

THE YWCA MAGAZINE

JUNE 1968 | REPLICATION

SPECIAL ISSUE ON

RACISM



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empowering women

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Message from the CEO

BUILDING A MOVEMENT TOWARD JUSTICE

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I AM THRILLED to re-release our YWCA Magazine Special Issue on Racism, originally published in June of 1968! We regularly peruse the YWCA Archives, and I will admit to being slightly obsessed. But when we poured through decades of YWCA Magazine in the archives now housed physically at Smith College and accessible to all now digitally, I knew instantly I wanted to share this edition with you — so you could see yourself in the reflection and be inspired.

The magazine was issued at a time when Helen Claytor — YWCA USA’s first Black president — was a year into her YWCA presidency and months after the tragedy of Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination. As you read each article from authors such as YWCA icons Helen Claytor and Dr. Dorothy Height to civil rights advocate Bayard Rustin — and my personal favorite, from Frankie M. Freeman, entitled “The Fourth ‘R’— Racism?” You will learn from the struggle of our predecessors. We are in a struggle of our own time and place, we have taken the baton and we are working to build a movement until justice... just is. And who is Frankie M. Freeman? The first woman appointed to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Freeman said, “racism produces segregated schools,

and segregated schools produce racism.” To her, racism was a component of and in our general education curriculum, riding alongside the essential studies of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Sound familiar?

This time capsule gives us in-depth knowledge of the national influence we had during the civil rights movement and a glimpse into our journey to eliminate racism and empower women, a mission officially adopted in 1970, two years after the original publication of this magazine edition. The 17 articles included in this magazine edition provide a perspective on our society then — from open housing rights to guidelines for taking action against housing inequities and police accountability. How does this magazine cling so perfectly to relevancy today?

Racism remains a public health crisis. Our YWCA family is large, but we must welcome others in, be bold and courageous, and challenge our own fears and status quo in the work we are currently doing for justice to leap forward once again. As you read this magazine published 55 years ago this month, we learn that YWCA was fully immersed in the civil rights movement. The activists for justice who wrote in our YWCA Magazine were trailblazers then,

and there are trailblazers in our YWCA movement now. We must continue making good trouble.

Each year a quote inhabits me, and at the start of 2023 it was Dr. Height's words that resonated with me, and I have been awed more than a few times by the wisdom ringing in my ears at just the right moment: "If the times aren't ripe, you have to ripen the times. We have to realize we are building a movement." As our movement blazes forward, the flame of YWCA's persimmon passion is again ripening the times, building upon our legacy of advancing justice for all. We proudly continue to blaze the path set forth by Dr. Dorothy Height, Helen Claytor, and others who have led through grace and conviction.

Remember — our mission of eliminating racism and empowering women is an invitation to everything better!

With gratitude and solidarity,



Margaret Mitchell
CEO, YWCA



THE YWCA MAGAZINE

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OPENNESS HURTS

MIRIAM HECKMAN

*Mrs. Walter C. Heckman chairman,
Racial Integration Committee*

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION on Civil Disorders has warned that this country is moving toward becoming two societies, one black and one white—separate and unequal. This would be a violation of our deepest conviction about the wholeness of the family of man. We must recognize this ominous threat, understand and face up to the intensity of the struggle, to the direction of change and the speed of the change. We must honestly examine the charge that ours is a racist society.

Too many people have lost all hope that anything will be done, that they can have some measure of control over their own destiny. They see violence as the only means of forcing change on an Establishment which will not move otherwise. The question is whether we shall take a hand in bringing about a democratic social revolution or resign ourselves to the tragedy of riots.

If the YWCA is to be relevant today, it must lean its strength—fully and quickly—into the struggle for justice and dignity for all people. In this crisis we cannot protect program as usual or business as usual. A young Negro leader may not be interested in serving on a committee or taking a class. She asks us now, "What are you doing that is concerned with my survival?" Whatever helps to build an open society—this is

YWCA program, this is YWCA business. Anything less is to put on a blindfold and to cry "Peace, peace" where there *is* no peace.

For many, many years the YWCA has known that a Christian movement is called to witness to wholeness. Integration was the accepted word. And in some cases, in some places, we have experienced true wholeness. We have grown in trust of one another, relishing differences, harnessing diversity of gifts and experience to the common task. When we have known this, we have felt it to be right—in line with the purposes of God. But in many cases, in many places, we have fallen short. We have settled for the policy without the practice, for a token instead of the truth.

To some, the whole idea of integration is discredited now. They have given up on it. They think of it as being a little social exercise where we drink a cup of tea together and go home unchanged but feeling good. This is a caricature of integration, and we share a common guilt if this seems to be the reality. Yet it is true that integration implies personal relationship—how we are with each other in respect and caring. Now we understand that this personal relationship is not enough. We are called to help create an *integrated society*—nothing less.

Even personal loving-kindness is not enough when the *situation* needs to be changed. And this is not accomplished by good intentions. We must be utterly intentional about it, and our action must

be commensurate with the depth of the problem.

The YWCA—Christian and open to the world—rallied to this call. But we find that openness hurts, and there is no end to the hurting if we continue to be radically open. We would be so relieved if we could find ourselves led beside the still waters and into green pastures, but instead we are led into tumult and danger.

Openness today means to be

- Open to the desperation of those who have no power to do anything for themselves.
- Open to the rising voices that are too raucous and shrill for our sensitive ears.
- Open to the terrible hostility that no longer smolders, but flames.
- Open to the AFDC mother who mutters, "What kind of country is this that puts money and property above people?"
- Open to the youth who shakes his fist in the cop's face and shouts, "I'm *human*, don't you understand that?"
- Open to our own ineptness and failure, mustering no excuses, seeking no scapegoats. Just standing in need of repentance and forgiveness.

It's hard to be open. Sometimes our spirits are so stiff and resistant that we are broken—broken and therefore open—open to the costly way of redeeming the promise of dignity and freedom for all people. ■

MARTIN LUTHER KING

the right man at the right time

by HELEN J. CLAYTOR
Mrs. Robert W. Claytor is president of the YWCA of the U.S.A.



Martin Luther King

I HAVE READ many tributes to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. since April 4, 1968. So far no one has repeated the first thing I can remember reading about him. It came from a photoeditorial in *Ebony* Magazine when he spearheaded the Montgomery bus boycott in December 1955. If my memory serves me accurately, the caption read “The right man-in the right place-at the right time.”

Certainly the history of the last 13 years has proved this to be true. Dr. King,

with his firm belief in the philosophy of nonviolence, fully appropriated from Mahatma Gandhi, was indubitably the right man to organize the protest that Rosa Parks started when she refused to give up her seat to a white person on a Montgomery bus. That protest seems to me to have been the impetus to the upsurge of Negro pressure to be, at long last, treated with the dignity that becomes a *man*—a child of God. At no time since then had that hitherto obscure, very young, southern-born-and-bred

minister—with a great gift of mind and spirit and with a great gift of oratory which could stir men’s souls—been away from the forefront of the struggle, by peaceful means, for equal dignity for *all* men, black and white.

This valuable life was snuffed out as Dr. King pursued, in his own unmatched way, the struggle for the dignity of garbage collectors in Memphis. His body was carried in a mule-drawn farm cart from the church in Atlanta, which he co-pastored with his father, to the campus of Morehouse College, his undergraduate alma mater.

Garbage men, a mule cart—more symbolic of the values he lived and died for than the 200,000 great and near-great who mingled with the humble people who marched behind that cart and gathered on that campus to honor this deeply committed, deeply dedicated, too- soon - taken- from- us man. His country was shamed and mourned for him. The whole world mourned this grandson of a slave who had merited the Nobel Peace Prize—this man who had a dream for his people, identical with that Great American Dream, which would not let him go, which he could not let go, even if it meant, as I think he knew it would, his death.

The last words I remember from that long day of mourning in Atlanta on April 9 were spoken by the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Dr. King’s successor as the leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. “The grave is too narrow for his soul, but we commit his body to the ground. No coffin, no crypt, no vault, no stone can hold his greatness, but we commit his body to the ground.”

He is gone. Our nation bows its head in shame that it so violated his dream—its own great dream. Yet I wonder—1,000 years from now, 2,000 years from now when our grief for his family, our guilt for our own too small efforts are dimmed by time—may it be that, even in Memphis, even in that dreadful moment, it was the right man in the right place at the right time *to make his country move* to vindicate its high purposes?

Only if people like us in the YWCA hold steadfastly to our goals and truly respond to the barrier-breaking love of God can we assure that Martin Luther King, Jr. did not give his life in vain. It is the only kind of tribute worthy of his greatness. ■

A Condensation of an Address to YWCA National Board Members

THE EFFECT OF THE NEGRO REVOLT ON AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

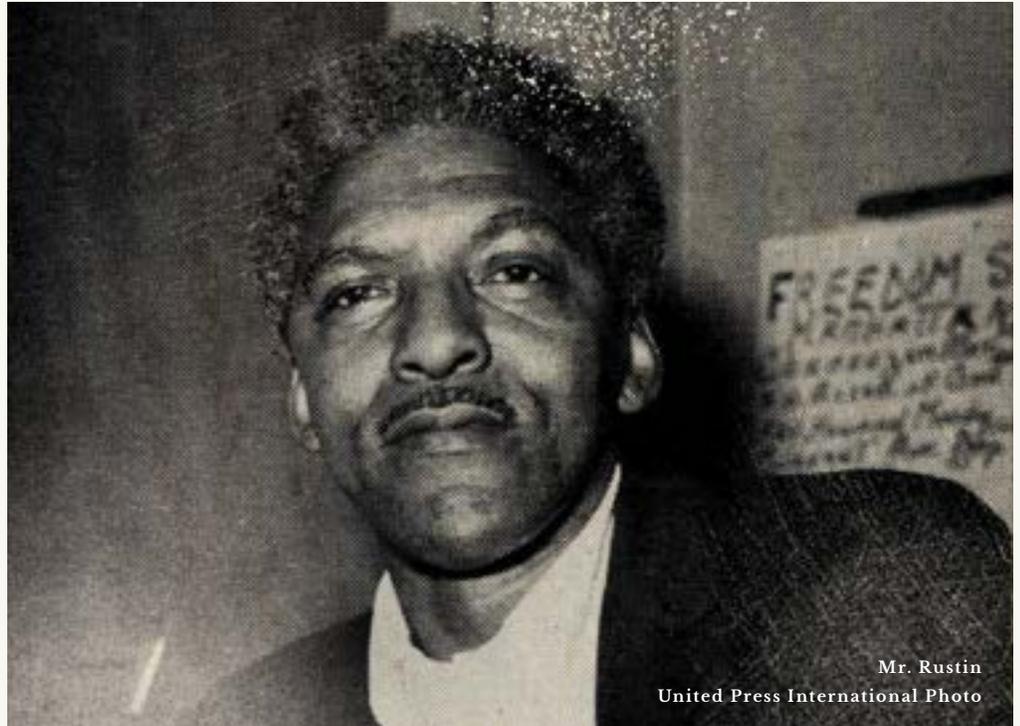
by BAYARD RUSTIN
executive director of the
A. Philip Randolph Institute

CONTRARY TO WHAT we are being asked to believe, the goal of integration is certainly not being rejected by the great majority of the Negro people—only by a very small and basically insignificant minority, and we ought not to be overwhelmed by screamers. LeRoi Jones simply does not reflect the thinking of the majority of Negroes.

Two and a half million Negroes are organized in the AFL-CIO. The NAACP, the National Urban League and my organization have received grants from The Ford Foundation and the federal government for the very purpose of speeding up the integration of Negroes into the trade union movement, particularly the building trades. Everywhere you look there are more civil rights groups than at the time of the March on Washington. And they are fighting to get better housing, better education, more jobs; to get their share of the cake— not to make a new cake.

It may be titillating to some white middle-class people who have experienced affluence and therefore know the limitations and the poverty of plenty to think that a small group of left-wing Negroes are somehow or other going to change the nature of American institutions for their benefit. But that is wishful thinking. The argument that we want segregated schools is made not by Negro radicals but by Negro PhDs who are less interested in what happens to Negro children than they are in whether they can control the system. And this results from their inability to move as whites do into a variety of middleclass positions of power.

We are again in a period that is not new to the American Negro. There is a recurrent pattern made up of three parts:



Mr. Rustin
United Press International Photo

high hopes; hopes unrealized; frustration syndrome. Once again after the great civil rights crusade of the late 1950s and early 1960s, we are in a period of frustration—great hopes followed by a dashing of hopes.

We find today that there are more young Negroes in segregated schools than there were in 1954. The ghettos are still there, except they are larger with more rats and more roaches. Unemployment among Negro males is almost double what it was in 1954; in our cities unemployment among Negro youth is up to 30, 35 and 40 percent. Hence, a new period of intense frustration.

Frustration Politics

In light of this, the small group that rejects democracy, rejects integration and rejects white people inevitably will come up with demands that are irrelevant. They will not

work. This is their rationale: “The United States promised, and we believed. Now look how bad things are. This nation thinks it is incapable of ever bringing integration, and therefore let’s be done with it”.

Now, if the Black Power people believe this nation is vile and that the Negro can never get justice and freedom here, logically they cannot have a program. What does that extreme group have to say about medical help? Nothing! What is their program for jobs? None! What is their program for housing? None! What is their program for education? None! If they cannot believe in the society and if they cannot have a program then their energy will be directed against those Negroes who do believe in programs; thus they are much more dangerous to these people than George Wallace.

Frustration Sociology

Bear in mind that the so-called Negro revolt is, in reality, a revolt. It is a revolt against objectionable conditions in this country and is meaningful as long as it is related to positive actions. But it becomes a double frustration at the point where people reject the society and reject programs for dealing with the ills within it. So they talk about let's forget integrated schools. If Negroes do not fight for integration where it is possible, then we're going to have in America two school systems—one private for whites and one public for Negroes. If that's what white people want, they should support this group in its separatist stand.

On the other hand, if a group of Negroes can appoint the principal, can determine what the curriculum is to be, can say there will be no white teachers, then we are in sore trouble. For then what is to stop white extremists from insisting on white Protestant principals, bringing white fascist curricula into the schools and preventing Negro teachers from coming into their areas? This is the game of frustration sociology.

This is also frustration economics. I am all for Negroes being in business; I am for anybody being in business who can make it. But we are in a period where small businessmen are not being encouraged to stay in business; they are being squeezed out. Any time a chain store wants to put a small Negro cooperative out of business, it can because it can sell more cheaply. Therefore, this is not an answer, to the economic problems of the Negro. The Negro is going to become uplifted largely because he takes his place, not merely in his own grocery store, but more importantly in the basic industrial and economic fabric of this nation.

Some Progress but More Aspiration

Many of those whites who joined the 1963 March on Washington for the right of Negroes to vote and for the desegregation of public accommodations did so because these gains would not cost them a penny. But now the demand is for decent housing, decent jobs and schools, and this does not cost money—billions each year out of the taxpayers' pockets. The fact that the liberal community has not seen its way clear to continue a vigorous effort for these economic and social gains has caused some unhappiness among younger Negroes.

Today we are fighting to create the kind of political climate and political coalition which makes it possible for the nation to try integration. We have failed to create the political atmosphere and the political forces that, in combination, can make integration work.

The civil rights bill and the voter rights bill obviously meant progress. Twice as many Negroes are voting in the South as were voting before that bill, and look at the number of Negroes who are being elected or appointed to important city and state offices. Of course there has been a great deal of progress!

But having said that I haven't said a thing. To understand progress we have to see it in relation to aspiration. Here is where the problem is difficult. What people forget is that aspiration has gone up through the ceiling and the gap between the tremendous progress we have made and the increase in aspiration is so great as to call for revolt on the part of many people.

Therefore, we have got to see that the desire for social change is served not by strategies of frustration and revolt but by demanding relevant, realistic programs which can take us a step further. And the action on the part of anyone who obstructs the course of positive program is negative action.

Our problem is now political. We must go to Congress to get billions of dollars. Negroes cannot go alone. We must have as many people from religious groups, labor, student communities as we can get to go with us. Any black or white withdrawal from or sidestepping of that fundamental objective is to throw us deeper into a ditch.

The question arises as to whether violence ultimately is sometimes good. I don't want to discuss it in those terms; that's too broad and too ridiculous a question. Philosophically, who is to say that violence in the world didn't do good at some point? The question of violence is the question of a tactic. A tactic is only useful as it is related to an objective. It is not a philosophical discussion which is needed. Therefore, any continuation of rioting and violence on the part of Negroes has to be ultimately destructive to our cause. Because this nation will not tolerate violence on the part of the Negro. It will ultimately repress the Negro and, in the process, take your civil liberties away from you.

The real question is what I call "white guilt feelings and white masochism." That's as dangerous as Negro frustration. Some nice liberal white people really think they are communicating with and getting nearer the Negro people by saying, "We've mistreated you so we'll give you 50 percent of the votes, but please stay in the meeting." That's an insult, because they still believe that the Negro is something different. Such foolishness is creating a stupid, frustrated Black Power movement in which the Negroes who believe in it are not the biggest enemy—but the whites who accommodate it.

I have been in jail 24 times, I have been beaten in the South, but I am sticking to three principles which I hope the YWCA will put down as "fundamental":

- We reject violence.
- We stand for achieving progress by constitutional means.
- We are dedicated to integration as the only answer for the American society.

Integration, democracy and constitutional means—short of that we can achieve nothing. If we are asked to violate these principles in the interest of Negro communication we ought to reject communication because there can only be real communication for this society on the basis of those three principles. ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

"The Lessons of the Long Hot Summer" by Bayard Rustin (October 1967: Commentary) reprint 25 cents.

"A Way Out of the Exploding Ghetto" by Bayard Rustin, reprint 20 cents.

Both may be ordered from the A. Philip Randolph Institute, 217 West 125 Street, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Chapter 4, "The Basic Causes" (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25).

BLACK POWER

What is it?

by MARION O. ROBINSON
Bureau of Communications staff

DURING James Meredith's march through Mississippi in the summer of 1966, "Black Power" was invented spontaneously as a marching slogan—not by Stokely Carmichael, as is supposed by some people, but by one of his lieutenants. The mass media, to whom such slogans as "Freedom Now" and "We Shall Overcome" no longer had news value and who, reported Dr. John P. Spiegel, director of Brandeis University's Lemberg Center for the Study of violence, were finding this phase of the march somewhat dull, picked up the slogan and headlined it.

The immediate, electric reaction "notified blacks that they had stumbled on a slogan that would make the whites sit up and take notice" Thus, what Dr. Kenneth Clark, president of The Metropolitan Applied Research Center, characterized as "a cry of frustration, anguish and disillusionment against tokenism" was, said Dr. Spiegel "as much a product of the national media of communication as of the activities of the black leaders." In these two years the words have come to express a crystallization of mood in black communities and have picked up a myriad of meanings hinged around black consciousness. By now, they are so loosely used they often refer to militant groups with very different objectives.

Sessions of the January meetings of the total National Board and professional staff and a Consultation the YWCA and Civil Disorders, held at "600" in March and attended by 27 Board and staff members, brought some enlightenment about the black power thrust and its relationship to the civil rights struggle and separatism.

Although black power advocates are said to constitute a small part of our total Negro population, their influence far outweighs their numerical strength. As Dorothy Height, director of National Board's Office of Racial Integration, so succinctly put it, "Don't play the numbers game. Keep your eye on the issues."

Black power advocates in general believe the civil rights movement has been a failure and progress toward integration an exercise in tokenism. (It is said that, at the rate we are going, full integration would take another 50 to 100 years.) Rejecting the help of whites, who, they feel, are unable or unwilling to face up to the racist nature of our society, they see separatism and self-help as the only means to liberation from economic and social inequality and political powerlessness.

Among their leaders, said Dr. Spiegel, are indigenous neighborhood workers in self-help programs, street leaders chosen by teenage gangs—not for their toughness as in former civil rights enthusiasts who "feel desegregation is hopeless" and no longer wish to be involved in "a game of deceit of the black poor".

To use "black power" as meaning "a hard core of people who are committed to violence and have totally rejected the possibility of progress"(through the civil rights movement) is too narrow, according to Alexander J. Allen of the National Urban League. Both to the public at large and to ghetto people, he said, "black power means much more than this."

One participant used these words to express its meaning people: "They see black

power when they have a job and a decent salary; when their children can get the same quality education as while children; when they can get a decent place to live and not be overcharged for it and know they're not going to be put out because they're black or poor. Equal opportunity, that is power. When you have a reason to live, that is power." Then she added, "But the best power for anybody is green power. If you don't have green power, you're lost."

Historical Perspective

Dr. Kenneth Clark told a meeting of the national staff that the struggle between integration and separatism is not new and cited earlier instances when a wave of separatism followed progress in integration. Twenty years of hard work culminating in the Supreme Court decision of 1954 on desegregation of public schools opened the way to promising legislation in 1957, 1964 and 1965. The 1963 March on Washington "celebrated the Negro's anticipation of full inclusion into the economic and political fabric of American life."

But the Southern Negroes, who had thronged into Northern cities where "they ostensibly had the same rights as all other people," were finding *de facto* segregation in inferior schools, consistent underemployment and unemployment and no way out of the ghetto. Worse, they saw that "whites who had previously seemed very willing to work against racial cruelty seemed suddenly to become mute, ambivalent, not sure whether racial justice in the North was the same as in the South." A wave of disillusionment occurred, the most dramatic of its expressions in urban riots.

Black power is “a reaction to indications that the majority of American people were not sufficiently mature...to move meaningfully toward fulfilling the promises of the Supreme Court decision,” said Dr. Clark. “Some good will come of this if those who genuinely believe any form of racism is anachronistic, ignorant, cruel and barbarous will more clearly understand and get back to the business of trying to build a racially integrated society as the essence of America’s survival.”

In the past, America has experienced successive struggles of other ethnic groups—Irish, Italian, Jewish—to escape the ghetto and move into the mainstream of life. Dr. Frances Fox Piven, professor of social work, Columbia University School of Social Work, pointed out that black people have learned from that experience. “An outcast society cannot simply wait for the majority to welcome it with proffered brotherhood,” she said. “It must develop its own countervailing power.”

The Integrationist’s Dilemma

Negroes and white liberals who have identified with the civil rights movement momentarily suffer from dislocation, loss of identity, feelings of uselessness. “You don’t realize how lost we feel,” said one Negro board member in the Consultation sessions, and a Negro staff member expressed the feelings of many in this way, “We continue to work in the YWCA because we believe in integration. In the long run, it is the only way. But we are suspect in our own communities. Confronting young people who accept the black power philosophy challenges everything I’ve built up. Who am I? Some of us can’t answer that. We’re scared to death. We want to be Negroes, not ‘Uncle Toms.’ We want to do what’s right.”

A young Negro staff member said there is a way of dealing with the identity problem: “It’s a process of shaking off the unfavorable connotation of ‘Negro’; instead of ‘inferior’ or ‘dirty,’ taking on a feeling for the beauty of blackness, being free to express love of blackness and black people. We want to shake off the state of mind that categorizes people.”

“Is there any place for white liberals now?” asked a board member. “Yes, there is,” replied William H. Booth, New York City Commissioner on Human Rights, who served as a resource in the Consultation. “Even the most militant will accept a person who demonstrates commitment

to the cause of eradicating racism. It’s in the interest of both black and white groups to have a racially healthy society, just as it is to have an economically healthy society.”

YWCA Experience with Militants

In the Consultation sessions YWCA staff, both black and white, told of work in their cities with militant individuals and groups, some expressing the feeling, as one put it, “We must make room for black power. It can help us. It’s a healthy development.”

One executive told about working with a group of young Negroes within the YWCA: “Right now they feel they have more in common with separatist groups than with an integrated agency. I feel we must live through this period, not get upset, keep in touch with them and keep the door open.” In this Association two young militants are joining the YWCA board, and “we are preparing to work at it to see that they are heard and supported.”

In another Association an interracial conference of young people was called to discuss alternatives to violence. One valuable learning was that “you must allow time for a black caucus if you want an honest expression from the black community.” Here and at other spots in the discussions, a phrase from a study done in the Watts area was quoted, “We don’t want black and white discussions resulting in white decisions.”

“Whether it shakes you or not, whether you approve of it or not,” said another board member, “these young people are very sincere. Good things can come of this development—for black *and* white people.”

From her experience, an executive director offered a practical lesson in psychology: “We have to forget some of our middle-class attitudes in working with these young people. For example, be prepared for the way they present their ideas. They are strong, matter of fact, often hostile and demanding. Politeness goes by the boards; it is too life-and-death a matter to them.”

“The ‘elite’ concept of our social system is being challenged,” Dr. Spiegel advised the Consultation group. “For people who want to stay in communication, it is inevitable that adversary relations be sharpened. For a time, comfortable relations are not possible or even productive. Struggle and the absence of politeness will be characteristic. But an



interracial group can get real work done if they reach a *value* consensus.”

Associations differ greatly in the kind and number of resources they can tap, the contacts they have or can make, the potential leadership available to them to help make the thrust these times demand of the YWCA. No one underestimates the difficulties and dangers ahead. Yet the fact that there are opportunities too came out of these discussions.

When one participant said, “This seems more frightening than integration was in the beginning,” another replied, “We pioneered then. We can do it again.” ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25), Chapter 4 “The Basic Causes.”

Black Power by Stokely Carmichael and C. V. Hamilton (1967: Random House; \$4.95).

White Reflections on Black Power by Charles E. Fager (1967: Eerdmans; \$1.45).

Black Power and Urban Unrest by Nathan Wright, Jr. (1967: Hawthorn Books; \$4.95).

Top Priority OPEN HOUSING

by DOROTHY I. HEIGHT
director, Office of Racial Integration,
National Board, YWCA

IN A CLIMATE OF national mourning on the assassination of Martin Luther King, Congress passed legislation for open occupancy in housing. The task now is to put its provisions into practice in every community in the U.S.A.

The National Board of the YWCA in October 1967 voted unanimously "to put major effort immediately into a program of action to achieve the reality of open housing."

"Why choose housing?" asked the chairman:

- Housing is a basic underlying factor perpetuating racism in our society. It affects health, education, recreation, employment, face-to-face relationships, community participation. A concentrated effort to achieve open housing in an open community would help to eliminate the basic causes of tension and rebellion.
- Housing is peculiarly a woman's concern. We know in so many ways its importance to persons. We know firsthand that where people live affects every aspect of their personal, family and community life. Women who make crucial decisions about housing are themselves too often overwhelmed by the problem. Like the whole American society they must be enabled to move off dead center. Progress in civil rights legislation has laid bare the grim realities of what must be done in community action to bring the benefits within the grasp of millions of Americans.

The clarity of the issues was reflected in the National Board discussion of what the vote to focus on open housing implies:

"The full strength of local Associations and the National Board must be mobilized for intensive action to work to remove slum housing, to increase housing for low-income families and to disperse rather than concentrate the low-income housing to eliminate the ghettos.



Dorothy I. Height

It means that women must face up to real estate boards, mortgage companies, banks and other lending agencies, work to implement existing fair housing laws and work for passage of fair housing laws in communities where none exist. We must join forces with all other groups who are working toward the same goal."

Specific Goals

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders points out that the basic reason many Negroes and other minorities are compelled to live in inadequate housing is the failure of the private market to produce decent housing at rentals they can afford to pay. There continues to be a widening gap between the income of many Americans and the price of decent housing produced by normal market mechanisms. Thus the implementation of the strategy depends on programs that

not only generate more low-cost housing but also raise the rent paying capability of low-income families.

Provision of low-cost housing will solve only part of the problem. Equally fundamental is the elimination of the racial barrier in housing. Residential segregation prevents equal access to employment opportunities and obstructs efforts to achieve integrated education. A single society cannot be achieved as long as this cornerstone of segregation stands.

Thus the Commission concluded:

- Expand the supply of housing for low-income families on a massive basis;
- Areas outside of ghettos should be open to occupancy by racial minorities.

The YWCA has to help translate housing legislation into housing action by disseminating information on available housing to minority groups and providing information on the values of open housing. Sometimes the YWCA needs to spark new effort in the community. At other times it needs to supplement and cooperate with programs already at work. In every community there is some place to take hold. A YWCA fair housing committee can make the assessment.

New Directions

The need is to shift from the traditional publicly-built, slum-based, high-rise project to smaller units on scattered sites. Where high-rise projects are constructed a wide range of social services should be developed. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has evolved some creative concepts that need to be studied: the leasing program and the "Turnkey" program are remarkable examples.

In many cities urban renewal has demolished more housing than it has erected, causing dislocation among disadvantaged groups. "Urban renewal is Negro removal" has been a frequent charge. HUD has recognized this and has new policies giving top priority to urban renewal projects that directly assist low-income families in obtaining adequate housing. Projects aimed primarily at bolstering the economic strength of downtown areas or at creating housing for upper-income groups while reducing the supply of low-cost housing will have low priority unless they are part of balanced programs including a strong focus on needs of low-income groups.

To date, housing programs serving low-income groups have been concentrated in the ghetto area. Non-ghetto areas, particularly suburbs, have for the most part steadfastly opposed low-income rent supplements or below-market-interest-rate housing and have successfully restricted use of these programs outside the ghetto.

We believe that federally aided low- and moderate-income housing programs must be reoriented so that the major thrust is in the non-ghetto areas. Public housing programs should emphasize scattered site construction; rent supplements should, wherever possible, be used in non-ghetto areas; and an intensive effort should be made to recruit below-market-interest-rate sponsors willing to build outside the ghettos.

Model Cities

The Model Cities program provides an opportunity to cities for experimentation, imagination and innovation in every aspect—from new ways of reaching the alienated slum dweller to new approaches to local administration and to the uses of new technology to reduce costs. It links projects designed to develop human resources with those for improving the physical environment. It is designed to develop a "total attack" on the social, economic and physical problems in slum and blighted areas to turn them into "model" neighborhoods.

The Model Cities program is intended to open up opportunities for constructive involvement of citizens in affected neighborhoods and in the city as a whole in planning and carrying out program activities. Neighborhood residents must have a meaningful role in the rebuilding and restructuring of their own communities; planning must be carried out with as well as for the people living in the affected areas. Area residents must benefit from the jobs that are created by the projects and activities carried out in the program.

Housing Sponsorship

The YWCA, as a not-for-profit-motivated sponsor of decent housing in a self-fulfilling environment, can make a real contribution to community change. The value of nonprofit sponsorship of housing for the disadvantaged has been recognized by Congress in a number of enabling legislative programs under the National Housing Act. Three programs—Section 202, Section 221-D-3 and Section 221-H—provide loans to

finance construction or rehabilitation. Technical assistance is also available.

Suggested Programs

Ten program areas that illustrate how the basic strategies can be put into effect call for bold, new thinking by YWCA leaders:

- Provision of 600,000 low- and moderate-income housing units next year and six million units over the next five years
- An expanded and modified below-market-interest-rate program
- An expanded and modified rent supplement program and an ownership supplement program
- Federal write-down of interest rates on loans to private builders
- An expanded and more diversified public housing program
- An expanded Model Cities program
- A reoriented and expanded urban renewal program
- Reform of obsolete building codes
- Enactment of a national, comprehensive and enforceable open occupancy law
- Reorientation of federal housing programs to place more low- and moderate-income housing outside ghetto areas.

Of course, the heart of the job of opening new housing opportunities comes in the effort to identify available housing, work with real estate brokers and home owners, make contacts with prospective home seekers, assist them to secure a home of their choice and help to create a normal atmosphere in the community for the "new families." ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND ACTION:

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25). See Chapter 17, IV "Housing."

Buying from Developers (1967: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C. 20410; free on request)—a guide to the "Turnkey" method of public housing construction.

Improving the Quality of Urban Life (1966: U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; 55 cents)—a guide to model neighborhoods in demonstration cities.

Miss Height's speech on racism and the role of the YWCA is available in Women Involved in the Real World (1967: Bureau of Communications, National Board, YWCA; \$1.00) and on tape in each Regional Office.

A Public Affairs Committee Project

HOW TO WORK FOR OPEN HOUSING

by ALEXIS HOOK

Mrs. Keith B. Hook is third vice president,
YWCA of the Hartford Region.

IN DECEMBER 1966 THE YWCA of the Hartford Region in Connecticut went on record in support of open housing. This was in recognition of a serious crisis in housing in the urban and suburban areas surrounding Hartford.

As members of the public affairs committee began to study the problem they learned that no attempt had been made to coordinate housing information in a form readily available to people wanting to examine housing in the region as a whole. The committee then started on a fact-finding project.

They sought and obtained the cooperation of many individuals and groups in compiling a Handbook on Housing to use as a tool to bring about improvements in the situation. It was their conviction that with increased knowledge about the facts of housing and the pressing human need there would be more individuals and groups willing to help solve the problem. The extreme complexity of housing became swiftly apparent, and the need to be informed, to cooperate and to coordinate efforts became evident.

Neighbors and Neighborhoods states, "Although America's housing market is



Photo by Harold Halma

*“Sorry. This house
has just being sold.”*

Would YOU believe it?

North, South, East, West-time after time-too many Americans find doors closed to them in this “Free Society.”

The problem of fair housing reaches to the very roots of so many other problems in America.

Equal and well-balanced education and job opportunity, for example. And true justice. And true brotherhood.

Thoughtful people know the time has long since passed when we can afford prejudice-yes, even in real estate.

Yet even thoughtful people sometimes turn emotional at the idea of a Negro or other minority-group family in “their” neighborhood.

How about you? Examine your conscience deeply. A good place to start is in your church or synagogue.

Look at what the very roots of your Faith have to say about brotherhood.

It just may make you the strongest person on your block-the one with the strength to take a stand.



Religion in American Life, like the YWCA, is concerned that open housing laws are put into effect. “Repros” of this advertisement, prepared as a public service in cooperation with The Advertising Council, may be ordered by local organizations to help support their projects in behalf of open housing from Religion in American Life, 184 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010.

still dominated by discrimination and segregation, the movement to achieve equality of rights and opportunities has accelerated sharply in recent years, and at least some measurable progress has been made. Specific measures which have aided the drive for equal opportunity in housing have included administrative and executive action by government; court decisions; legislation; pioneer open-occupancy developments; and the continuous, dedicated and intelligent work of voluntary groups of citizens.”

The YWCA history in housing goes back to the year 1860. Since that time YWCAs in hundreds of communities in America have established residences for low-salaried workers, residences and clubs for special groups and room registry service. In recent years an increasing number of Associations have turned their attention to public housing as a necessary factor in any plan for good housing and to cooperation with other groups to raise the level of housing in the community. In 1947 the National Public Affairs Committee began to help committees in local YWCAs understand the significance and the danger of racially restrictive covenants.

The Past Is Prelude states, “In spite of its great wealth and ability to build and rebuild, the United States has lagged in providing decent shelter for minority groups... The greatest problem of all, however, is the inability of minority group families to live where they please even when they can afford to pay for the accommodations.”

Housing Problems

Hartford is a city 80-85 percent renter occupied. A high percentage is public housing; 85 percent of the region's nonwhites and Puerto Ricans live in the city, as do a high percentage of the elderly, the unskilled and those of low income. One-third of the city is in need of physical renewal. Prices demanded for rental units of poor quality in some of the most rundown areas exceed those for better units elsewhere in the city. New housing for low- and moderate-income families has been exclusively rental. Yet housing directors increasingly believe that it is equity, ownership, that inspires a pride in and healthy attention to property which enhance the city's housing.

More than 1,000 families, nearly double the number a year ago, are waiting to enter public housing. There is an increasing scarcity of low-cost housing especially for large families because developers prefer

building the more profitable efficiency and one-bedroom units. It is especially difficult for minority families to find rentals. A few organizations assist minority families who can afford and wish to buy homes in stabilized areas of Hartford or in the suburbs. Between 200 and 300 such families have moved out of Hartford in the last two or three years, usually with assistance. Housing for the elderly in Hartford is also quite limited although several hundred more units are planned. In the suburbs generally, any emphasis is on housing for the elderly. There has been quite frequent use of 221-D-3 financing provided by the federal government, and the new State Department of Community Affairs plans to emphasize 221-D-3 in its housing activities.

The Association's Position

The State of Connecticut has an open housing law which prohibits discrimination “because of race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry in the sale of all housing, commercial property or building lots.” It further prohibits discrimination in the rental of all commercial property and housing with two exceptions: two-family housing half of which is owner-occupied and rooms for rent in a private home.

The history of support by our board of directors is consistent. In one year the YWCA board voted to support Injunctive Relief Authorization for the Civil Rights Commission. In another year it did not take an official position. There was, however, a detailed mailing to all board members on the position of the National Board of the YWCA of the U.S.A. on open housing and discrimination and on the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed civil rights housing bills as they affected the individual home owner and the would-be home owner. Individual board members were urged to write their representatives. In the last legislative session a two-page housing information flyer was circulated, presenting local and state housing facts and a brief digest of the most important housing bills.

On various issues related to housing the board of directors has taken stands and written to the city manager, members of the common council and boards of education. Our public affairs committee has followed up with special meetings for representatives of the surrounding towns. Human relations, housing, prejudice and desegregation were all emphasized.

The Value of Cooperation

Knowledge about and cooperation with groups working toward the same goals are important. If there is a Department of Housing, a Public Housing Authority and/or a City Human Relations Commission the directors of these can be valuable sources of information. They may have an annual report available to the public. Other helpful sources may be found outside the official family. Fair housing committees, human relations groups, housing-finding committees, church committees, a neighborhood and community renewal group may be active and both glad to assist and to find someone to work with. Interviews, study of materials and accomplishments and future planning are all needed.

The Handbook on Housing includes a section describing Hartford's housing problems and contains figures on population and housing in the suburbs. There are sections on housing for the elderly and on the latest state housing legislation. It lists housing organizations and agencies with directors, addresses and phone numbers. There is a special section in question-and-answer form. Completed housing projects and those in the planning stage are listed.

Joint sharing of information and action can be helpful although a YWCA is best advised to handle its own publicity and correspondence even if acting in concert with others. Personal commitments, investment of money, support for constructive political action on federal, state and local level all are necessary. One active in housing is likely to want to be in contact with fair housing committees and the League of Women Voters; contact with the board of realtors may also be desirable. If there is an earnest dedication to the cause of better housing it will be recognized.

How to Take Action

Different avenues of action are possible.

There are techniques of testing whether or not discrimination is being practiced. A knowledgeable volunteer may be needed to assist an individual or a family seeking a rental or a house.

Local nonprofit funding organizations are beginning to arise and require help. Such a group might assist families with the first down payment on a home of their own and follow this up by helping them organize their own financing of their home from that point on. There might or might

not be repayment by the family of the first down payment. A nonprofit group could be organized to aid families, white or nonwhite, who wish to purchase homes outside the ghetto, where neighborhood stabilization and integration is the goal. A group like that might provide funds for the upgrading of housing and construction of new housing.

An organization can make clear its support for open housing to the political community and those in the field of selling and renting. An example of this might be use of a form similar to the application form printed a year ago by a committee of the Hartford Realty Board but only now beginning to be circulated. The form is intended to assist minority, low-income or families with problems to get special help from realtors. By use of a duplicate copy a knowledgeable volunteer might be able to assist by checking credit rating and in that or other ways help the applicant prove himself a good risk.

A well-informed YWCA board may be willing to urge a speedup of unnecessarily delayed local housing action. It could seek to encourage procedures that lead to home ownership. Such procedures might call for legislation; they might merely call for a change of policy on the part of a housing sponsor or a housing authority in which incentives and help are provided to encourage a renter to move on after a while into home ownership.

Some people believe that the housing problem will never be solved without a regional approach. The regional approach and zoning changes require study and quiet consideration. Documentation of case studies could be a valuable contribution on the local scene. They could even be a basis for a "Meet Your Neighbors' Housing Problem" panel offered as part of a program to various clubs or churches. Our public affairs committee is hoping to form a housing team to go into suburban areas and listen to the housing concerns and plans of YWCA members who live in the locality.

In the light of our YWCA purpose and in the face of the dire need of our neighbors we should have the courage to hope that hearts and doors and towns will begin to open. The public affairs committee admits that Connecticut has some good housing laws; even more than needing to have changed laws we need to have changed hearts. Probably one of the most important YWCA contributions is sincere and constant work in the area of changing attitudes. ■



ADDITIONAL PROGRAM RESOURCES:

Neighbors and Neighborhood—a handbook to help community groups take an active role in achieving open housing; \$1.50.

The Past Is Prelude—a history of YWCA members' work in behalf of women workers, children, the foreign born, housing, civil liberties and integration; \$1.50.

Both may be ordered from Bureau of Communications, National Board, YWCA, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Trends in Housing (monthly publication of National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, 323 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016; \$2.00 per year). Information on the latest developments in this field, covering all 50 states.

Some Guidelines for Action

VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS AND THE YWCA

1. *Begin by realizing its own potential for influence.* "This is a national situation," says Dorothy Height, "which affects nearly every American community, directly or indirectly. An organization that reaches into 2,000 communities and has over two and one-half million members has influence ready to be used constructively—or wasted by default."

2. *Help people find out "what the fight is all about."* Focus on real problems, ghetto grievances and racial issues; see what can be done about them and how the YWCA can bring pressure to bear to reach genuine solutions. Refuse to accept token gestures or vague promises for the distant future.

3. *Help white members confront the racist nature of our society* and move past the resulting hostility and guilt to a commitment to a social structure which guarantees true equality.

4. *Read, study, write and talk.* The situation changes daily—keep up with it. Get background on the true history of American Negroes, on the history of struggles of minorities in the U.S.A.. Study the *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* to find out who riots and why, what action is recommended for the police, the mass media, the courts, American citizens. Write newspapers, TV and radio stations to let them know how YWCA members feel about the issues and the way they are handled by the news media. Talk with like-minded people but concentrate on the people who differ. If you are convinced, you will be convincing.

5. *Seek opportunity for contact with militants,* both individuals and groups. Use every means to stay in communication.

6. *Be aware* that some staff members, both black and white, are in the midst of personal struggles of allegiance and identity.

7. *Plan program* to give members understanding of ghetto problems and involvement where they can help. Some suggestions:

- Shop in slums to see firsthand how ghetto people are overcharged for bad food and shoddy materials and bear witness to it some place that counts.
- Work on needed welfare amendments, e.g., child care to enable mothers to work.
- Support parents pressing for a voice in the curriculum and staffing of public schools, attend hearings, be prepared to give testimony.
- Work on equal justice and protection for all citizens in courts and law enforcement agencies, attend court sessions, communicate concerns to police, inform law enforcement agencies about known injustices, arrange meetings of police with concerned citizens.
- Emphasize enriching summer program for socially isolated children and youth.

8. *Encourage and support* community preventive measures. Some examples are cited:

- Police-community relations training, meetings of police commissioner with neighborhood groups.
- Devices to link city administration with neighborhoods, e.g., New York City's Urban Action Task Force, Boston's "Mobile City Halls," satellite service centers.
- Information centers to track down rumors and replace them with true information.
- Local units of the Urban Coalition* which involves business, industry, labor, private agencies in joint work to provide training and employment for ghetto youth.
- Join with other community agencies to propose setting up a community task force to be called on when trouble is brewing, before the police come into it.

9. *As an interracial organization* rooted in the community, the YWCA can present questions Negro groups can't or won't ask. In a situation of tension, this may help bridge the gap between groups in adversary positions

10. *Use contacts with press or police* to reduce tension situations. One Association, involved in a controversial interracial project, won agreement from the local press not to "fan the situation." In another YWCA interracial dances attended by teenagers attracted the surveillance of five to seven policemen, which aroused resentment and restlessness in the young people. The executive director was advised to see the police captain, explain that the police presence was creating additional tension and ask for a phone number where help could be gotten quickly if needed.

11. In an actual situation of open civil disorder the YWCA can serve as an information center; help locate people who get separated; offer housing to individuals and families who are dislocated because of danger of fire or violence; offer staff for emergency services sponsored by the Health and Welfare Council or other civic organizations. ■

M.O.R.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM GUIDES AND FURTHER READING:

"Where to Get the Least for Your Money" -discriminatory consumer and credit practices in ghetto neighborhoods and what YWCA groups can do about them—also in this issue of THE YWCA MAGAZINE.

"Do Crash Programs Really Cool the Long, Hot Summers?"—description of projects carried out last summer by the Los Angeles YWCA also in this issue.

"Citizen Responsibility and Police Accountability," also in this issue.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25), Chapters 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17.

* National headquarters:
Federal Bar Building, West, 1819 H
Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY AND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

by CHARLOTTE C. MEACHAM
*national representative,
police community-corrections program,
American Friends Service Committee*

IN RECENT MONTHS civil and police authorities throughout the country have turned increasingly to military instruments and attitudes to deal with internal protests and rebellions. The nation's concern with "order," amounting almost to an obsession, has been a major factor in halting progress in eliminating the poverty, discrimination and exploitation which prompt disorder.

The *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* concludes: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal... Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American." The deepening racial division is not inevitable, says the Commission. It stresses that choice is still possible. But it warns that "to pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values." Any discussion of citizen responsibility concerning police performance and police accountability must be seen in the context of the "law and order" obsession.

The Kerner Report identified 12 deeply-held grievances ranked into three levels of intensity. On the first level, the No. 1 grievance--the most sensitive and abrasive point--was "police practices." However, it is wrong to define the problem solely as hostility to the police. The policeman only symbolizes an increasingly bitter social debate over equal enforcement of the law and points up the conviction in the minds of black citizens of all social groupings, from the ghetto inhabitant to a U.S. senator, that there is a dual system of justice in the United States. We must squarely face this fact--either unknown or complacently unrecognized by most white Americans.

Yet, instead, we may be escalating the chances of explosion by a reckless threat of



The YWCA in Kansas City, Missouri sponsors a Youth Crime and Civic Commission made up of senior high school pupils who study law enforcement and the structure of the municipal government. Here its members visit the office of the chief of police.

suppression. While the Commission was publishing its report on the cause and cure for riots, anti riot brinkmanship was going on apace in American cities. Recently a brilliantly researched article* in a national magazine documented the very weaponry approach which the Commission maintains will escalate rather than eradicate disorders. The article lists elaborate arrangements whereby every major city in America is being mapped for defense from its own citizenry. It tells of coordination plans of the police, the National Guard and the Army mobilizing, in effect, the forces of a government against its own people.

Newspapers bring word of citizens arming themselves, of women taking target practice in deadly earnest, of police forces buying tanks and helicopters and machine guns. All this is so alien to our country's expressed beliefs as to seem almost incredible. Yet it is happening in city after city. Armed might is being lined up on the theory that it will prevent another disaster. Fear blinds us to the fact that this kind of hysteria could turn any incident into a holocaust. Recently a former president of the Detroit Bar Association warned lawyers and judges that "fear has led to real overreaction" and "there is real

danger of fascism...coming to the fore in this country." Certainly overreaction can lead toward the garrison city and the police state. And once embarked on this weaponry track are we capable of attacking the root causes of our problem? Down that road the only possible community is the community of fear.

What Can Be Done?

First of all we can recognize, as did the predominantly white middle-class members of the Advisory Commission, the deeper roots of our problems—unemployment, lack of education, poverty, exploitation plus the insidious and pervasive white sense of the inferiority of black men. All too often the police represent this white viewpoint, reflecting the attitudes of the larger society.

A new concept of law enforcement is needed—one where every man, black or white, is treated with dignity. We must act on several levels at once, recognizing the perils of our present course. For instance:

1. *Compare your city's problems with the Report's recommendations.* Act as a catalyst for an influential group to look into how your town squares with the Commission Report. Included should be citizens of varying persuasions from both black and white groups. Special emphasis should be on police planning and how Negro citizens feel about police protection, police brutality, weaponry planning.

2. *Oppose the weaponry approach.* Insist to your city government that the white public forgo the temptation, to which it too often succumbs, to use the police against minority groups. Be willing to have the police serve equally and fully all segments of the community.

3. *Demand civilian responsibility for the police.* Elected civilian officials should exercise responsibility and control over the police as well as over all other government agencies. This demand is in strictest conformity to the recommendations of the President's Crime Commission Report as well as that of the Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

4. *Learn about actual police practices.* In Philadelphia a conference is planned to find out the facts regarding the police department and what happens in their station houses and on the streets. Most

white people simply don't know this. Discussion groups are designed with a carry-over to pressure city government to provide adequate channels for citizen complaints concerning the police.

5. *Communicate with the communications media.* As the Commission on Civil Disorders observed, on the all-important subject of race the American media have "failed to communicate." Further, Negro citizens charge that the media tend to simply take any story the police give them. How about a local "Institute of Urban Communications" along the lines of the Commission's recommendation?

6. *Study your police system.* How does it fit in with the administration of justice, with community relations? The ghetto resident views a police-community relations program—unrelated to his other problems—as "window dressing" or a hoax. A former police official, an expert in the area, says, "I don't believe there is a successful police-community relations program in the nation today in terms of the complete involvement of all members of the law enforcement agency." He suggests that future police training programs and police systems be drastically changed if we are to improve existing police approaches to the community.

7. *Work at the precinct level.* In Chicago, agencies—building on a three-year involvement with the problems of housing, education and poverty in a West Side neighborhood—will attempt to "stabilize" relations with the police through special training for district officers in the social and police problems of the area. The district will seek ways of making the assignment to their area more attractive, such as pay differential and special educational opportunities and perhaps social awards for effective service in a high crime area.

8. *Try confrontation sessions.* Grand Rapids is trying out a police-Negro "sensitivity" school where a behavioral science group is experimenting with a form of group therapy that draws hostile groups together and forces them into intimate, brutally frank discussions. While still wary and skeptical of one another, there seems to be some possibility that through this searching candor a grudging respect and even eventually perhaps a mutual

trust may be established between young ghetto residents and the police.

9. *Promote a service-oriented police department.* New York police are training unarmed Harlem corpsmen to patrol Central Harlem as an experimental community service to prevent crime and increase neighborhood security. They will be assigned to a store-front office and will work with area residents who need help. This experiment is in line with recommendations of the President's Crime Commission, which points out that at least 50 percent of any police force duties are in the area of social service.

The deeper problems of our society do not originate with the police. They cannot be cured by police violence and weaponry. Democracy is a particular kind of order: the preservation of the quality of dignity in human life. Unless such a democratic order exists for all, no one is secure. ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25), Chapters 11 and 12.

*"The Second Civil War" by Garry Wills: *Esquire Magazine*, March 1968.

The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society, a report by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967: U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; \$2.25).

Behind the Shield—The Police in Urban Society by Arthur Niederhoffer (1967: Doubleday; \$5.95). A retired policeman and professor of sociology appraises the work and personality of the city policeman, drawing attention to the conflicts between community attitudes and enforcement of the law.

PUTTING PREACHMENT INTO PRACTICE

by THOMAS GIBBONS, JR.
national director, Project Equality National
Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice

IT IS ONE THING for this nation's churches and synagogues to preach brotherhood and racial justice. It is another thing for those same religious institutions to take positive and concrete actions to end systematized discrimination in American life.

Project Equality is a program aimed at bridging the gap between preachment and practice. Its goal is to achieve equal opportunity in all aspects of employment.

The report of the "Kerner Commission" on civil disorders is only the most recent document pointing to unemployment and underemployment as root causes of the turmoil of our cities. Its story is old.

This nation has retained artificial employment barriers against Spanish-speaking people, American Indians Jews and other minorities for generations. For Negroes this barrier means that the unemployment rate in the black community is double that of whites. In our major cities that figure leaps to triple the white unemployment rate.

Further, when raw employment statistics are broken down by job level they show the minorities at the bottom of the job ladder with little chance to improve their lot.

Project Equality is aimed at reversing that pattern, whether it exists because of conscious or unconscious discrimination.

Here's how it works:

In a growing number of cities throughout the nation, the major religious faiths have banded together to declare that henceforth their money will all be spent in a moral manner.

In simple terms, that means their churches, parishes, synagogues, schools, hospitals and related institutions will demand a new purchasing specification from all suppliers of goods and services—equal opportunity in all aspects of employment.

The participating religious bodies first send out a small commitment form asking their suppliers to pledge that:

1. They will maintain policies that will promote equal employment.

2. The policies will be communicated throughout the company and to the public at large, particularly the minority community.

3. Affirmative steps will be taken to recruit and hire minority group persons.

4. Statistics on minority group employment—broken down by job classification—will be provided to the local Project Equality office.

5. On request, the firm will participate in discussions with Project Equality's employment specialists in an effort to assess and upgrade, where needed, its fair employment practices.

Upon receipt of the signed commitment form, Project Equality sends the supplier a report form (similar to that required by the federal government) requesting a head count of minority group employees and a breakdown by job classification.

The report form also asks the supplier to describe his equal-employment-opportunity program and to outline the steps he plans to take to fulfill it in the coming year.

When a supplier has filed his report form with Project Equality, he becomes eligible to appear in the PE *Buyers' Guide*.

The guide is an annual published list of cooperating suppliers. All churches, synagogues and institutions participating in Project Equality use it to guide their purchasing by favoring those suppliers whose names appear.

Finally, a compliance officer will meet with the supplier to assess his personnel situation and offer aid in upgrading minority employment.

That is the essence of the program: a workable formula for spending religious money in a moral manner.

Today Project Equality has offices in 11 cities touching 12 states. Some 115 major



religious bodies—Baha'i Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Unitarian-Universalist—plus two private institutions—are engaged. New participants join the program almost monthly.

Project Equality is sponsored by the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, a Chicago-based organization serving 150 Catholic human relations and urban organizations, including 29 in the South. The Conference operates services in the field of education, housing and medical care as well, available to persons of all races, faiths and nationalities. ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25). See Chapter 7 and Chapter 17, I.

WOMAN POWER IN SPENDING

By MARY FRANCES CRAM

Mrs. Ambrose L. Cram, Jr. is vice president of the YWCA of the U.S.A.

YWCA CONCERN for equality in employment is not new. We pressed for legislation governing hours and wages for working girls and women back when the early YWCAs were making trouble for an earlier status quo. Union recognition to protect workers was yet another step.

Now, despite laws which prohibit it and the expression of convictions which should eliminate it, discrimination continues to persist in employment in many areas of business and industry. We spend some of the moneys entrusted to us in business and industrial firms, in buying goods and services, and we recognize that we have an obligation to spend our money where it furthers the principles upon which we stand.

The federal government is fortunate enough to have a channel for the enforcement of the law through the Executive Order which set up contract compliance procedures. Mr. Gibbons, of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, describes a network of religious institutions which has found a way to exert its influence in the business world.

Mindful of its need for responsible stewardship, the National Board of the YWCA has adopted its own program, YWCA Project Equality, as its way to make its money serve its goals. On the well-publicized assumption that the power of women is not to be underestimated, we dared to believe that, although our buying power is small in the aggregate, nevertheless it can be an effective weapon when focusing attention on the hiring and promotion practices of firms with which we do business and that such a focus will help to open doors to employment opportunity for members of the racial minority.

Accordingly, letters have been sent to the 50 firms that render services or supplies to our national headquarters and regional offices. Their responses have



indicated that they are becoming aware that, if equal employment opportunity is to be achieved, much more will need to be done to increase the numbers of minority members who are qualified for the positions higher on the scale, both in white and blue-collar occupations. They recognize the need for better recruiting programs aimed at raising the educational and occupational level of aspiration of untrained inner-city youth and school dropouts. Testing procedures in pre-employment screening require scrutiny to ensure that such tests fairly measure skills required without prejudice because of inappropriate criteria.

When we buy goods and services to carry on our work, we have a built-in method which makes our money do double duty to further our goals. This is YWCA Project Equality. ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

Job Discrimination Is Illegal by Sharon Leventhal (1967: Public Affairs Pamphlets, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016; 25 cents, quantity rates) — a guide to legal action.

DO CRASH PROGRAMS REALLY COOL THE LONG, HOT SUMMERS?

by PAT McGUIRE

*staff writer, Fran Hynds Public Relations,
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California YWCA*

ONE OF THE most persistent and audible criticisms of government-funded summer crash programs for youth in a ghetto area of a city is that they fail to reach the "hard core" members of a minority group.

The two YWCA directors of government-funded crash programs in the Los Angeles area in the summer of 1967 would be the last to argue the point. But they would be quick to say that the crash program is designed to reach ghetto young men and women *before* they join the bitter ranks of "hard core" minority spokesmen.

The girls who were active participants in the YWCA programs for teenage youth were those who had ambiguous feelings about the unrest in their neighborhoods. They were confused. They needed and wanted some kind of positive direction.

It would have been but a token program to schedule activities designed to keep the young girls off the streets. Attention to the real needs of the residents of the Venice and Watts areas involved in this program was the secret of the positive and fruitful success of the crash programs.

In Venice the emphasis was on employment—how to gainfully employ girls between the ages of 13 and 17, all from a poverty area, and to make that employment meaningful and relevant to them and to their community.

Twenty-one teenage girls were given the job of making a survey of a housing project, a survey designed to find out the needs and interests of women and girls who resided there. This proved to be a double-edged sword, as it were, in the fight against summer unrest. The young employees were both aiding and being aided, and those who were asked to fill out the questionnaires felt that the YWCA cared enough to ask them what their needs were and ultimately to follow through whenever feasible.



At the end of the five-week crash program participants celebrate with an open house.

The young employees were very much involved in the questionnaires. With adult supervision, the girls evolved the questions for two surveys—one for teenagers and one for adults. They worked for seven weeks, four hours a day, to find the answers to their questions.

More than 250 questionnaires were completed, and a new Y-Teen club has been organized at the housing project. Members are girls who were directly involved in the summer program or who joined as a direct result of filling out the questionnaires. The YWCA is aware of the needs of this community, and its residents are now very much aware of the YWCA and what it has to offer them.

Just as important as gainful employment were the YWCA workshops, with emphasis on human understanding, that were conducted in conjunction with the survey operation. There was on-the-job training in personality and grooming procedures. There was a workshop on sex values and sex facts. There was a special class in preparation for childbirth for

unwed mothers where girls could talk out their problems while a psychiatrist listened, as well as exercise for physical fitness.

In Watts, at a YWCA Teen Post located in a housing project more than 500 young women were affected in a constructive and positive way. Here the emphasis was not on employment but on sex education and a tutorial program. Approximately 45 percent of the girls were high school dropouts; most of them were in real need of sex information.

Two eight-week courses in sex education were conducted, and the Los Angeles County Health Department cooperated by showing audio-visual material. Questionnaires were given out to find out what these girls thought about sex in general and the boy-girl relationship in particular. Lively discussions were held; fact and fiction were separated.

Fourteen students from the University of Southern California and seven from Claremont College tutored these girls, working particularly with those who were



At the end of the five- week crash program participants celebrate with an open house.

below grade level. Many who had been doing “F” work were able to come up to a “C” when school reopened. Many who had contemplated dropping out decided to remain in school.

A Mothers’ Council was organized in conjunction with the YWCA sex education and tutorial programs. These mothers helped raise money to send five girls to YWCA camp; they made uniforms for a drill team; they assumed a new responsibility as parents as they began to do things for themselves and for their children. Mothers chaperoned many of the activities and also helped staff the YWCA facility which was open eight hours a day, five days per week.

These girls had felt rejected by society, and their attitude was one of depression and hopelessness. They were reflecting the feelings of their families in many instances.

The YWCA staff managed to build up their image of themselves. They were honest with them and thus able to tear down barriers and negative “Hate Whitey” feelings they were harboring. They began to learn that there are good people and bad people—no matter what the color of the skin.

Leadership ability was unearthed in the ghetto among young people and their parents. But these people need community recognition; they need to be a part of something. The YWCA crash program was instrumental in giving them this feeling.

In summarizing the effect of these programs, one YWCA staff member commented:

“We reached a great many people; we think we accomplished some minor miracles in a ghetto noted for violence and unrest. After last summer, most of these girls will never feel quite the same about the ghetto, their community. They learned more self respect, pride, a sense of purpose and the knowledge that those outside the community really care.” ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Part III “What Can Be Done?” (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25).

WHERE YOU CAN GET THE LEAST FOR YOUR MONEY

AURELIA TOYER

*associate director, research Bureau of
Research and Program Resources*

CONSUMERS in Negro neighborhoods pay more and get less. They are aware of this discrimination. They resent it. They lack the mobility to do much about it. As a result, discriminatory consumer and credit practices rank high among the deeply-held grievances of residents of ghetto neighborhoods, according to the President's National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders in its recent devastating report on the crisis in our cities.

These discriminatory practices take the form of higher prices, inferior merchandise, short weights, tainted meats, wilted vegetables, exorbitant credit charges, flagrant misrepresentation of the content of installment contracts and a degrading shopping environment. As a result of this type of discrimination, those persons who find themselves discriminated against in the labor market—with low-paying, dead-end jobs, erratic employment and family incomes well below the poverty level—pay the highest prices for the necessities of life. These practices effectively lessen the value of money in Negro neighborhoods.

The consumer in the ghetto is subject to the same pressures to buy that pervade all segments of the American society. Seventeen billion dollars a year is spent in our country for advertising on television, radio, in magazines, newspapers and other media. Advertising does more than describe the product offered for sale; it promises status, popularity and esteem to the purchasers of these products. These are exceptionally strong appeals to persons who are denied the opportunity to acquire status through the traditional channels of society—higher education, active community participation, political responsibility and good paying jobs with promise of advancement.

Of the forms of consumer discrimination listed here, those that have been most extensively documented



are exorbitant credit charges and misrepresentation of installment contracts. The two go hand in hand. Credit is necessary to buy major consumer goods because the poor family cannot possibly save enough money to purchase them for cash. Most of these goods must be bought on the installment plan because cheaper sources of credit, such as bank loans and credit union loans, are not available to these poor credit risks.

The creditor has many legal remedies available to him in the event of nonpayment since most laws have been designed to protect him rather than the debtor. He can institute an action to garnishee the wages of the debtor; he has the right to seize other personal property owned by the unfortunate buyer. Not only are the credit charges high, but the debtor

is liable to severe penalties if he cannot pay. Imprisonment for debt is no longer allowable in most states, but loss of a job without hearing or trial is a severe punishment, and many firms discharge a worker whose wages are garnisheed.

Following are summaries of three typical case studies of consumer discrimination in low-income areas:

Help Your Children Succeed in School

Many ghetto parents believe that success in school is the ladder that will lead their children out of poverty. Hence sellers of encyclopedias and other sets of informative books find a fertile market in this area. Some sellers of encyclopedias have represented themselves as agents of the Board of Education and have told parents that the

ownership of such books is essential to the progress of their children in school. In many cases, the sets of books are outdated, their “factual” material no longer true, printed from old plates at a relatively low cost.

A Spanish-speaking parent in one of the major cities, with two children, one six months old and the other two years old, was visited by such a salesman. He told her that she had been selected to receive a set of his company’s encyclopedia without charge. Her only obligation, according to the salesman, would be the purchase of one book each year for ten years. She was told that these books would be of invaluable assistance to her children when they began school, and she was asked to sign some papers. She signed the papers, which she was unable to read because they were written in English, and in so doing obligated herself under an installment sales contract to pay \$30 a month for two years. When her husband came home from work and read the contract, he called the company, requesting that it be canceled. He received assurance over the telephone that it would be canceled, and the family promptly forgot about the incident.

Several months later, the husband was summoned to his employer’s office. There he was informed that he was being dismissed from his job because his wages had been garnished. The encyclopedia company had filed the wage garnishment action. Prompt steps taken by the appropriate law enforcement agency resulted in a backdown by the company and agreement by the employer to keep the man in his job.

Look What You Get for Nothing

Most people know that no one gives something for nothing, but when the something is represented as an accommodation for a large purchase their fears are lulled. The “free freezer” plan is one that is used a great deal in poor neighborhoods. Families are told that they can save money by buying large quantities of frozen foods, and a freezer will be given to them with the large order.

One family living in a public housing development was told that for \$12.50 a week they would receive enough food for the family and a free freezer in which to store it. They signed a number of documents which they later discovered were installment contracts—one for a freezer and one for food. These contracts called for a payment of \$93.75 each month for food and \$28.35



a month for 36 months for the freezer. They discovered later that the same freezer could be bought in any household appliance store for \$450. There was no redress for this family. They had signed binding contracts, and they were obligated for the payment of the debt.

Take Your Time to Pay

“Trade-in” allowances and “easy credit terms” are stock phrases used by many furniture and appliance stores in low-income neighborhoods. One consumer attracted by this advertising contracted to purchase a combination television and hi-fi set for \$795. She received a trade-in credit of \$145 for her old set and signed a contract to pay the balance of \$650 over a 36-month period. The contract provided for payments of \$24.60 a month or a total of \$885.60—a credit charge of \$235.60 for three years. The rate of interest for this transaction was 24 percent—a clear violation of the law in the state in which the transaction occurred. Consumers in other areas report interest charges ranging up to 55 percent on installment sales even though state laws provide a much lower maximum.

These cases can be multiplied by the thousands. They point up the lack of consumer education in the ghettos and also the need for more intensive enforcement of the laws that control such practices. Volunteer groups, such as the YWCA, can perform a needed function by cosponsoring or encouraging the

establishment of “consumer clinics” in low-income areas.

In some cities lawyers, teachers, librarians, union officers and other well-informed persons have volunteered their time to help exploited consumers with their problems. Such help may be education-oriented—“Don’t sign unless you know what you are signing, bring the contract in and let us see it”—and/or protection-oriented pressure on law-enforcement agencies to step up their efforts. The exploiters themselves may change their tactics as they realize that the community is mobilizing its resources to help eliminate this form of discrimination which adds to the terrible economic burdens already borne by the poor. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND ACTION:

The Innocent Consumer vs the Exploiters, Sidney Margolius (1967: Trident Press; \$4.95). A revealing report on the money traps, deceptive advertising, credit plans, packaging that unsuspecting buyers encounter in the American marketplace.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25). See Chapter 8, III “Exploitation of Disadvantaged Consumers by Retail Merchants.”

And watch for the *second* in the National Board, YWCA’s Contemporary Programming Series —“Money Talk-The Y’s Consumer Kit”—due this fall.

TRIANGLE IN THE WORLD

by ALICE PAPES
International Division staff

ONE TALL sugarcane, two stocks of bananas, three pumpkins, four pineapples, five papaya, six passion fruit and a basket of eggs—not a new version of “partridge in a pear tree” but the gifts of the Gimbo Club, one of the rural YWCA clubs in UGANDA. They shared what they had—the essence of the World YWCA’s idea of mutual service in its work in 76 countries of the world. In 1967, 51 National Associations contributed in some way, and 46 received assistance; 33 were both giving and receiving Associations.

The YWCA of the U.S.A., being one of the biggest, has most to share and therefore takes responsibility for helping with grants to 27 countries as well as the Latin American Organismo Tecnico and special funds for the Vietnam and Middle East refugee projects and international buildings. Fourteen U.S. advisory staff work with YWCAs in 23 countries. Twenty-seven from 23 countries were provided leadership development opportunities this last year. Seven international volunteers were sent to help abroad.

The mutual service plan is like an international Community Chest with an extra dimension added. National Associations which have special needs ask the help of the World YWCA. The Mutual Service and Development Committee decides on priorities, then other National Associations are asked to help as they are able. It is world fellowship contributions from local Associations that enable the YWCA of the U.S.A. to take these responsibilities. The extra dimension to our sharing is that we all belong to one YWCA and so are members, one of another.

Improved Nutrition

To return to the Gimbo Club, one of its concerns is nutrition and its corollary, agriculture. Not only the women of the area in their flowing Uganda dress with babies on their backs were gathered under the



Pakistan refugee children line up for their daily vitamins

bamboo shelter with banana leaf roofing and sweet grass carpeting, but some of the village elders, for the staff nutrition expert had come to show them graphically why they should feed their children with some of their products and not sell all the necessary protein foods because they bring in cash.

Nutrition and agriculture projects are not just a Ugandan program, though that YWCA has started dozens of gardening and poultry-raising projects in its 70 rural clubs, but they are also part of the program in many countries.

Rosalie Oakes writes from SOUTH AFRICA where she is advisory staff: “For several years the YWCA clubs in townships [African residential areas] near Durban have been developing a scheme to encourage less well-educated African women, many of whom participate in no organizational life in the community, to improve nutrition.

At first the Regional Council of YWCA Clubs searched for a central spot where they could set up a shop. Later they realized this would be difficult for many mothers of young babies, as transportation across the townships is limited and costly. Now about 20 depots have been established in members’ homes which are inspected regularly by the Department of Health. Powdered milk and ‘Pro Neutro,’ excellent high-protein food approved by the World Health Organization, are sold at certain hours daily to anyone who needs them. Mothers of young babies must bring with them a card signed by the nearby clinic showing that they have reported for regular check-up for themselves and the baby.”

Youth Gets a Chance

At the 1967 World Council Meeting in Australia a decision was made to put greater emphasis on work with youth. The YWCA of COLOMBIA is already doing that. Virginia Heim, advisory staff for Colombia, writes of the first national convention of the Colombian YWCA, “It was really a thrill—50 delegates from the four Associations, and we were young. There were a dozen attractive girls between 18 and 25, all ‘raring to go.’ I was happy about that for I think the hope and life of the Association here is in the youth that is coming up.”

That same emphasis is reflected in work with teenagers around the world. In KOREA where Esther Park is the advisory staff, the teenagers surge through the YWCA building every day after school; one day for folk dancing, another for games, another for singing and still another for clubs. However, they are also engaged in serious endeavors. “Nation building” was the answer when the national staff member working with youth was asked what was the greatest interest of teenagers. “They want to beautify the community. They want to make KOREA a better place to live.”

The Korean Y-Teens have had several practical projects to that end. For instance, they took on the problem of the pushing and shoving to get on buses. They made signs with the number of each bus line and directions for queuing. Then, dressed in uniforms with the YWCA insignia, they manned the bus stops at rush hours. People soon got the idea and lined up for themselves after the Y-Teens’ educational week was over.

Y-Teens are an important part of the program in LIBERIA. Teenagers make the Valparaiso, CHILE YWCA their “hangout.” Teens in PUERTO RICO and ITALY are constantly learning at the YWCA. In West Berlin, GERMANY work with youth is an important aspect of program at Neighborhood House. Odile Sweeney has just spent three months in GHANA advising on work, particularly with university students.

New Kind of Camp

In an hour from HONG KONG by ferry at the cost of only a few cents the boys and girls of the YWCA can move from their crowded city homes with no play space to the island of Lantau—the biggest island in the group which make the British Crown Colony area. Here the YWCA has built a strange sort of camp to the American eye on a small piece of land given by the government. A two-story concrete and stone edifice perched on a mountainside with concrete playing courts and broad terraces is the camp, but it will seem a lot of space to people from the perpendicular city of Hong Kong. What’s more, the mountain behind is government land and can be climbed, and a white sand beach is only a 15-minute hike away.

Camping is an important part of the program with children and youth in many countries: in CHILE’s Andean camp, in URUGUAY, in TURKEY where the camp on the Sea of Marmara is called “Happiness” and Eleanor Davis is the advisory staff.

Leadership Multiplied

The youth emphasis of the World YWCA has a special exponent showing itself in a unique leadership training project with Jacklyn Wilkes, advisory staff for youth program in East Africa, directing the project. It works this way:

In KENYA and UGANDA, as in many other countries, girls take examinations for the university in December and anxiously wait out the months to know if they have passed and can enter in July. It is a wasted period in the lives of those who at 20 have finished the equivalent of junior college, so the YWCA proceeded to enlist eight of these girls, four from Uganda and four from Kenya, to try a great experiment. First came a four-week training course; two weeks with all the group in Kenya and two weeks in Uganda. Then the Kenyan girls went home to work there, and the Ugandan girls started work, each group to be supervised in developing clubs in secondary schools in each country.

Their assignment included not only starting clubs and getting them in operation, but also in finding and coaching permanent leaders. This clever technique starts the preparation of eight young women for group work in the future and has the potential of reaching great numbers of youth for YWCA participation. As an extra dividend, no girl is having time to worry about whether she passed her exams!

Leadership training happens on every level. There are two-week courses for officers of rural YWCA clubs in UGANDA, workshops for both teenage and adult leaders in RHODESIA and varied types of preparation for volunteers in many countries. The YWCA of MEXICO, where Jeannette Patchin is advisory staff, offers special leadership training for swimming teachers as well as club leaders.

Margaret Hathaway, training staff for East and Central Africa, reports two intercountry training events: In February, the top professional staff of KENYA, TANZANIA, UGANDA and ZAMBIA met in Mindolo, Zambia for a week of practical work on the inevitable executives’ problems of priorities, finance and supervision as well as the inspiration and searching for truth which are an important part of any such agenda. Each of the executives returned to her own job stretched, challenged and with new techniques of work. From August 5 to 25, five leaders from each country, volunteer and staff, gather for a consultation on the ways ahead for the YWCAS in Africa.

In South America, the ORGANISMO TECNICO, on whose staff Ruth Van Meter is working, helps in training of leaders in their own countries as well as the occasional intercountry seminars. So, whether the development of a leader happens in her own country, in the U.S.A. or in a regional interchange, this is one of the important aspects of the work of the YWCA.

Head Start in the YWCA

The World YWCA’s Australian Council Meeting recommended a greater emphasis on education, with the YWCA supplementing the public schools where needed. In many areas of the world and in many aspects of education the YWCA is doing just that.

Barrio Fugoso in Manila, PHILIPPINES has narrow alleys for streets and shacks for houses, but the YWCA club in this area not only does many self-help projects but runs



A participant in a sewing class in a rural area of the Philippines

a preschool to help its children have a head start. One member hangs a long curtain to hide her few belongings and gives her room over to the preschool. Thirty-three children can crowd in on the little benches they have improvised, so there are morning and afternoon sessions with a volunteer teacher from the neighborhood for each. The space may be improvised and small and the only playground the narrow alley, but the teaching is superior, and the children entertained the visitor with motion games and songs in English! They looked shining and beautiful in blue and white uniforms which their mothers had insisted on making although at great sacrifice.

Preschool program takes place in YWCAs of many areas of the world including ETHIOPIA, where Gladys Lawther is advisory staff, FIJI, RHODESIA, TANZANIA.

Literacy Means Self-Respect

In the YWCA’s neighborhood center in a low-income district of Taipei, TAIWAN, one of the countries which Esther Briesemeister helps as advisory staff, the mothers gathered until the garden of the little house was full. The teacher distributed a Chinese version of “I see the



A literacy class in an Indian village.

dog; the dog can run,” but, instead of being bored with the children’s readers, the 40 women in the class practiced writing the difficult Chinese characters and reading with the greatest enthusiasm. In fact, the teacher must have had a very special gift for as she explained the lesson ripples of amusement would go over the faces. They were mostly washerwomen with gnarled, misshapen hands, but learning to read and write was such a high privilege that they gaily attacked their studies.

The all-Latin American literacy seminar in Sao Paulo, BRAZIL last year has further stimulated a literacy program which first started in BOLIVIA more than a generation ago. In PERU, where Margaret Ping is the advisory staff for this new Association, as in most of the South American countries, literacy classes are important not just for teaching people to read and write but for their profound effect on attitudes and family relations.

Education for School Leavers

The borrowed bus pulled up at the Lusaka, ZAMBIA YWCA, and the waiting teenagers piled in. It was no ordinary excursion but the

social studies class of school leavers going to visit Parliament. This is the practical approach that the volunteer teachers give to the education of the students who enroll in the YWCA study center. The wife of the vice governor of the university is the director and the teachers highly qualified. The school meets regularly from 8 to 1 each day, and the girls come back to the YWCA in the afternoon to play net ball or learn country dances or handicrafts.

The 40 students enrolled either have had to drop out of primary school or had no chance of getting to secondary school since schools are few and entrance standards high. Some only need extra tutoring, but some need basic education. English, arithmetic, sewing, cooking, nutrition, religion are the classes offered in addition to social studies.

SIERRA LEONE, where Margaret Robertson is advisory staff, has a pre-vocational school with which the government cooperates. HONG KONG has a tremendous complex of night schools running five nights a week in various areas for girls 12 to 18 who work in factories or do piece work at home by day. EGYPT runs a

special vocational center for school leavers. KENYA has several vocational schools as do ETHIOPIA and UGANDA. ARGENTINA has a babysitters’ course in Barriloche. In Beirut, LEBANON there is a vocational school with more than 500 students in the new downtown building, and girls in two industrial centers beyond Beirut come to the YWCA centers when their shifts end to learn to sew, read and write or do crafts.

Refugees and the YWCA

“Do they cry as much in Jerusalem as we cry here?” This was the query of the 60 Jordanian refugee girls who are studying in the Beirut school to complete their courses because they could not return to the Ramallah school on the west bank of the Jordan River, and UNRWA is paying for them to live at the YWCA.

The answer to the query is that there is a great sadness in the Jerusalem YWCA but perseverance too. The damage caused by the June war has largely been repaired and with great effort the fittings assembled to open the residence for tourists. This is intended to finance the work with refugees that is the major program. Of the 120

students in the Jerusalem vocational school, 80 are refugees. In three refugee camps on the west bank there are now YWCA kindergartens, and Aqabat Jaber continues its work with sewing, knitting and self-help projects for teens and adults as well.

The JORDAN YWCA has been engaged in even more direct emergency relief on the east bank where its members conduct school in tents at the Karamah camp as well as many other activities in Amman and elsewhere.

Refugees Help Refugees

Karachi and its environs are in the dry part of PAKISTAN. There are brown hills and salt marshes, and flowers don't grow easily. However, this last year the rains came and completely flooded great areas. Poor people lost homes, utensils, clothes in the floods. So the refugee women at the YWCA center at North Karachi, who have little themselves but who've learned sewing, made 101 shalmer (the pajama-like pants worn by men, women and children in Pakistan) out of material donated by a YWCA volunteer. This was one more proof of the validity of the motto that permeates the YWCA of Pakistan, "By Love Serve One Another."

These same women earn for their families with the mirror work that is the special self-help project of the Karachi YWCA. Every Friday work is given out and collected and payment made at the North Karachi and Korangi refugee camps for the beautiful hand-embroidered dresses and other crafts. During the week workers at the YWCA cut material, count mirrors and prepare packets of work for 150 women for the next week. And every morning other volunteers come to man the shop at the YWCA where this beautiful work is sold. It takes many months to learn to do this special stitch well enough to meet the YWCA's high standards, so there are always classes in progress at each camp in mirror work as well as school classes for children and adults, health services and supplementary feeding for babies.

With 15 million refugees in the world, the YWCA is only able to help a tiny portion, but through the special Middle East Emergency Fund and the Vietnam Refugee Fund we have helped the World YWCA contribute a share in this big job. A staff member from New Zealand at first, and now, one from the Philippines, represents the YWCA on the team working with war victims at Tuy Hoa, VIETNAM.



At a preschool run by a rural YWCA club in Uganda papaya stems are used for blowing bubbles.

Seeking a Peaceful World

In INDIA, where Dorothy Cotter is at work as a program consultant, one of the special commemorations of the centenary of Gandhi's birth was planned by a subcommittee on women and children, of which the YWCA formed a part. The YWCA of India took on as its special responsibility two events which it believes to be significant in this day of unrest and violence among students and young people in general: a symposium of youth on February 24 and an interfaith worship service on February 25.

At the Raj Ghat where Gandhi was cremated and now a black marble monument marks the spot, a panel of five young women and three young men brought the point of view of youth to the concept of nonviolence and other aspects of Gandhian thought and teachings. They presented the idea that there seems to be no one listening or helping when appeals are nonviolent.

The prayer service on Sunday morning at Raj Ghat was planned by a YWCA group of university students and other youth. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians participated using their own sacred books as a base for reading and prayers. There was great religious music, and the half-hour in the early morning was a time of worship for all. The whole concept

was not compromise or syncretism, but an effort by different faiths to communicate with God and each other at the special place dedicated to one of the world's greatest exponents of nonviolence.

A gift to mutual service is an opportunity to help in this work in the world. Shall we bring our share to join the bananas, sugarcane and precious eggs of the Gimbo Club? ■

CHANGING OUR COMPLEXION

DAPHNE HUGHES

director, Bureau of Personnel and Training

WE HAVE A PROUD HERITAGE—not only the Interracial Charter but all that led up to it and the significant efforts since that time. Our concept of earned leadership, our early development of indigenous leaders, as evidenced in opening doors to leadership positions on committees, local boards, national and international boards for industrial girls and business girls, provide us with the knowhow so earnestly sought today by many community efforts to involve those served with self-determination in establishing and directing service programs.

Surely our collective memory as an institution will help us devise effective ways and means for attracting to our membership persons of color. The first step might be to increase the participation of members already on our rolls. We need to discover the members we have but do not know if we hope to attract more persons of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Diversity in membership is essential to diversity in leadership in a membership organization. The urgency of these days of racial tension demand imaginative shortcuts in recruiting and training more representative leaders *now*, while we work to strengthen our future leadership potential by opening more career lines and opportunities for leadership to persons of color. How can we offer a viable strategy for dealing effectively with racism when leaders across the country are predominantly white?

There has been no appreciable increase in the employment of Negro staff in local Associations in the past two years. My impression is that, while we have moved all too slowly in employing other than white professional staff, we have been even slower in utilizing in volunteer leadership roles members of other ethnic backgrounds. "Tokenism" has many subtle forms. For those of us who reject either white or black racist extremism, how can we change our complexion to offer visibly genuine integration in practice? To attempt



to work effectively in our communities to improve the racial climate requires that we exemplify what we are working toward.

As a membership organization we have a great strength as well as a great heritage. We have structurally, because we are a membership organization, a possibility and tremendous potential of synthesizing community concern and action with service. No other social institution has our heritage and established way of work although many current efforts mirror the same goals.

Surely, to paraphrase the old song, our complexion should not turn from "white to rosy-red" but to the beauty and richness of the whole range of skin color in our multiracial and pluralistic society. We must not let our words exceed our practice. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND ACTION:

Negro Women in the Population and in the Labor Force (1968: Women's Bureau, U.S.. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210; free) . The latest statistics on working Negro women—who they are, their educational attainments, occupations, salaries and arrangements for child care.

Graduates of Predominantly Negro Colleges by Joseph H. Fichter (1967: U.S.. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; 75 cents). The findings of this report demonstrate the potential for more effective utilization of college-trained Negroes, especially in the helping professions.

GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITING NEGRO STAFF

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RECRUITMENT
Bureau of Personnel and Training

NEW TIMES and a new climate make it imperative that our Negro staff members, volunteers and community leaders be involved in the planning and carrying out of the recruitment program. We must:

1. Demonstrate the interracial aspects of the YWCA by involving Negro women in campus and community recruitment.

2. Identify and pursue Negro women leaders who may themselves be prospective candidates and/ or know others who should consider YWCA positions.

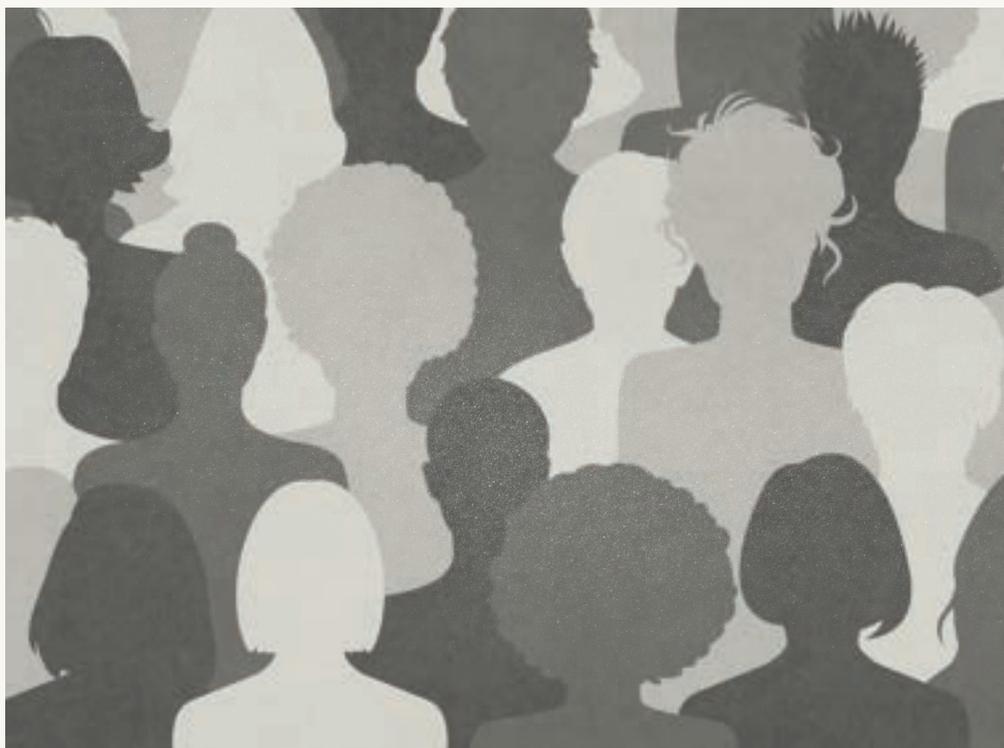
3. Adopt a long view of recruiting by encouraging Y-Teens and other high school students to plan for college. Open the doors to all kinds of employment opportunities. Help with scholarship sources. Seek out individuals.

4. Help develop internships for those who have not had chances to test their skills. This demands well outlined jobs and able supervisors who understand the possible lack of skill and the strengths of the disadvantaged person.

5. Work with the Urban League, employment agencies and other community organizations that are helping Negro women prepare for and find satisfactory employment.

6. Remind college placement offices of YWCA interest in all people; include graduate students and alumnae.

7. Tell the YWCA story in ways appealing to all groups: person-to-person contact, brochures, posters, newspaper stories, pictures, ads and radio and television shorts must all demonstrate YWCA interest in persons of all races.



8. Know the fair employment practices legislation and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VII. Seek compliance with the law *and* with our own commitment.

9. Seek Negro women who are identified with the disadvantaged and minority groups who use conflict constructively for change.

10. Assist with opening top leadership positions to Negro women.

11. Develop salary scales adequate to meet or exceed those of other employers competing for qualified Negro women. ■

THE FOURTH “R” — RACISM?

by FRANKIE M. FREEMAN

member, U.S. Commission on Human Rights

The *Report of the National Commission On Civil Disorders* concludes that, while the causes of riots in our cities are complex, “the most fundamental is the racial attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans.

“Race prejudice,” the Report states, “has shaped our history decisively; it now threatens to affect our future. White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.”

In education, the racial attitude of the majority of our citizens has produced segregation in the public schools. School segregation has been authorized by law—not only in the South but in the North as well. State statutes sanctioned separate-but-equal public schools in New York until 1938, in Indiana until 1949 and Wyoming and New Mexico until

1954. In other states outside the South segregated schools were authorized from the time of the Civil War until early in the 20th century.

Although laws specifically dictating separate schools for Negroes were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1954, there are more Negro children today in virtually all-Negro schools than in 1954.

One of the causes of the continuing racial isolation in our schools has been segregated residential patterns. Public policy on all levels has contributed to this: Low-income public housing has been concentrated in the inner city. FHA and VA loans, which after World War II contributed significantly to suburban growth, were administered on a discriminatory basis until the late 1940s. Not until 1962 did FHA move from a policy of “neutrality” to one of nondiscrimination.

The public schools themselves have contributed to intensified racial isolation. The policy of separate schools for Negroes has contributed to residential segregation. Through policies affecting school boundaries, transportation practices,



site selection, transfer procedures, staff assignment and grouping practices, racial isolation in the schools—North and South—has been intensified.

In the same way that school segregation contributes to residential segregation, which in turn perpetuates school segregation, a more fundamental cycle exists: racism produces segregated schools, and segregated schools produce racism.

Not until very recently has there been any serious attempt to integrate Negro history and culture into public school curricula. There is still a paucity of textbooks and teaching materials that present an accurate picture of the contributions of Negroes and other minority groups to our society or that present an honest picture of the racial injustices that are a part of our history. In most schools, Negroes simply have not existed except as happy slaves. Other minority groups are treated as stereotypes also.

Racism is perpetuated through teacher-training programs which, by and large, neglect to prepare teachers to instruct minority-group pupils. A recent survey of the 10 largest teacher-training institutions revealed that only three percent of the students were being well-prepared for urban education.

Examinations of the damaging effects of racial isolation in the schools usually emphasize the minority child, and it is true that the most obvious injustices and inequality are borne by minority children. Generally, low-income Negro, Mexican American, Puerto Rican and American Indian children are consigned to old, overcrowded, poorly staffed, inadequately equipped buildings. They are treated like the stepchildren of our society. They are simply not given an equal chance to an education.

The academic results of inferior treatment are inevitable: underachievement. But what about the effects of racial isolation itself? There is evidence that white and Negro children develop undesirable racial attitudes at an early age. Researchers from Teachers College, Columbia University, questioned a predominantly white group of suburban first, second and third graders about a picture of a Negro boy and a white boy walking down a city street and noticed how uneasy, hesitant, nervous and anxious the questions made most of the youngsters. One white child considered the Negro boy a foreigner—“He is different than an American.” Another white child said he would rather play with the white child in the photograph “because he didn’t carry a knife.”

Negro children were questioned about the same photograph. Like the white children, most of them chose the white child as a playmate: "He looks better than the other boy." Such evidence of a lack of self-respect by the Negro children was saddening, but the racism of a white child in kindergarten was shocking. Shown a picture of a pretty Negro girl, she said, "I wouldn't play with her because she's black people. I hate black people."

This kind of racial attitude results in a perpetuation of racial isolation which, says Dr. Robert Coles, a child psychiatrist at Harvard University leads to a "considerable degree of fear and anxiety" among Negro children, "which is in many instances pathological." Negro students, Dr. Coles continues, "often see themselves as cornered, and they see the school as a mockery of society rather than a reflection of its best attributes."

Such a reaction to school and society is not confined to Negro students. For example, a Mexican American girl—a Los Angeles high school senior—put it this way: "We are taught about our great American heritage, about democracy, freedom, equal opportunity for all, and yet in the very history and geography books all we ever see are pictures of Anglo kids, a blond world that we cannot identify or associate with."

A study by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights—*Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*—shows that white students who attended desegregated schools expressed greater willingness to reside in interracial neighborhoods, to have their children in desegregated schools and to have Negro friends and were more favorable toward elimination of discrimination. In short, desegregated school experience tends to make for citizens who are more likely to favor the kinds of social changes that must be made if this nation is to avoid racial division and disruption.

It is this aspect which the continuing debate on the crisis in our schools has generally underemphasized. Discussion has centered mainly on how to improve the academic achievement of minority students. Advocates of desegregation cite studies which show that Negro students achieve better in an atmosphere of racial balance. Exponents of compensatory programs point to the lack of progress toward school desegregation and recommend an upgrading of deprived schools as they presently exist.



What both sides of the debate have failed to stress is the factor of racial attitudes. Racism is damaging to the minds of all students—and, eventually, to all society. Racist attitudes are a basic and major problem, and it would be unwise to expect that simply desegregating schools would immediately correct this legacy of hundreds of years. But one thing is certain, the problem cannot be met by upgrading standards of instruction in schools which continue to perpetuate racist beliefs by their very racial composition.

There are many who say that desegregation of schools—for a variety of historical, political and traditional reasons—cannot be accomplished. This conclusion is a dangerous one. First of all, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy which is ultimately pessimistic and damning to our whole culture and society. Events have demonstrated that unless the problem of racism is solved the country will split into two alienated and unequal nations.

Secondly, the conclusion is dangerous because it is untrue. In many small and medium-sized cities schools can be desegregated relatively easily, quickly and inexpensively. Attendance boundaries can be redrawn; segregated schools can be paired, and their students exchanged to create balance; old, overcrowded schools can be closed, and their students assigned to surrounding schools.

These techniques for desegregating schools are not merely theories and possibilities. Cities with marked differences in population, tradition, needs and resources have demonstrated not only the feasibility but the desirability of desegregation. Indeed, some school systems have found that desegregation itself suggests other educational changes and improvements which further benefit all children, such as greater attention to individual needs, special programs dealing with teacher attitudes and incorporation of multi-ethnic materials in the curriculum.

In larger cities, where the political situation is more complex and desegregation more expensive to accomplish, proposals have been made which would pave the way toward full school desegregation. Pittsburgh has embarked on an education park system. Beginning steps toward metropolitan cooperation, essential to achieve racial balance in many urban systems, have been taken in Boston, Hartford and Rochester.

The reason more cities have not accomplished what these cities have is that they have not committed themselves to change and improvement, to the best interests of their children or to the health and progress of their society.

If desegregation of schools is "impossible" in a specific locality, it is not inherent in the local situation itself but

because of a lack of imagination, creativity, commitment, pride and patriotism on the part of its citizens.

Not only can schools be desegregated, schools must be desegregated. The racism which threatens to shred the fabric of our culture is being manufactured by racial isolation in the schools. What is at stake is not only the lives and learning of our children, nor merely the excellence and efficiency of our schools, but the very survival of our society. ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25), Chapter 1 7 II "Education."

Racial Isolation in the Public Schools, a report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1967: U.S.. Government Printing Office, Washington,D.C. 20402; \$1.00).

Equality of Educational Opportunity by James S. Coleman (1966: U.S.. Government Printing Office; \$4.25).

Children of Crisis-A Study of Courage and Fear by Robert Coles (1967: Little, Brown; \$8.50).



THE CRISIS IN WHITE LEADERSHIP

by LEONARD J. DUHL, M.D.
*psychiatrist, U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development*

THE URBAN COMMUNITIES of the United States are faced with a crisis in leadership.

In the process of implementing Great Society programs, we have encouraged the poor to emerge as contenders for political power. Their emergence and demand for a "piece of the action" have created a new confrontation at the political bases of urban areas. To meet this confrontation requires change and leaders or "agents" of change who are competent, dedicated and concerned not merely with power and stability, but with values and progress. To date these leaders have emerged on the Black Power front but not among those who presently hold political power.

Burning, lootings and murders are the outburst of frustration at not having a piece of the action, at exclusion from the basic democratic right to participate in the system by which one is governed. It is a revolt against a system in which there is no community participation by the "have nots," in which they have no sense of power over the conditions that directly affect their lives.

The spirit of most of these groups is not yet revolutionary in the sense of overthrowing the government of the city; what is heard is the desire to have some control over their destiny, to get some economic power, to be able to build up some of their own businesses. They feel they have no leverage, there is no response, and there is no listening by the administration.

The development of the Black Power movement represents an emergence of leadership pledged to accomplish the changes needed to permit Negro participation.

If this Black Power movement, with its disparate elements, is to merge with other forces of American society to accomplish

needed social change, it must be met with leadership from other segments of the community. Leaders or "change agents" must emerge from among the "haves" who are dedicated to sharing power with the "have nots" whom the Black Power leaders represent. They must revise the institutions and systems through which these two forces confront and negotiate so that both forces are equally represented in a nonco-optive atmosphere. They must assure that the changes emerging through the joint efforts of black and white leaders are more than a momentary consensus based on the co-optation of the weaker force by the stronger, but rather a consensus of black and white based on the mutual advantages to be gained by the entire society in which both sides have a stake.

Such change requires that both black and white leaders become concerned with values and goals rather than with the power and the processes of government. Unfortunately, the "white power" in control of domestic politics today tends to be concerned with the processes of decision making rather than with the ends toward which decisions should aim. They operate as "crisis managers," preoccupied with power or the recognition by their peers of their power rather than with the adjustments needed in our institutions so that all members of our society may participate in the process of governing our society.

What is needed at this moment then is new white leadership. There is a crying need for change agents leading, setting the stage, creating the atmosphere for a new direction. The problem of our cities is more than money, more than power for its own sake or concern with specific political jurisdictions. It is the problem of giving the Black Power leaders a piece of the action. Rebels as well as catalysts among the Black Power movement must be heard and answered.



If white politicians cannot meet the black leaders with positive, new leadership, black desperation will tear at the very fabric of our society. Our very way of life is at stake: how we as a people want to live, what is important, our integrity and self-valuation by poor and rich alike. ■

FOR FURTHER READING:

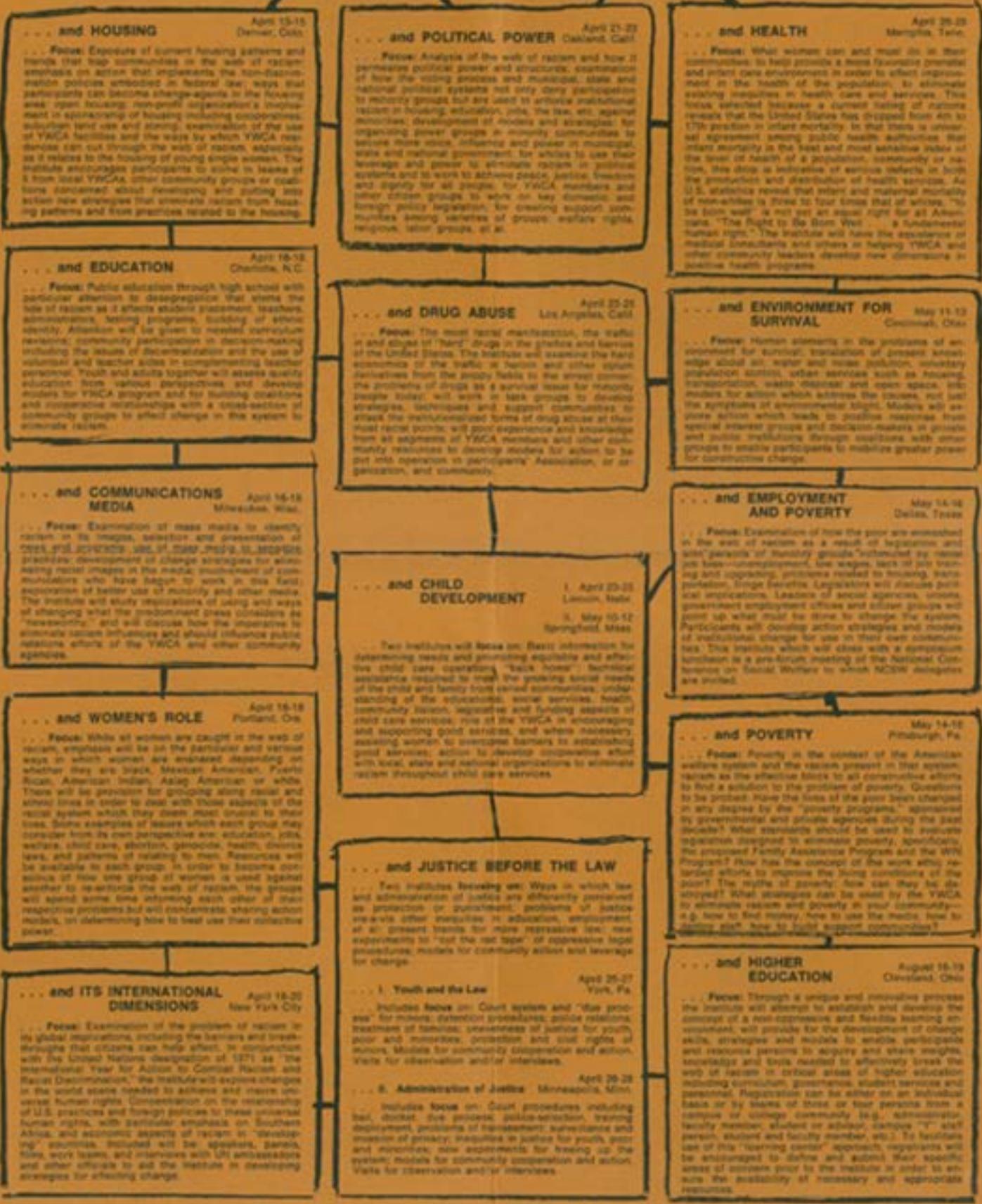
The Urban Condition, edited by Leonard J. Duhl (1963: Basic Books; \$10.00)- a compilation of authorities' views on the totality of urban environment.

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Chapter 16 "The Future of the Cities" (1968: Bantam Books; \$1.25).



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