun an exploration with various Black groups in the I.S. 201 community, wanted a different kind of educational managerial system. He learned that:

If this was to be a predominantly Negro school, they said they wanted a Negro principal and a say in what the school would teach.<sup>12</sup>

Parents wanted to become school trustees, to have the right to hire their own staff and administrators. In essence, the Black community wanted Black control of its schools.

The Board of Education, however, did not act on decentralization until after it had discovered that the state was allocating more money to schools for decentralizing. The Nation's Schools wrote:

The idea found official support after a city commission reported that the city's schools would receive more state money if the system were broken down into five districts, one for each borough.<sup>13</sup>

The increase in state funds came as a result of Mayor John A. Lindsay's negotiations with the state legislature. The new plan submitted by the Mayor was that in the allocation of funds New York be regarded as five separate districts, not as a single administrative entity. The logic behind this was that state aid to the various school districts is based on the value of the real estate in a particular district, the higher the real estate assessment the lower the state aid. Consequently, the assessed valuation of New York, when treated as a

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<sup>12</sup>Nation's Schools, Vol. 83, No. 1 (January, 1969), p. 27.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

single entity, made it eligible for only a minimum grant to be divided among five boroughs equitably. Areas needing additional monies were unable to receive them through the traditional means of state allocation. Levine writes, "If state aid were to be computed by considering each borough separately, however, the city would be entitled to receive an addition \$108 million annually."<sup>14</sup>

The Mayor's new plan for state financial aid was not received by the state legislature with enthusiasm. The legislature felt that if the Mayor wanted the various districts to be regarded as separate de jure they would have to become separate school districts de facto, creating five separate powerful bureaucracies instead of one. This plan was quickly abandoned and a compromise plan instituted. Levine writes:

Instead, on March 30, 1967, it passed a compromise plan (Chapter 484 of the Session Laws of 1967) which asked the Mayor to submit by December 1 of that year a plan to decentralize the New York City schools. On the receipt of an acceptable decentralization plan, the city would receive \$54 million (not \$108 million) in extra state aid.<sup>15</sup>

Three views emerged around decentralization. The Mayor saw decentralization as a means of getting more money from the legislature; the Board of Education saw it as a means of getting more money and as an administrative device for more community involvement, which would in turn placate a group of angry Black parents clamoring for total control; the Black community's concern was with neither. It merely

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<sup>14</sup>Memorandum, Mayor's Advisory Panel on Decentralization of the New York City Schools, July 1967, p. 1 quoted in Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup>Notes and Comments, The New Yorker, September 21, 1968, p. 39 quoted in ibid., p. 17.

wanted to control its schools regardless of the administrative breakdown. Therefore, the struggle was being waged on three levels -- the political level, the school level, and the community level.

The law which the legislature passed reads in its preamble:

Increased community awareness and participation in the educational process is essential to the furtherance of educational innovation and excellence in the public school system within the city of New York. The legislature hereby finds and declares that the creation of educational policy units within the city school district of the City of New York with the formulation of educational policy for the public schools within such district to "take a more active and meaningful role in the development of educational policy closely related to the diverse needs and aspirations of the community."<sup>16</sup>

The Ford Foundation, after conducting its own investigation under the leadership of McGeorge Bundy, agreed to work with the Board of Education in implementing and financing a means for meeting the demands of the Black community in increasing the community's participation in the I.S. 201 district. The Ford Foundation went even further and was prepared to extend the experiment to include two other districts. Ford offered the New York City Board of Education a sum of \$139,000 for "planning grants" for three experimental projects which was to include the I.S. 201 district in Harlem, the Two Bridges section on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district in Brooklyn. The Board and Ford Foundation mutually agreed on these three areas primarily because local community organizations already existed within these areas to devise means for achieving community control.

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<sup>16</sup> News Release, "Mayor's Advisory Panel...", p. 4, quoted in Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 17.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the experimental district that truly tested the sincerity of the Board of Education on "community involvement," was to become a school district of hostility and frustration, born of resentment of the Board of Education, which was jealously guarding its domain from Mayoral encroachment, and teacher disenchantment. For Ocean Hill-Brownsville, with a comparatively long history in the struggle for community involvement in school affairs, such strife was not unfamiliar. Levine writes of this history:

That such a community should cry out for change was an inevitable expectation. As far back as 1966, the United Federation of Teachers had been working with Ocean Hill parents in picketing demonstrations and other joint actions which had succeeded in winning certain special services for the district and in ousting a junior high school principal who had been found wanting by both parents and teachers. It was in Ocean Hill, too, that the Rev. Milton Galamison had led the demand in 1967 for community control of a newly constructed school, I.S. 550. In February, 1967 four months before the Ford Foundation's formal offer to the central Board of Education and five months before the Board formally created the decentralization experiments, a small group in Ocean Hill began to meet to plan "for some means to participate more directly in school affairs." The nucleus of this group was the local unit of the Council Against Poverty and members of Brooklyn C.O.R.E. ...<sup>17</sup>

The fact that the Ford Foundation offered money and the Board of Education sanctioned community participation was a welcoming sign to the Black community, which had already engaged in the activity without the support of either.

In 1967 the Board accepted its planning groups and gave formal recognition to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, and the Ford Foundation awarded a grant of \$14,000 to Father Powis' church for the establishment of an experimental decentralized school district.

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<sup>17</sup>The Center Forum, quoted in Levine, Schools in Crisis, p. 3.



The Ocean Hill-Brownsville planning committee was instructed to develop a set of proposals delineating its powers and functions and present them to the Board. From this point on, the growing disenchantment of the teachers would culminate in open hostility between the United Federation of Teachers and the Black community, bringing the union of two rivals, the Board and the U.F.T., as will be shown later.

Nevertheless, the three experimental districts were divided into administrative units, with Rhody McCoy elected as unit administrator by the local governing board for the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district which was retroactively sanctioned by the Board of Education. As its first assignment, the local governing board undertook to appoint eight principals to replace eight who chose to leave at the beginning of the experiment. McCoy selected four blacks principals two Puerto Ricans, one Chinese, and one white, none of whom were on the eligibility list for elementary school principals. However, all eight did have certification for the position of principal in the state of New York. In setting forth the criteria for selection, the local governing board contended that selection was based on experience, intimate knowledge, cultural background and, mainly, on what the local governing boards felt the schools needed personally.

McCoy stated:

The reason for my selections has been based on a number of criteria - people who have demonstrated particular abilities in programs and people who fit a situation rather than just arbitrarily taking a number. For instance, the community around one of these particular schools is predominantly Puerto Rican. Hence the characteristics and qualifications of this particular gentleman, Mr. Tuente, fit the bill. And he was selected on this basis.

He meets state certification, and this is another way of selecting people which we think is more appropriate. We're actually selecting people fitted to a given school system.<sup>18</sup>

The Board of Education went along with the appointments, creating the new position of "demonstration school principal" and "demonstration unit administrator," all of whom were nominated by the local community. However, the Council of Supervisory Associations, representing principals and assistant principals, did not see fitting the people to a given system as important as meeting the traditional requirements of the merit system. The Council of Supervisory Associations challenged the appointments in the courts on the grounds that the principals were not among the top three on the eligibility list. The Council also challenged the appointment of the unit administrator. The principals, assistant principals, and supervisors saw the Council's move as a double threat, job security and mobility. Whether or not Black and Puerto Rican children would receive a better education was not the prime concern.

The fact that the Council challenged the Board and the powers of the community is an interesting phenomenon in and of itself. Though the Council challenged the new Board policies, it in essence challenged the Black and Puerto Rican communities. It was actually asking for the retention of the very system the local communities saw as oppressive. If the experimental projects were to succeed the idea of decentralization could have spread throughout the entire city.

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<sup>18</sup>Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 47.

That would mean the possibility of a complete breakdown in the traditional system, and those holding supervisory positions might lose all they had worked for in climbing the ladder of educational meritocracy. Many teachers supported the Council for they too, felt threatened and many teachers had vested interests in the status quo, not educational innovation. Viewed from a racial perspective, the challenge could be seen as a means of denying Blacks the right of entry into the mainstream of American life through education and the continued maintenance of marginality. Blacks were denied the right to integrate and now were being denied the right to separate. As was shown earlier in this paper, throughout America's history this has been the repeated position in which whites have held Blacks. The question of race becomes even more significant, especially since the student population in the urban ghettos is becoming increasingly Black and almost 98 per cent of the administrators are white.

Although the suit brought against the Board of Education by the Council was not upheld, it did mark the beginning of an uphill struggle for community control. Levine noted:

Whether this will provide the flexibility that the central Board wants and the local boards demand remains uncertain. Should the state legislature fail to abolish the New York City Board of examiners and the rank-list system, either as part of total decentralization plan or as independent pieces of legislation, the scope of the Court of Appeals decision may be of greater importance than appears at the moment.<sup>19</sup>

Levine points out the grounds upon which the teachers and the Council would move together to control local governing board powers:

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

The enduring importance of this case lies in the fact that it brought into the open the growing hostility between the teacher's union and the local governing board over hiring procedures and thus served as a prelude to the strike that followed.<sup>20</sup>

Teacher disenchantment with the local governing board began early in the decentralization experiment. Signs of growing antagonism on the part of the teachers appeared when some teachers claimed that they were not included in the formulation of the original proposal outlining the powers and functions of the local governing board. The disenchantment mushroomed into open hostility when the teachers struck for twelve days. At this time the teachers were striking for an increase in pay, reduced class sizes, and the expansion of the More Effective School programs. While on strike, the local governing board tried to keep the school open, totally disregarding union pressure. According to the Niemeyer Report:

At the same time the teachers lodged serious complaints against the project board and its administrative staff, charging lack of community support for their walkout as well as the fact that the Planning Council did not listen or consult with the teachers' representatives.<sup>21</sup>

Levine reported that the disenchantment escalated to a crisis between the local community and the U.F.T. when McCoy transferred nineteen teachers. She concluded that McCoy was not within his legal rights, nor was he tactful in what he did. In essence, she contends that confrontation between the local board and the teachers could have been avoided had McCoy taken a different course of action. For example, Levine states:

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<sup>20</sup>ibid.

<sup>21</sup>The Niemeyer Report, Chapter III, p. 22 quoted in ibid.

Under the By-laws, the power to grant or deny requests for transfers, voluntary or involuntary, rests with the superintendent of schools. The discretion is entirely his.<sup>22</sup>

Of a different course of action for McCoy, she states:

For it is clear that if Rhody McCoy had merely wanted to move some unwanted teachers out of his district he could have done so without provoking the U.F.T. and angering vast segments of the general public.<sup>23</sup>

Because of her attempt to establish who was right and who was wrong, Levine's account of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville struggle with the U.F.T. and its allies becomes simplistic. For example, Boggs' account of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville crisis gives a more intimate account of the struggle from the community's perspective and views the total situation as a continuation of the Black Power struggle for self-determination necessitated by racism and oppression. Right and wrong presupposes an established criteria upon which both groups have agreed. Levine's judgements are based on educational laws and By-laws, the criteria which originally established the colonial relationship between the Blacks and whites. Consequently, any act committed by the Black community would be seen as violative of standing procedures.

Boggs noted:

Two very fundamental conflicts are here involved. First, there is the conflict between the community's rights and powers and the teachers rights and powers. Secondly, because the teachers are overwhelmingly white and the community overwhelmingly Black, there is the race conflict.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 53.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>24</sup>Boggs, "Toward A New System of Education," p. 190.

For example, the evidence of a Black-white power struggle becomes quite clear when we find traditional enemies such as the Board of Education and the teachers' union uniting in a common effort to undermine the experimental project. Education, job security, and right and wrong procedures are issues, not causes. As was shown in this paper, in numerous cases of Black history in America, Blacks have learned that liberals and conservatives only differ pragmatically when it comes to race. This is not to deny that other attendant social factors are not important or that community control per se or job security are not issues. However, even at this point certain peculiar circumstances show the irrationality of this position. Rural areas and a vast number of suburban areas already operate on the basis of community control. When Blacks attempt to exercise powers of any kind it becomes "reverse-racism," as in the case of Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X, or anti-Semitism as in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville struggle. This is despite the fact that even though McCoy terminated the employment of many Jewish teachers who conducted a strike in behalf of the nineteen teachers opposing the local governing board, he rehired mostly Jews. In terms of job security, Williams moves closer to the heart of the problem. He writes of job security and teacher values that:

While job security may be a problem in this situation, it is less important when the teacher and the school board share the values, interests, and attitudes of the community. Thus, it is not community control per se that necessarily threatens the job security of teachers. It is only when the values of the teacher and/or the school board conflict with those of the community that job security becomes an important issue.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Williams, "The Unionization of Teachers," p. 67.

Though Levine maintained that the "real crisis" began with McCoy's transferring out nineteen teachers and administrators, it should be noted that the local governing board met with the Mayor, union officials, the State Commissioners of Education, the Board of Education and the superintendent of schools to mediate what was growing into a desperate situation. The local board was searching for a means of getting out of the district the nineteen teachers who were the leaders in opposition and for a means of dealing with the teachers and administrators who refused to teach and were in sympathy with the Council of Supervisory Associations. Finally, amid confusion, the Board of Education sanctioned the transfer. The real chaos came when 350 of the 550 teachers walked out in protest against the Board's action.

Acquiescing to union pressure, the Board hired a Negro to give an "impartial" examination to the nineteen teachers, and as could be predicted, they were found competent. This tactic inflamed the local Black community even more. In essence the Board was saying to the local community that, "Even one of your own kind says they are okay!" To add further insult, the Board paid the 350 teachers in full for the six weeks they refused to teach and the city administration supplied police to ensure the safe return of the nineteen to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, despite the expressed determination of the Black community to keep them out. Furthermore, prior to the transfer of the nineteen teachers, a group of U.F.T. members and members of the Council of Supervisory Associations were in Albany lobbying not only against the experimental districts but also against decentralization of any kind. It was stated

in the Niemeyer report:

Under normal circumstances, the demonstration project might have been able to accomplish the transfer of "unsatisfactory" personnel informally, but a larger struggle was being waged in the New York State Legislature over a general proposal to decentralize the entire school system.<sup>26</sup>

The above quote reflects not only the reports own bias, but the biases found in the reporting in general. First, "normal circumstances" means the status quo. Any act of the local governing board that smacked of any kind of autonomy had to be crushed by the U.F.T. and the Council because it would violate "normal circumstances." Second, as far as the Black community was concerned "circumstances" have never been "normal!" The struggle in the local Black communities has been a continuous one, beginning with remedial programs, then integration, and finally a quasi kind of separation — all of which have failed. Third, "normal circumstances" in education for Blacks means essentially no education or tokenism. This pattern has been reflected throughout American history. At the University of Wisconsin in 1969, McCoy was asked whether or not the newspapers portrayed the fundamental issues in the school dispute. He responded:

Didn't portray them at all. The situation is in fact that the schools serving black kids have not educated the kids. The press didn't give us that advantage, so that those who needed a reason could say, "I'm with you." What they did say was here's some militants out there. They create pandemonium. No community in the history of the country ever suffered like this one ... over education, man!<sup>27</sup>

In some seventeen newspaper articles and twenty-one magazine

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<sup>26</sup>The Niemeyer Report, Chap. I, p. 95 quoted in Levine, Schools In Crisis, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup>McCoy, "Why We Have An Ocean Hill-Brownsville," pp. 257-258.



articles reviewed for this study, not one treated in depth the real issue from a Black perspective. The Black perspective was treated in depth only in Black news releases and magazines. Blacks saw education as the primary issue. However, this began changing, as is reflected in an interview with McCoy:

If anyone walking the streets of New York is under the impression that the teachers are on strike over an educational issue, he is<sup>28</sup> grossly misinformed. The issues are politics and labor.

McCoy is correct within the political and labor realm of the issues; however, he would rightly have charged blatant racism. For example, the U.F.T. formed a partnership with other anti-union groups to subvert the efforts of the local community to gain responsibility for the education of its own children. This collaboration began with the efforts of citywide supervisor's association, the gatekeepers of the bureaucracy, to block the introduction of more principals from minority groups. Certainly the union was not without the knowledge that out of 900 principals there are only five Blacks, no Puerto Ricans, and no Chinese. Nevertheless, the union, which finds the origin of its "leadership in liberal and socialist" parties, never went on strike for this educational cognitive deficit. The consummate conservatism (racism) of the U.F.T. was openly displayed when it formed a marriage with the most anti-labor elements among the Democratic and Republican party state legislators. The formation of this bloc occurred when the U.F.T. won a battle to prevent community control of schools in the state legislature. The "irony" of it all is that this bloc was formed with those same legislators who were

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<sup>28</sup> "Decentralization Agony at Ocean Hill-Brownsville," Nation Schools LXXVIII (January, 1969), 94.

responsible a year earlier for the passage of the anti-strike Taylor law. Of course a few weeks later the U.F.T. extended electoral support to these same legislators.<sup>29</sup> This confirms an old axiom in the Black community that whites cannot get together on anything except race.

The question of education seldom entered the picture. When questioned about the low achievement scores of Black students, the teachers invariably exonerated themselves by blaming the students for having psycho-social deficits or cognitive deficits. The arguments usually invoked were either cultural deprivation or poor working conditions.<sup>30</sup> For example, most teachers agree that poverty and racism are significant factors affecting the education of ghetto children. They describe Black children as being culturally deprived, underprivileged, or socially disadvantaged. Yet, teacher strikes rarely if ever deal with these issues. For example, no teacher strikes were ever held to protest the Board's not hiring enough Black administrators. Nor was a strike ever held for a guaranteed annual wage for the poor. Nor has there ever been a strike against racism in education. On the contrary, the teachers have struck for higher wages, smaller class loads, safety from disruptive children, pensions and remedial instruction.<sup>31</sup> Though teachers did strike against the Board of Education in New York City for not constructing the I.S. 201 school in the fringe areas to promote integration, this is suspect because of teachers' union history of self-interest. It would seem

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<sup>29</sup>Stephen Zeluck, "The UFT Strike: Will It Destory the AFT," Phi Delta Kappan, I (January, 1969) 251-254.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Williams, "The Unionization of Teachers."

that the teachers knew that if integration did not work, community control was next; furthermore, they had never struck in behalf of integration prior to that time. It was also a chance for them to attack the Board and give the Black community the illusion that the union was on its side.

The union's failure support the Black community created a wider chasm between the Black community and the white teachers. It also caused a split in its own ranks between the Black and white teachers. Many Black teachers who identify with the Black community have formed their own organization in New York, the Afro-American Teachers Association; The goals and objectives outlined by the Afro-American Teachers Association are diametrically opposed to the self-interest of the present teachers' union (See Black Position Paper.) The failure of the union to keep pace with the changing ideas in the Black community is also a contributing factor. Zeluck writes:

The absolute lack of relevant education for the poor of all races and the rising consciousness of Blacks are factors which have combined into an explosive mixture which make teaching, especially along conventional lines, a frustrating, hazardous occupation.<sup>32</sup>

The demoralizing and frustrating situation of which Zeluck speaks has more to do with the union's pursuit of goals other than those of the people whom they serve than with the lack of relevant education. The lack of relevancy in education is not unique to ghetto schools; this has been made quite clear by such men as Bernard Mehl, Dave Chandler, Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenbergr and others. The major disenchantment mainly stems from teachers who are unable to overcome

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<sup>32</sup>Phi Delta Kappan, 252.

their own inhumanity. This is clearly shown when one examines what began as a mere experiment in education and ended in a conflict that should never have started. The extent to which the U.F.T., C.A.S., city administration, State Legislators, and others went probably formed one of the most elaborate displays of combined institutional racism in the history of America.

Hamilton and Carmichael wrote:

Black people in the United States must raise hard questions which challenge the very nature of the society itself; it's long-standing values, beliefs, and institutions.<sup>33</sup>

Cleaver charged; "...school teachers and college professors are seen as a clique of brainwashers and whitewashers."<sup>34</sup>

The above quotes reflect in almost picturesque fashion what the Black and Puerto Rican communities of Ocean Hill-Brownsville did and said. It requires no profound analysis to recognize that the U.F.T.'s use of words like "professionalism" and "due process" were diversive tactics to preserve the present value system.

These criticisms are not an attempt to blame educational institutions specifically. They in no way have reacted any differently from other white institutions in America, be they industrial or social. James Forman's indictment of the religious institutions in America yielded essentially the same responses as criticisms of the educational institutions. Americans are guilty of racism, from the white ditchdigger to the president. Use of teachers in this paper was merely to show that if an institution so large as education — in which many Blacks have so

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<sup>33</sup>Hamilton and Carmichael, quoted in Knowles and Prewitt Institutional Racism, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup>Phi Delta Kappan , 249.

much faith— could have foregone its personal, selfish self-interest and aligned itself with the Black struggle for self-determination and human dignity, depolarization of Black and white America could have begun. Education failed to do this.

As was mentioned in the beginning of this study, the struggle began, at least in a formal sense, with an experiment in 1881 under a man named Booker T. Washington. It started with the help of white philanthropists. The basic philosophy of Washington was termed accommodationism, which simply meant "We can go it alone, do not antagonize the whites with political agitation; the right to vote and mingle socially will come once we prove through hard work and education that we can become invaluable to America." W.E.B. DuBois studied Washington's program and saw it going nowhere. In the main, white opposition, which denied Washington entry into industry to learn about new machinery so that he could keep pace with the advancing technology, forced the institution into obsolescence.

DuBois adopted a posture in the tradition of Frederick Douglass — agitation for political and civil rights, complete integration of Black and white. He discovered this position was no more effective than Washington's. However, he too, felt that the Black man needed to be educated first. He developed the Talented Tenth concept only to find the educated Black alienated from both Black and white America.

DuBois differed with Washington on a number of issues, among which was education as a means of liberation. The rejection of Washington's total emphasis on industrial education was expressed when DuBois stated that the goal of education was not to make carpenters of

men but to make men carpenters. Though the debate continued, DuBois was to discover in the end that the awesome forces of racism would not permit his integrationism to flourish regardless of how well a Black man could mimic a white man. In the end, he, too, expressed the same concerns as those of Washington, though economically different. He turned inward to the segregated Negro Economy as he saw the hope for integration fade before his eyes.

Black nationalism came full bloom with the appearance of Marcus Garvey and his "Back to Africa" movement. For the disenchanted masses a glint of hope arose with the emergence of this new leader who rejected integration and DuBois' Talented Tenth concept. Embracing much of Washington's philosophy and moving ahead with DuBois' Pan-Africanism idea, he mobilized vast numbers of Blacks to develop their own economy and open trade with the brothers in Africa. Garvey formed the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) only to find that like Washington and DuBois, he too would fail. Not because of internal friction, as many like to claim, but because white America said "No!"

Elijah Muhammad, an avowed separatist with a Zion, has taken the Booker T. Washington economic and educational program, updated, and is traveling the same route. Though he has done well for a few, time will tell. Despite his demonstrated proof that he is able to take any Black man and make him a decent, nondrinking, nonsmoking mathematician, the federal government refused to loan him money to develop his program. As was mentioned earlier, white racists in Alabama destroyed his cattle and his attempts to build an agricultural-industrial complex. The survival of Muhammad, thus far, can be contributed to Allah and relative obscurity.

Malcolm X, who found his beginning with Muhammad, left the Black Muslims and reiterated DuBois' argument for liberation and brought the attention of the Black man's plight to a world level. He was assassinated.

Martin Luther King reinvoked the old argument of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on integration with the added feature of nonviolence. This was not new either. Roy Wilkins and others picketed and boycotted in the 1950's. King through God and nonviolence tried to prick the American conscience. He, too, was assassinated, along with countless others who tried to integrate housing, jobs, and schools.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and others can be traced directly to their forefathers, Washington and DuBois, in their civil right and economic struggles.

The Black Panthers, militant integrationists in the beginning, have their roots in Black American thought, also — Frederick Douglass, David Walker, DuBois, and many others. The Panthers differ from their predecessors, excluding DuBois, primarily in their notion of a more socialistic form of government. The Panthers, too, were to experience death, jail, and abuse. Today little is heard of them. Huey P. Newton says he is returning to the Black community, Eldridge Cleaver is in exile, and Bobby Seale is in jail.

The Supreme Court with its 1954 decision outlawing segregation raised the hopes of Blacks once again for integration. Only today Blacks find that schools are more segregated than before 1954. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for example, the Pennsylvania Commission

on Human Relations ordered prompt and total desegregation for the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school systems, by massive intracity busing if necessary. As of today, the Philadelphia schools are more than 60 per cent Black and increasing. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders stated that in a few years schools in the inner cities will be predominantly Black. Thus, with the white's continuous flight to the suburbs, exercising white local control (separate municipalities), the neighborhood concept for schools, and the outlawing of busing in many states, integration is not likely to come for many centuries. If the pattern of movement continues on its present course, if the white educators, white members of boards of education and white administrators continue to maintain control of Black institutions in the inner city, they will find themselves aliens in another country, pointing up even more blantly the colonial relationship between Blacks and whites.

Stokely Carmichael's life thus far parallels that of DuBois — at first, an avowed integrationist, then a separatist, and now a Pan-Africanist. Similar to DuBois' late positions, Carmichael has embraced scientific socialism as a means of severing the colonial relationship between Blacks and whites. Studying with two of the most gifted revolutionary theorists today, Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure of Africa, he sees the liberation of Black people in America as part of a total world struggle for Black people. Stokely's contention is that the liberation of Africa is paramount in the liberation of all Black people.

Whether Blacks go abroad or remain in America in their struggle for human dignity, whites must realize it is also their struggle. As was



shown in the case of Ocean Hill-Brownsville the burden has been totally carried by Blacks. Thus, Ocean Hill-Brownsville has brought the Black man in America full circle in his struggle for human dignity through education. Booker T. Washington started his experiment in Tuskegee, Alabama with the help of white philanthropists, just as Rhody McCoy did with Ocean Hill-Brownsville. Though the institution remains standing in Tuskegee, the dream of the so-called accommodationist that the Black man in America would find his rightful place in America through hard work and education never materialized. Ocean Hill-Brownsville remains. McCoy is away studying and the talk of decentralization and community control no longer claims the headlines of the newspapers. Just as Booker T. Washington was called an "Uncle Tom" by his more disenchanted contemporaries, men such as Rhody McCoy are being called by their more disenchanted contemporaries, bourgeois reactionary Black nationalists with a stake in a decadent system. Accommodationism has failed. Integrationism has failed. Separatism has failed. Martin Luther King asked the question: "Where do we go from here?"

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

An assessment of Black thought relative to the so-called integration versus separation controversy among Blacks themselves, if examined from a Black perspective, should reveal the moods, thoughts, and actions of a group of people living in a racist class society where vertical mobility (change in status from slave to citizen) has been totally denied. This isolation in the main has not produced a Black collective suffering from cognitive or psycho-social deficits. On the contrary, the isolation has impelled Blacks to communicate with each other, moving them toward a Black consciousness that sees the ridiculousness of a static white racist world and their own folly of imitation. Integration and separation are white concepts and have very little to do with the Black man's struggle for human dignity.

Through my own experiences and studies, I have come to recognize that integration and separation are not choices; they are white alternatives having absolutely nothing to do with human dignity. Blackness is being. When it struggles against whiteness, logically or otherwise, it, Blackness, runs the risk of losing humanity. I have a very difficult time coming to grips with this delicate situation — the struggle to gain needed power and the retention of humanity. Therefore, the following assessment of this investigation will reveal many contradictions that are more in me than anything else.

Historical research reveals what appears on the surface a continuing controversy among Blacks. This interpretation is correct, but its narrowness fails to take into consideration two major dynamics: The internal dialectic among Blacks forms a synthesis of new Black Consciousness and the avoidance of a dialectic between Black and white America, avoiding what Frantz Fanon called bilateral liberation.

For example, Washington's "adoption" of a "quasi-separation" posture as a means of liberation was based on a level of consciousness that basically saw the Black man as inadequate in relationship to the white man. Influenced to some extent by the larger societal values or what he perceived as the direction of America, he began emphasizing vocational education to keep pace with the ensuing industrial era. For his time and era, this position is difficult to argue against. However, as Washington's popularity grew, mainly through the white media, many Northern Blacks opposed this position and Washington's right to speak for them. This conflict brought into full perspective what basically was a sectionalist conflict. The rural psycho-social dynamics differed significantly from the urban psycho-social-economic dynamics necessary for liberation. The Southern Blacks had developed a concept of land and capital. They, therefore, needed the skills to work the land, to amass the capital, to gain economic security, and human dignity. Though inherent in Washington's philosophy was a concept of self-inadequacy, it differed tremendously from the inadequacy felt by Northern Blacks. This is clearly seen in Washington's writings. He was seldom, if ever, bothered by the 19th century social science that documented Negro inferiority, sociologically or psychologically.

Washington viewed what he thought was right and good— for him it was a question of by what means do we arrive at this. The Northern Black saw the struggle differently.

The Northern urban Black, trapped by the same racism, though to some extent less overtly vicious, developed a different approach to liberation. Trapped in urban ghettos surrounded by rapidly developing industries, his survival was dependent entirely on white economics. He had to get "in". He had to prove that he was "fit" to do the work. He had to integrate. Consequently, out of the North emerges a long history of political and economic agitation. Through the life of DuBois it is possible to see the nature and complexity of the Northern struggle through the Talented Tenth concept, the Niagra Movement, the NAACP, the adoption of some of the basic tenets of Washington's philosophy and finally Pan Africanism.

DuBois' disagreement with Washington was philosophical; consequently the more pragmatic aspects of their philosophies, economics and education, as a means to achieving liberation differed. The disagreement was not that DuBois did not see the value of vocational education, because he did. The conflict arose from the peculiar urban experiences that continually reminded the Black man of his inferiority, consequently there arose a need for a Black consciousness. DuBois saw that his Talented Tenth concept meant "flight of class from mass." He also saw Washington's idea of mini-capitalism as continued exploitation and enslavement because of the lack of Black Consciousness. Washington in essence had Black Power and no Black Consciousness. DuBois had Black Consciousness and no Black Power. Both elements are necessary

for liberation. Out of this clash of internal forces grew basically an integrationist ethic with a Black consciousness rooted in realization that Black Power is necessary for the achievement of one and keeping alive the other. Racism forced Black Americans to begin thinking in separate nation terms, territorial on one level and psychological on another level. This moves toward what appears to be a very confusing or complex situation in terms of Black-white dynamics in the struggle for liberation, what many have called the integrationist-separatist fad.

Human dignity is the ultimate goal. The historic and contemporary forces of white racism have readied Black men to separate or integrate to achieve the ultimate goal of liberation. At times separation appears to be the solution and at other times integration appears to be the solution. However, either position must operate from a Black Power base. Without this self-determining Black Power base, Blacks have come to recognize America can have only two groups, master and slave. The struggle for self-determination places two diametrically opposed forces into full view, Black Power and white racism. Here there exists no dialectic, though. Black Power is the struggle for human dignity and white racism is the denial of that dignity. One must triumph over the other. There can be no synthesis. Black is good. White is evil. In a sense if white America is to be free of white supremacy, it must become Black. Whites have to engage in the same self-liberating process that Blacks have and are engaging in or America must cease parading itself as the free world. The self-liberating process for whites does not mean moving from conservatism to liberalism, or the

liberalizing establishment morality for the absorption of token Blacks to appease the Black masses. It means nothing less than the redistribution of power. To move in this direction is to challenge white racism. Thus far, educational institutions in America, as well as other white institutions, have not made this challenge despite the fact that Blacks have provided many opportunities for these institutions to make decisions based on principle rather than what is good for the system.

The growing Black Consciousness will continue to point up more blatantly the opposition of white racism to Black Power. This will be more openly evidenced in the educational institutions than any other institutions in America for two primary reasons: The faith Blacks have in education, and the psychological dependence Blacks have developed on educational institutions as places of learning. The faith in education has been evidenced in the struggle of Black students to get Black studies programs established. They were not calling for the educational institutions to change significantly their operational policies. The next move will call for complete alteration of institutional practices as they relate to Black people totally. For example, in the late 1950's the whole struggle in education was to integrate the schools. Despite what seemed to be insurmountable opposition from the white communities, the white police department, and in some states, the white local, state, and nationally elected officials, the struggle for integration continued. Though Blacks have only experienced a modicum of success in this struggle, it will continue for quite sometime. Where Blacks were "integrated" they began calling for additional

course offerings related to Black people, developed by Black people, and taught by Black people. Similar to integration, this has only met with a modicum of success. Just as Blacks have grown in sophistication in their struggle so has white racist opposition. Where there has been integration it has been on white terms. For example, Blacks who excel academically or are a part of low achieving experimental packages are allowed to enter white educational institutions. The failure rates of the latter group have been phenomenal. The former group succeeds in the white institutions and fails in its own Black community, leaving it mainly a neurotic group with middle class incomes unable to reidentify with its own people and rejected in the main by whites. The faith in education has also led Blacks to believe that this could be overcome if they had Black courses to teach them how to be Black or at least help them retain their Blackness. This, too, has led to a sort of bourgeois elitism that finds its existence and rationale in analysis that leads to further misunderstanding of Black people.

This is not to argue that Black analysis is not important, however, analysis in the Western tradition has become a value in and of itself. The so-called neutral value paradigms that are presently being used to evaluate and conceptualize the pathology of Blacks have become oppressive tools designed and developed by systemically oriented beauracratc racist "intellectuals" who see themselves as aloof observers. With their white middle-class weighted instruments (anti-human) they continue to carve Blackness out of existence. These institutional intellectual gate keepers, will breed a Black intellectual opposition and this is now happening at an ever increasing rate.

This Black opposition will spend useless time trying to convince the Moynihans, Jensens, and Schockleys of Black normality until they realize that whiteness is to be transcended not opposed.

From this perspective I see very little change, if any at all, occurring in educational institutions. This is not to say there will not be more Blacks admitted. The educational institutions will have to continue to admit Blacks to convince the masses of Blacks self-reform is the correct path rather than revolution. The educational institutions, however, will become more functional in relationship to Blacks, that is, with the growing Black Consciousness, neo-colonial Black leadership will be trained to take over the schools in an attempt to suppress this consciousness. Blacks such as myself will be forced to make certain choices in terms of whether or not we wish to participate in this process of continued enslavement or turn to the Black communities to preserve the remaining humanity in this country.

The preservation of Black humanity as I see it will be contingent on three logically distinguishable, but empirically inseparable phases: Psychological separation, Black Power, and Pan Africanism.

Psychological separation is essential to maintenance of Black Consciousness if neurotic transformation is to be avoided. In this phase "Black Scholars" will have to begin or move more extensively in the development of paradigms and conceptual tools based on the Black experience, to provide Black educators, writers, and community people with more accurate conceptual maps of reality.



The development of new criteria must be based on the spiritual essence of Blackness. This entails the monumental task of translating the sublime spiritual essence of Blackness into concrete achievement, providing a cultural value binding base -- making the fusion of the spiritual and literal worlds possible.

The continued development of Black Power bases where ever Blacks find themselves is the necessary political, economic, and educational struggle that will continue regardless -- integration and separation is a bourgeois controversy that a powerless people cannot afford. It is about survival in a hostile environment. This phase has to begin with the integration of Phase I or Blacks will recreate white institutions that in the end will exploit other Blacks.

There is a positive correlation between an ethnic group's power in America and the power of the country of their national origin. England, for example, exercises world power -- White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans exercise maximum power in America. Ireland exercises less world power than England -- they also exercise less power as an ethnic group in America than the WASP group in America. Africa exercises no world power and neither do Africans in America. Therefore, important to African-American liberation is the liberation of the continent of Africa. However, essential to the development of Pan Africanism is the integration of Phase I, II, and III. Without this integration, African-Americans will assist white America in the continued exploitation of Africa.

In short, Black Americans must recreate a new history -- a new people. The schools and churches have failed not only Blacks but

whites as well. Deformation of these institutions only delays human developme.

White imagination is trapped in the paralysis of self-interest and inhumanity. Black imagination is the source of liberation.

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