

THE NEGRO PROBLEM AND CIVIL RIGHTS

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There are three issues that seem to be uppermost: white supremacy, integration and discrimination. At the present standing of my knowledge and experience, I must believe that the Negro race is not equal intellectually, morally or socially to the white race. One hears the arguments advanced by the anthropologists and the sociologists that the Negro is not inferior, that the mental capacity of the Negro is equal to that of the Caucasian, that his deficiencies are only due to his lack of opportunity, and that since he is only one hundred years removed from slavery he cannot be expected to have the drive of his former masters. However, for three hundred to four hundred years the Negroes have been living in America. During this time they have had intimate association with Caucasians. Yet they have been unable to change their position significantly, even with the sponsorship of do-gooders and sincere friends. Meanwhile, many other minority groups have progressed from degradation to greatness, an example being the Mormons. No group could have been more oppressed, poor, ill fated and ignorant than the Mormon group, and their success story is a national monument. Another outstanding example of the rise of a minority group is seen in the Chinese of this country. Ignorant, malnourished, poverty-stricken coolies were brought in by the thousands to build our railroads, dig ditches and toil in our fields for a few pennies a day. Yet an innate pride and ambition allowed these little yellow men to overcome prejudice, discrimination and ostracism. Many have become outstanding leaders, and most Chinese would starve rather than face the disgrace of accepting public welfare.

On the question of integration, I feel that we should integrate fully. It is our obligation to provide an equal opportunity for each American to develop his talents and arrange his life in a manner satisfactory to him. We deny Negroes the right to equal enjoyment of our city by prohibiting their use of certain parks, libraries, public schools and public commercial facilities. The only important reason that we should not integrate is to prevent marriages between the races. It is certain that there will be more mixed marriages in an integrated society. We can assume; however, that individuals will continue to marry within their same intellectual and social strata, at least as well as is done at present. If the selection of marriage partners continues in the same fashion as at present, I can see no reason to worry about decreasing the general timbre of society. We do not expect a highly intellectual person to marry a foolish one, and integration will certainly not change our expectations. On the other hand, mixed marriages may prevent a certain degree of inbreeding and actually improve the general lot.

Another reason for integration is economic. To provide double facilities such as waiting rooms, water fountains, parks and libraries is pointless. All persons must follow

the same rules for using public facilities. The misuse of facilities, whether by Negro or White, should result in disciplinary action.

Integration makes sense also in another area—that of allowing Caucasians to select associates with more freedom. At present, it is not possible to associate freely with even the more educated and cultured Negroes. Many occasions arise in which similarities of likes and dislikes, professional interests or hobbies bring about the desirability for a certain degree of companionship. In our present system, association is discouraged to the point that a Negro scrub nurse would be unwelcome at a Christmas party for the operating room personnel. I feel a curbing of my own freedom under this pressure.

What of the cry of discrimination? It is a fact that Negroes generally have an inferior combined productivity in relationship to the total percentage of their population. However, many Negroes do attain a superior level of intellectual development. This fact points up the deficiencies of the average Negro, since it demonstrates that opportunity for development in fact is present for the worthy Negro. I am inclined to agree with a recent newspaper article, which referred to an interview with a self-made, wealthy, Negro businessman. He felt that he had never experienced any discrimination of significance. His right to be a leader in his business circles, which included people of all races, had never been questioned. He admonished his fellow Negroes to make themselves acceptable professionals and businessmen and confidently plunge into the job of making a living. The recently acquired attitude of discourtesy, unfriendly aggressiveness, abruptness and crowding for recognition is unbecoming to anyone, and especially to one who is striving to sell himself as an equal contestant for jobs and social position.

Some may claim that the points of view expressed here are illogical and irreconcilable. It is true that most intelligent white Southerners have been forced into a position that might well be considered schizophrenic. However, I would personally prefer the "simple schizophrenia" represented by these ideas, rather than the dangerous paranoia of the extremists of both sides. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a middle-of-the-road attitude; more and more conservatives are being forced into one camp or the other. Our main hope is for a return of public and political morality. Withdrawal of political sponsorship from the Negro radical groups would cause them to collapse and perhaps allow the Negro to attain his rightful position as a useful citizen by dignified social and moral evolution. The freedoms and opportunities opened up for the Negro by full public integration should tremendously speed this evolution; however, the American citizen of any color must not be denied his sacred right of discrimination. As long as we have a free country, discrimination—in the selection of one's friends, associates, employees, religion and a million other things—should not be dictated or denied by judicial fiat or executive decree. Whether this country can survive the brutally cynical

"civil rights" onslaughts of the New Frontier, after several hundred years of honest and forthright prejudice, remains to be seen.

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