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THE ROLE OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY II

THE PROBLEMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEGRO
COMMUNITY WITH REGARD TO INTEGRATION

Dr. George M. Johnson*

Negro-white relations in this country have been the subject of every recognized form of literary and scholastic effort. It is probable that the Supreme Court's 1954 and 1955 school desegregation decisions\(^1\) have been a greater stimulus to this literary out-pouring than any particular events since the “late unpleasantness” often referred to as the War between the States, or the Civil War.

In his invitation to participate in this symposium Dean O'Meara has made it clear that we are not here to discuss the legal soundness of the desegregation decisions. Rather we agree with the principles laid down in the decision, or at least assume their soundness for the purposes of this symposium and concern ourselves with the practical problems posed in effecting compliance with the requirements of the decisions and the responsibilities of various segments of American society in making the necessary adjustments to these requirements.

My special assignment relates to the problems and responsibilities of the Negro community.

Preliminarily, it seems appropriate to make a few observations in regard to the term “Negro community.” Presumably those responsible for organizing this symposium intended this term to identify that segment of American society which, under practices and policies of enforced racial segregation, would be restricted to those opportunities available to Negroes. Generally speaking, it may be said that all Negroes identifiable as such, constitute one group or community because all of them are actually or potentially subject to the restrictions imposed by laws, policies and practices of racial segregation. However, if one groups or classifies Negroes on the basis of their reactions to racial restrictions, instead of one negro community, there are probably three, a community consisting of those who are in favor of the restrictions, another consisting of those who though not in favor of the restrictions nevertheless say they are for reasons of expediency, and a third consisting of those who are opposed to the restrictions and state or otherwise make known their opposition. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that the advent of public school desegregation has swelled the ranks of this last community and that it will increase in size at the expense of the other two. Accordingly, unless otherwise indicated, in the discussion that follows the term “Negro com-

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munity' will have reference to the group of Negro Americans who are opposed to enforced segregation and in favor of desegregation. Our main concern will be with the responsibilities of this group and of course, its problems with regard to desegregation.

Many of the practical problems of school desegregation have their roots in deep-seated attitudes spawned by the system of enforced racial segregation which has been so much a part of our Negro-white relations, not alone in the field of public education but in such other areas as housing, recreation, employment and transportation. An understanding of the nature of these attitudes and their relationship to racial segregation is part of the process of understanding the practical problems posed by compliance with the desegregation decisions.

I have emphasized the importance of understanding the nature of the deep-seated attitudes that are involved in Negro-white relations. However, I do not mean to suggest that compliance with the desegregation decisions is contingent upon changing individual attitudes about racial segregation. Distinguished lawyers taking part in this symposium doubtless will discuss the role of law in our society and the fact that laws, including the law enunciated by the Supreme Court in the school desegregation cases must be obeyed by all persons to whom they apply, whether or not they are agreeable or in accord with prevailing attitudes.

Most of us, I am sure, accept and comply with many laws concerning which we have adverse attitudes. If vigorous oral and written statements can be said to reflect attitudes it would appear that the attitudes of a substantial number of loyal Americans are adverse to our income tax laws. Notwithstanding these adverse attitudes a high degree of compliance is obtained. Of course, income tax laws and desegregation laws are widely dissimilar. The only point sought to be made here is that the obligation to comply with laws is not contingent on attitudes. Understanding the individual's attitude toward action required by law is important in understanding the dynamics of compromise which operate to secure group acceptance of laws. Compliance, however, comes not merely from personal acceptance or from an individual's compromise with his beliefs but from a recognition that individual beliefs must be accommodated to the greater demands of society as reflected in its laws.

While it is difficult to believe that lawyers, especially constitutional lawyers, actually were taken by surprise by the 1954 school desegregation decision, compliance with it did require a major social readjustment and gave rise to practical problems of considerable magnitude.

It has seemed to me most unfortunate that results of the careful research of social scientists have not been used more widely in a really serious effort to promote national understanding of the practical problems of public school desegregation.

The results of this research of many able social scientists are of enormous assistance in understanding the nature of racial prejudice, the important differences between racial prejudice and racial discrimination, and the efficacy of law in controlling discrimination, even where it is conceded that prejudice may be beyond direct legislative control.
Professor Tumin of Princeton University in a recent book titled *Desegregation — Resistance and Readiness*, presents a case study of a North Carolina community and brings together the findings of social scientists that have a direct bearing on the practical problems of school desegregation. In his book Professor Tumin discusses the distinction between prejudice and discrimination and the belief that discrimination can’t be eliminated until prejudice is removed.

"Prejudice," he says, "has come to stand for a set of unfavorable beliefs about the desires for distance from certain types of persons. . . . By contrast discrimination refers to types of actions taken to keep distance from the disfavored group and/or to prevent that group from having access to certain facilities, such as schools, jobs, and voting."  

He then goes on to say:

> For some time now it has been fashionable to contend that there is an automatic connection between prejudice and discrimination. This implies that the prejudiced person naturally tends to practice discrimination. As a corollary, it is held that discrimination cannot be eliminated except as one first removes the prejudicial feelings which underlie the tendency to discriminate.

More recent research and theory, however, have been very persuasive in demonstrating that there exists a gap between the thing we call prejudice and that which we call discrimination. In this gap a variety of factors can be interposed which will either facilitate the acting out of the prejudice or inhibit the prejudiced person from discriminating. Moreover, it has also become evident that there are significant numbers of people who practice discrimination even though they do not carry in them nearly the amount of prejudice which one would expect on the basis of their discriminatory acts.

No suggestion with which I am familiar has more potential in resolving the school desegregation policies than the dynamic, moving idea that factors can be interposed between private feelings (prejudice) and public action (racial discrimination).

Law is perhaps the most obvious factor that can be interposed to prevent prejudice from being translated into action. The Supreme Court’s desegregation decision is such a factor and it is probably true that in many communities where schools have been desegregated, white people are compromising their private feelings and beliefs to comply with the decision. There is nothing particularly objectionable about compromises of this kind. In fact, it is generally recognized that compromises of private feelings and attitudes is the minimum price to be paid for living in organized society. Despite all this, however, law alone has never been regarded as satisfactory although it may be necessary to permit a “breathing spell” during which time other factors may become operative. One of the objections to laws in controlling manifestations of prejudice is the natural aversion of people, to being forced to do something against which they have strong feelings. A practical problem then, is to bring into play other factors that will encourage, promote, or stimulate voluntary restraint on discriminatory practices.

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION

The effect of racial segregation upon Negroes as a minority group, has been to force them out of the main stream of American life. Those individual Negroes who, notwithstanding the obstacles imposed by racial segregation, get into the main stream find themselves in competition with white Americans who have not been handicapped by an earlier racially segregated environment. It should not surprise anyone therefore, that Negroes who desire for themselves equal opportunity to participate and share in American democratic life, advocate the abolition of enforced racial segregation. Education is so important to effective participation in a democratic society that Negroes have long recognized the disadvantages of separate schools, so-called.

Separate education for Negroes in America existed in colonial days long before public education had attained its present popularity, while economic class distinction prevailed as a European heritage. In this period a few free Negroes in Colonial America were the beneficiaries of separate schools for the masses as distinguished from the classes. The intent on the part of the classes appears to have been to improve the capabilities of the masses for laborious services. Professor Ellis O. Knox commenting on this period observes:

In brief, the fact can be established that separate schools are a part of America's heritage from its colonial era. The few Negroes who were privileged to receive an education became the wards of provisions for the lower economic classes, and received a type of apprenticeship training. Even though the Southern colonies assumed a laissez-faire attitude toward education during the entire colonial period slaves were frequently rendered literate by religious or benevolent masters, but the ultimate aim was to make the slave status more profitable.\(^3\)

Interest in public education grew during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century but the differences between the North and the South over slavery also grew. The Tenth Amendment to the new Constitution placed the responsibility for public education in the several states and public education laws were enacted in the South as well as the North. In the North only a few enactments had separate provisions for Negroes. On the contrary, by 1835 every slave-holding state had laws prohibiting the education of Negroes. It is significant that between 1786 and 1856 philanthropists and religious leaders established separate educational institutions for Negroes in several northern areas where Negroes were free to attend non-segregated public schools.\(^4\)

It is not necessary here to review the incidents of the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period during which racial feeling ran high and left its mark on public education throughout the former slave-holding states. Racial segregation in all phases of public life, including public education, was the order of the day.

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\(^4\) Id. at 270-72.
II. The Current Problem in Statistical Terms

Numerically American Negroes constitute approximately one tenth of the nation's total population. The last official census in 1950 gives the following figures: total population — 150,697,361, number of Negroes — 15,042,286.

In 1950 68% of America's negro population lived in the South where racially segregated public schools were maintained by law and where the Supreme Court's desegregation decision had its sharpest impact. The 1950 census figures show that the total population of the 17 southern states and the District of Columbia where public school segregation was rigidly enforced was approximately 55,000,000. Of this total approximately 11,000,000 or 20% were Negro Americans. Thus, four years prior to the Supreme Court's desegregation decision, while Negroes constituted 10% of the Nation as a whole, they constituted 20% of the population in the geographical section affected most acutely by the decision. This section, commonly referred to as the South, was the section where slavery flourished prior to the Civil War and where at the time of the 1954 decision the separation of the races (segregation) was sanctioned by law, custom or practice, in the major areas of community activity, including public education. What were some of the obvious results of racial segregation in public education? In 1950 the negro school-age population in the South was approximately 2,800,000 or 24% of the total number of school-age children in the South. The average annual per pupil expenditure for negro schools was $95.31. During this same period the per pupil expenditure for white schools was $154.69! Thus, the South by racial segregation in public education operated two educational plants, spending $95 annually per unit produced in one plant and $154 or 62% more annually per unit produced in the other plant! One other statistic should be added here better to demonstrate quantitatively the problems faced by the negro community in relation to school desegregation. For the 1951-52 school year the per pupil expenditure for negro children in the South had increased to $115 while that for Southern white children increased to $190. For the same year the average per pupil expenditure for all children in the 31 states outside the South was $282!

The twentieth century has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the interest in public education on the part of the states, the national government, and private philanthropy as well. Ironically, the South, where the per capita wealth is only two fifths of that of the Nation as a whole has persisted in the expensive attempt to maintain two separate public school systems. In deference to the right of each state under the tenth amendment to control its system of public education the federal government, in providing federal aid to education, traditionally has accommodated itself to racially segregated public education. In general federal aid to education funds are allocated to states

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on the basis of total population. In the actual distribution for white and negro education in segregated school states Negroes are again denied equality. The following statement by Dr. Ambrose Caliver describes the situation as follows:

In practically all southern states there have been until recently glaring inequalities in the amounts received by Negroes from most of the federal funds appropriated annually for education and research. The federal funds are distributed equitably among the states, and, in general, the state funds are also distributed equitably among local administrative units, but discrimination has occurred in the distribution within the local administrative unit.

Funds are allocated on the basis of total population, and according to the data presented, the amount received by Negroes was over $400,000 less than their share of the allotments.

While no extensive study has been made of the situation in recent years, from reports and general observations it is my opinion that the situation has probably not changed very much.

This statistical picture justifies the conclusion that, even if equal opportunity were open to Negroes in other areas of American life, the denial to them of equal educational opportunity handicapped Negroes severely. That equal opportunity was not in fact open to Negroes in other areas of American life simply accentuates this educational handicap.

III. School Desegregation, An Urgent Need

Elementary education is the basis for and foundation upon which all subsequent education rests. It has been observed that American education is preparational in its nature. Every stage is a preparation for a higher stage. Depriving negro children of an adequate elementary education has resulted in disqualifying them from higher education. In a more immediate way it has limited Negroes in their quest for economic security. The tragic fact is that racial segregation in public education has combined with racial segregation in other areas of American life so as to cause many negro children to lack the desire for educational excellence found in many white children whose daily lives are not restricted by the accident of race.

The thorough-going system of racial segregation which still prevails in much of the South has had a sort of "brain-washing" effect on many Americans white and Negro. It has created in many white Americans an image of the Negro as irresponsible, immoral, lacking in ambition and intelligence. It has also created in many Negro Americans an image of themselves as incapable of attaining first class citizenship, forever limited by their racial identity in what they can achieve.

Prior to the judicial repudiation of the separate-but-equal doctrine, it was fashionable to assert that logically Negroes ought to be able to demonstrate their claim that inferiority is not a racial trait by solid achievement in

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7 Id at 19.
the separate compartments assigned to them. A corollary assertion was that the failure to so demonstrate was proof either of lack of innate ability or lack of ambition or both. Also, it was and still is asserted that in challenging enforced racial segregation the Negroes’ primary aim is social equality or racial mixing and not equal opportunity for education, employment, housing, etc. Of course, these assertions ignored and frequently still ignore the fact that the overriding purpose of enforced racial segregation was and still is the maintenance of white supremacy without regard to any possible demonstration of equality in aptitude or achievement. Racial segregation compartmentalizes the community into a white dominant segment and a negro subservient segment and permits maximum control by the white segment over the negro segment. Under racial segregation it has been possible to provide inferior public education for Negroes as has been statistically demonstrated. It has been possible to limit their employment opportunities. It has been possible to compel all Negroes, the cultured and the illiterate, the ambitious and the shiftless, the refined and the immoral, the saint and the sinner, the law-abiding and the lawless, to crowd into those residential areas assigned to them.

In these circumstances, it is understandable that American Negroes who are concerned about their own future and the future of their children seek the abolition of enforced racial segregation in public education, and in American life generally, “with all deliberate speed.” These Negroes are not unaware of the deep-seated nature of the racial attitudes of many of the opponents of school desegregation. They are also aware that in some situations resistance to desegregation has resulted in violence, the closing of schools and the development of racial hostility where heretofore racial harmony and good will appeared to prevail. It is argued that to press for desegregation in these situations makes it virtually impossible for the negro children immediately affected to obtain a satisfactory education and destroys the lines of communication between the races, lines that are essential to any lasting solution to the problem. Both these arguments will be discussed later when we turn to the responsibilities of the negro community. However, these observations can be made here. Acquiescence in defiance of the desegregation decisions may lend more support for the image which negro children have of themselves as doomed to a subservient status and further thwart whatever ambitions they might have for scholastic excellence. Also, the lines of communication between the races within a system of racial segregation normally are based upon the Negroes’ acquiescence in a status of subordinacy and therefore are not lines that would be of much value in pressing for desegregation.

The following statement sums up the reasons for “all deliberate speed” in general compliance with the school desegregation mandate.

The Negro population labors under a double educational handicap. Since the Negro goes to school for fewer years than whites, he receives far less preparation for life and work. What schooling he does

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9 See REPORT OF COMMISSION ON RACE AND HOUSING, Where Shall We Live? (1958).
receive is of inferior quality and therefore has less value than the schooling received by whites. A major weakness of Negro education is the poor preparation of Negro teachers. It has not been possible under segregation to break the cycle of poorly prepared Negro teachers teaching severely handicapped Negro students. Significant improvement will probably have to wait for progress in integration. This was surely a major concern of the Supreme Court when it handed down its epoch-making decision to end segregation in public education.10

From what has been said thus far, it is reasonably clear that I am of the view that the problems of the Negro community in relation to school desegregation have their roots in the general status of the Negro pupil population which the desegregation decision made legally eligible for public educational opportunity without enforced racial segregation. These problems may be summarized as follows:

1. Understanding the nature of the attitudes upon which the system of racial segregation is based. The self-fulfilling prophecy of racial inferiority implicit in racial segregation, when exposed by the objective analysis of social scientists, suggests the proper function of law and the courts.

2. The demonstrable differences in developed potential between most negro children who are the products of segregated environments, and most white children more favorably circumstanced. Here the built-in futility of racial segregation tends to deprive negro youths of desire for education.

IV. THE NEGRO'S POSITION ON DESEGREGATION

Fifteen years ago at the request of the University of North Carolina Press a book was published titled *What the Negro Wants.*11 It contains the views of fourteen Negroes who were considered to represent “left-wing, moderate, and right-wing points of view.” The editor, himself a Negro and one of the fourteen contributors, states in the preface that,

The complete freedom enjoyed by all the contributors makes doubly significant the surprising unanimity with respect to what the Negro wants. Conservatives, liberals and radicals alike want Negroes eventually to enjoy the same rights, opportunities and privileges that are vouchsafed to all other Americans and to fulfill all the obligations that are required of all other Americans.12

The publisher of the book, an American white man, frankly states as follows: “While I disagree with the editor and most of the contributors on basic problems, there is much . . . with which I have to agree.”13 His disagreement appears to stem from the fact that he holds to the view that the Negro is inferior but that this inferiority and resulting prejudices can be eliminated, whereas the book's contributors subscribe to the view that the Negro is not inferior but his condition results from race prejudice and consequent disabilities inflicted by the white man. The publisher concedes that

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10 Ginzberg, *op. cit. supra* note 8 at 60.
11 (1944).
12 *Id.* at v-vii.
13 *Id.* at xxii.
this latter view is the dominant one and that it is held by most scientists. Individual Negroes react in a variety of ways to the limitations imposed upon them by racial segregation and concomitant discrimination. Some Negroes are of the view that it is not possible to eliminate enforced racial segregation and have accommodated themselves to it. This reconciliation has led some to the conclusion that the majority of Negroes in this or that community are not interested in school desegregation. I am not aware that any Negro of national stature today takes the position that enforced racial segregation is satisfactory or in the best interests of Negro Americans anywhere. I have not the slightest doubt that the unanimity of opinion found among representative Negroes fifteen years ago exists today.

That is not to say that unanimity of opinion on the goals to be achieved requires, or can be expected to engender, unanimity about the methods to be used in attaining such goals. Differences in speed, in selectivity of areas, and in mechanisms of enforcement were anticipated by Negro spokesmen 15 years ago, exist at the present time, and can be expected to continue so long as the problem remains with us. There will never be a time when men of intellectual conviction and of good faith can be expected to find in a single approach the solution to a many-sided and highly delicate social phenomenon. Differences in approach, however, should not be confused with, or allowed to alter, basic agreement which has existed and continues to exist among Negro leaders of the necessity for equal rights, opportunities and privileges.

V. THE PROBLEM OF “STANDARDS”

Negroes, especially those who have given serious thought to the matter, have long been keenly aware that enforced racial segregation deprives the Negro of equal opportunity. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the area of public education. The statistics already referred to clearly demonstrate this fact. For some time prior to the time of the filing of the complaints which came before the Court in the school desegregation cases, Negroes sought equality within the separate-but-equal doctrine. In these cases it was fashionable for state school officials to defend segregation by alleging that negro pupils were in fact receiving educational opportunity substantially equal to that offered to white pupils. It became increasingly apparent that it was impossible financially for the states enforcing segregation to provide equal or even substantially equal education separately to white and negro students. During this period, of course, generations of negro students were being produced who were scholastically inferior to white students.

Following the Supreme Court’s decision in the Brown case, opponents of desegregation have been proclaiming what Negroes had been asserting all along, that racially segregated public schools produce scholastically inferior negro students. The segregationists, of course, now advance this evidence of scholastic inferiority as grounds to support their resistance to desegregation. The demonstrable fact that many negro pupils with scholastically inferior backgrounds have the constitutional right to desegregated public educational opportunity poses difficult problems, albeit problems for which the present generation of neither white nor negro pupils is responsible. The problem is
made even more difficult by the fact that the generally restricted environment into which policies and practices of racial segregation have relegated Negroes has given many of them a whole range of standards which are different from and usually lower than the standards prevailing in the dominant white community. Regardless of the causes for the existence of these different or lower standards, clearly it is the special responsibility of the negro community to recognize this situation and moreover to develop programs and adopt measures designed to correct it.

Representatives of the negro community recognize this responsibility. Martin Luther King describes his non-violent resistance programs as embracing the positive concept of cooperation with the constructive forces of good. He emphasizes that "the constructive program ahead must include a vigorous attempt to improve the Negro's personal standards." He recognizes the importance of keeping the record straight as to the reasons for lower standards frequently manifested by Negroes. Notwithstanding this, Negroes are obligated to take steps toward raising these standards. Speaking for the negro community King states, "Whenever we are objects of criticism from white men, even though the criticisms are maliciously directed and mixed with half truths, we must pick out the elements of truth and make them the basis of creative reconstruction. We must not let the fact that we are the victims of injustice lull us into abrogating responsibility for our own lives."

Benjamin E. Mays discusses this responsibility as it relates to negro pupils in his weekly column in the March 28, 1959 issue of the Pittsburgh Courier. Mays refers to the period of slavery and the period between emancipation and the Supreme Court's desegregation decision and the two periods of bondage that "so enslaved the minds of Negroes that millions of them will never be free because in the final analysis freedom is in the mind and it must be achieved. . . ." Mays then goes on to say that "physical slavery and slavery under legal segregation tended to dim and destroy the Negro's desire to learn and achieve. The minds of Negro youth must now be freed; that is, confidence restored and the desire to achieve an unquenchable fire. This task of freeing the minds of Negro youth so that they will be inspired to develop their minds to the nth degree, rests in the final analysis with Negro teachers and Negro leaders."

The Division of Social Sciences of Howard University addressed itself to this problem of standards at its seventeenth annual conference in 1956. A statement embodying the combined thinking of the Division on the principal issues of the segregation-desegregation controversy includes the following conclusions about scholastic standards:

That differentials in the performance level of Negro and white children may be eliminated is not to be gainsaid. The job would require only the same general 'life chances' for the two groups. It can never be achieved under a system of separate education. For even if schools were equalized in a formal manner, differences in community

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14 King, STRIDE TOWARD FREEDOM 222 (1958).
15 Id. at 223.
16 DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AT ITS SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, HOWARD UNIVERSITY, America, The South and Desegregation (1956).
factors which shape the child's motivations, aspirations, and emotional development would remain. Improved performance of Negro children will come only with a significant raising of the general social and economic level of their families. The resultant change in their parents' perspective on education and the elimination of the barriers which frustrate the children in their everyday community experiences will be essential factors in growth. 17

It is submitted that this conclusion indicates both the problem and the responsibility.

Leadership

The negro community has a continuing responsibility to encourage and develop leadership to give guidance to the community in relation to desegregation and to serve as symbols of achievement to overcome prevailing myths of inherent inferiority. Negro leadership also is desperately needed to represent and interpret the negro community to the dominant white majority. Moreover, the development of negro leadership is necessary to provide realizable goals for negro youth who must not be permitted to become disillusioned and despair of their place in our national society. The waste of such an untapped reservoir of human resources could spell disaster in an atomic age.

In the complexities of today's society, discharging this responsibility to produce leadership is no small assignment. Some Negroes in this mid-twentieth century are found competing successfully with white Americans in all areas of American life, from Dr. Ralph Bunche in international diplomacy to Willie Mays in professional baseball. Their diversified activities are conducive to diversified approaches to national problems. America's strength and vitality is in large part the result of the blending of the activity and thinking from its many different areas of national life. Diversity in thought is found among Negroes as in other segments of American society. In many respects a negro professor at one of the major northern, predominantly white institutions of higher learning will have an approach to national problems more closely identified with that of the American Association of University Professors than with the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, even where the specific issue is due process of law in relation to a Negro in Alabama.

It is a fact, however, that all Negroes are exposed to some of the same limitations by policies of racial segregation, and this lump classification provides the least common denominator in the search for leadership of the negro community.

Negroes have long been aware of the need for leadership. In 1934 James Weldon Johnson discussed this need in his book Negro Americans, What Now? He suggested that in the Negro's then situation, diversified leadership was required. He advised a "leading element" rather than individual leaders. 18

In 1944, many of the contributors to the book What the Negro Wants discussed the question of negro leadership. Logan welcomed "The passing of

17 Id. at 13.
both the single leader and of the leadership of a single organization," and suggested an intersectional and interracial conference of national coordinating committees.\textsuperscript{19} Hill also notes the absence of one all-dominating personality and asserts that "today there are many leaders. . . . These are men and women who have strong influence and loyal following in all those areas of action and interest in which Negroes struggle."

Hill further asserts that "the most impressive single fact in this wide dispersion of leaders is the unanimity of their convictions. . . . They want that sense of being acceptable and belonging which can be realized only when there is ungrudging respect for all human personality, whatever the accident of color."\textsuperscript{20} Townsend seems to favor Logan's idea of a coordinating committees of leaders of existing organizations, and speaks of "the dire necessity for a national clearing house form combining the political pressures of all liberal, labor, Negro and religious elements in a united drive to insure the institution of a broad program of economic rehabilitation."\textsuperscript{21}

Hancock views the problem of leadership as one of the most acute intra-racial problems of the day. "There are islands of leadership in an ocean of confusion," he writes. Hancock suggests that serious consideration be given to "a clearing house for Negro thought and opinion which by its very nature would resemble the ancient Sanhedrin of the Jews." This he asserts "would obviate the necessity of these individual leaders with their concomitant ambitions and too often their concomitant jealousies and intra-racial politics."\textsuperscript{22} He suggests a number of difficult questions that would be considered by such a clearing house. The following suggested question, although posed ten years before the Supreme Court's desegregation decision appears relevant today. "Shall Negroes concentrate their fighting energies on segregation, or should they concentrate on prejudice, the cause of segregation?"\textsuperscript{23} Patterson, recognizing that the present status of American race relations is intricate and involved, suggests "sound planning on the part of Negroes themselves — planning that will encompass the overall relationships involved and which will seek to put at work, those who can best work at some particular aspect or relationship."\textsuperscript{24} Hughes has no suggestions directly relating to negro leadership, but he makes the following suggestion which is mentioned here because of its relevance to the basic problem of changing white America's image of the Negro. Hughes suggests that "the government draft all the leading Negro intellectuals, sociologists, writers, and concert singers . . . and send them into the South to appear before white audiences, carrying messages of culture and democracy, thus off-setting the old stereotypes of the Southern mind and the Hollywood movie . . . with each, send on tour a liberal white

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{What the Negro Wants}, \textit{op. cit. supra} note 11 at 19-20.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Id.} at 74.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Id.} at 192.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Id.} at 241.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Id.} at 243.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Id.} at 273.
Southerner . . . and, of course, include soldiers to protect them from the fascist-minded among us." 

In 1958, *Stride Toward Freedom* was published. In this book Martin Luther King, Jr., describes one of the really significant events in present day race relations. The emphasis in the book is on non-violent resistance as a way of achieving equality. King, a recognized negro leader asserts that "the Negro himself has a decisive role to play if integration is to become a reality." 

King does not discuss leadership as such, but his suggestion as to programs leaves no doubt as to his belief in the importance of leaders. He contends that the Negro "must organize himself into a militant and non-violent mass movement;" that he "must get to work on a program with a broad range of positive goals."

A few days ago there came across my desk a pamphlet titled *The Great Awakening.* It was published by the Fund for Adult Education and recites that it includes "a plan for education for leadership." Several observations are made in the pamphlet that are pertinent to our discussion of responsibilities. Stressing the fact that the essence of our free democratic society is a regard for the uniqueness and worth of the individual in his own right, the pamphlet observes that while each individual plays many roles and shares in the making of many decisions, he also engages in community activity by voluntary participation through a network of multiple organizations which make up American society. Further observing that Americans are free to organize and associate voluntarily for a variety of purposes, the point is made that "the effectiveness of these many organizations depends upon the quality of their many leaders."

By cooperative action through voluntary organizations, Negroes have made considerable progress toward freedom from legal segregation. In this progress, leaders have given form and direction to organizational efforts. *The Great Awakening* emphasizes the importance of education for leadership and presents a program for the systematic education of leaders including "the deliberate cultivation of leadership in voluntary affairs." It may be too ambitious to suggest that the negro community has a responsibility for developing a program of systematic education of negro leaders. On the other hand a top level meeting of already recognized negro leaders and a limited number of representative Negroes who may not have attained national stature, seems both feasible and desirable. The purpose of such a meeting would be that of serious inquiry and appraisal.

25 Id. at 305.
26 *King, op. cit. supra* note 14 at 211.
27 Id. at 214.
28 Id. at 221-22
29 An elaboration of an address by C. Scott Fletcher, President, The Fund for Adult Education.
30 Id. at 6.
31 Id. at 15.
32 This suggestion of an all Negro meeting is made at the risk of being accused of racial chauvinism and perhaps a victim of conflicting aspirations. I am well aware that there have been and are now hundreds and perhaps thousands of fair-minded white Americans sincerely dedicated to the cause of equal opportunity for Negro Americans and the elimination of legal segregation from our national life. They can be found today actively participating in voluntary interracial human relations...
At such a meeting these participants could wrestle with the complex and delicate issues involved in school desegregation. Objective and thoughtful consideration could be given to the legal, political, economic, social and educational aspects of various methods and techniques for accomplishing desegregation with all deliberate speed. Consideration could be given to ways and means for informing the Negro community and the dominant white community too, both as to the complex nature of the problem and as to the reasons for advocating any courses of action agreed upon. In such a top level conference it should be possible to agree to an allocation of specific responsibilities to several already existing organizations. Among the organizations to be considered would, of course, be the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It is without doubt the most influential voluntary national organization dedicated to achieving for Negro Americans the equality vouchsafed by the Constitution. The vigorous attacks currently being made against it testify eloquently to this fact.

Best known, perhaps, for its representation of Negro Americans before the judicial tribunals of the land, the NAACP has come to be looked upon by many Americans, white and Negro, as an all-purpose organization. Is it being required to spread itself too thin? It is being attacked because allegedly it is not doing anything about juvenile delinquency and the scholastic deficiencies and low cultural standards of the negro school population it presses to integrate into formerly all-white public schools. I submit that the Negro community has a responsibility to deal with these allegations but should the NAACP be the organization with primary responsibility?

Juvenile delinquency has become a serious national problem frequently related to slums and ghettos. The high rate of juvenile delinquency among Negroes may be inextricably connected with racial segregation and discrimination in employment and housing. Nevertheless a responsibility on the part of the Negro community is indicated. How much of this responsibility should be assumed by Negroes and how much should be pressed upon the agencies of government established to deal with these matters?

Recently it has been necessary for the NAACP to spend a substantial amount of time, energy and money in defense of attacks upon it. Moreover, these attacks have completely immobilized the organization in some areas and in other areas the position is taken that the NAACP is not an acceptable representative of Negroes in conferences looking toward voluntary agreements organizations, often at the risk of social ostracism. My suggestion for an all Negro meeting is certainly not a must, although I dissent vigorously from the idea prevalent in some quarters that it is difficult if not impossible for American Negroes to think objectively about the Negroes' problems and responsibilities. Whether it is possible for a white American to know what it means and how it feels to be a Negro in mid-twentieth century America, I cannot know. Certainly the participants in my suggested all Negro meeting would all know what it means and how it feels. These participants might as a first order of business discuss whether there are any significant advantages at this point in history for voluntary all Negro meetings to consider seriously the present status and future outlook of Negro Americans.

33 The Christian Science Monitor for April 4, 1959, commenting on an editorial in the Monroe (La.) Morning World on Negro leadership quotes the following from an unidentified national negro weekly: "And no matter how much he dislikes being singled out as the logical keeper of his blood brother, the conscientious Negro is compelled to assume that duty if only in self-defense."
on school desegregation plans. What organization, if any, has the personnel adequately to represent Negroes at such conferences where the NAACP is immobilized or unacceptable? It must be remembered that the constitutional right of American Negroes to available public educational opportunity without legal segregation based on race is not a proper subject of mediation or conciliation. However, plans and procedures for effectuating this right may be. For these reasons among others, the conference table where the discussion involves this right is no place for the novice. The questions I have been raising are not susceptible to easy answers. Responsible answers are nevertheless needed. The meeting I have suggested would provide an appropriate forum for a serious and hard-headed appraisal looking toward the best available answers.

The National Urban League is another voluntary organization dedicated to securing equal opportunity for Negroes. It is generally regarded as an agency that is interested primarily in Negro employment opportunities, but it was organized to render a variety of services and is called upon to represent Negroes in a wide range of activities. The Urban League's interest in expanding the employment opportunities for Negroes necessarily involves it in problems of school desegregation. The employment opportunities for the uneducated are severely limited in today's highly complex and technological society.

From its inception the Urban League has given special attention to training young men and women for social service. Its branches located in most of the nation's metropolitan centers are staffed with persons with substantial social service backgrounds and with the special competence needed to understand and cope with the many interpersonal and intergroup conflicts between students in the change-over from segregated to desegregated schools. The participants at the suggested meeting could consider whether the Urban League should be requested to assume responsibility for dealing with certain problems inherent in school desegregation.

About fifteen years ago the United Negro College Fund was organized for the purpose of providing desperately needed financial assistance to private institutions of higher learning operated for Negro students. During a recent campaign for funds to assist this voluntary organization in carrying out its purposes, it was observed that today the thirty-three schools aided by the Fund "face an even greater challenge in providing responsible leadership for an emerging minority group." The overwhelming majority of the students enrolling in these schools come from environments restricted culturally by reason of policies and practices of racial segregation. The suggested meeting should have available for reflection pertinent conclusions reached by the United Negro College Fund based upon its fifteen years of experience.

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84 Once a legal right is decided by the highest court of the land, in this instance the ruling in the Brown case that the concept of separate-but-equal is contrary to the United States Constitution, no room for conciliation or mediation is warranted, or justifiable, or even proper on the subject of whether there is a right to education without racial segregation.

85 Washington Daily News editorial, April 22, 1959. The editorial states that while these thirty-three schools are 90 percent self-supporting, the remaining 10 percent needed in 1959 amounts to $2,250,000.
sideration then should be given to responsibilities, if any, which the organization could effectively assume in relation to public school desegregation.

The democratic creed which stresses the worth of the individual and the constitutional promise of equal opportunity are so much a part of our religious beliefs that it is not surprising that the Negro church has always played a significant role in the struggle of Negro Americans for first class citizenship. In his "Negro Americans, What Now?" James Weldon Johnson severely criticized the Negro church but he asserted that "The Negro church notwithstanding, is the most powerful agency we command for moving forward the race as a mass. It is then not too much to call upon the church to meet the exigency as it met the situation confronting it in slavery days and in the post-civil war period." 36 Ten years after Johnson's assertion Gordon B. Hancock was to say: "The Negro church has borne the weight of responsibility for Negro advance in that it was the clearing house for the race's aspirations. Even now there are no indications that the Negro church is not without a large place in the future affairs of the Negro race. . . . For better or worse the Negro church is fast shifting its emphasis from things emotional to things more essentially related to strivings and contrivings of the race in its broader community relations." 37

Following the memorable Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott by Negroes under the leadership of Rev. Martin Luther King, a new organization was formed called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The leaders of this new organization represent the Negro church in the forefront of the struggle against enforced racial segregation. While at present this organization is sectional rather than national, its program of non-violent resistance has national and even international implications. Of the program King has this to say about the effect of its use in the Montgomery bus boycott: "The Montgomery story is a chronicle of 50,000 Negroes who took to heart the principles of non-violence, who learned to fight for their rights with the weapon of love, and who, in the process, acquired a new estimate of their own human worth." 38

The suggested meeting should certainly give consideration to the responsibility of the Negro church in relation to school desegregation, especially in dealing with problems of moral standards. Moreover, it would seem entirely appropriate for the meeting participants to reflect on the wisdom and practicability of resorting to non-violent resistance in aid of school desegregation.

In addition to the organizations already referred to there are a number of other organizations, some interracial, and some within the Negro community, that have made and are continuing to make substantial contributions to the struggle to eliminate racial segregation and concomitant discrimination from our national life. Negro women's organizations, college sororities and fraternities, and fraternal orders, all have assumed responsibilities, the discussion of which is beyond the limits of this paper.

36 JOHNSON, op. cit. supra note 18 at 25.
37 WHAT THE NEGRO WANTS, op. cit. supra note 11 at 229.
38 KING, op. cit. supra note 14 at 9.
THE ROLE OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY II

Currently there are four Negro Americans who on several recent occasions have made joint appearances on behalf of equal opportunity for Negroes although none claims to speak for or to represent all Negro Americans. They are Roy Wilkins, Lester Granger, A. Philip Randolph and Martin Luther King, Jr. These four could constitute the nucleus of the participants in the suggested top level meeting. At least two representative Negro women should be included and Negro youth certainly should be represented.

A basic problem involves changing the image which white America has of the Negro and changing the image which the Negro has of himself. Individual Negroes, minors and adults, can help by their daily conduct and public demeanor but it may be that the major responsibility for effecting this change lies with those who control the mass media — the nation's daily newspapers, radio and television.

Despite the limited environment in which many Negro Americans must live and work today, an ever increasing number of them are, but for their color and physiognomy, not to be distinguished from the average white American as he conceives himself to be. If this image could gain general acceptance school desegregation would be easier to accomplish. In recognizing and accepting its responsibilities in this regard the negro community will improve the lot of all Negro Americans, aid the nation toward domestic tranquility, and, moreover, strengthen the nation to more effectively represent the free world. On this last point a quotation from Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom* is relevant. Speaking of Negro Americans today Franklin says:

They had become an integral part of Western culture and civilization, and their fate was inextricably connected with it. The rejections which they had suffered doubtless wounded them considerably, but such treatment also gave them perspective and objectivity that others had greater difficulty in achieving. They could therefore, point out more clearly than some others the weaknesses that seemed to be inherent in Western civilization. They could counsel their country, if it cared to listen, concerning its own position in an atomic world. . . . If America's role in the atomic age was to lead the world to peace and international understanding, the Negro element in the population had a peculiar function to perform in carrying outward the struggle for freedom at home, for the sake of America's role, and abroad for the sake of the survival of the world.39

The special problems of the Negro community in relation to public school desegregation are enmeshed in the whole range of problems spawned by the system of racial segregation. Public school desegregation may present problems directly educational or scholastic in nature such as those concerned with differences in aptitude, scholastic performance, and classroom conduct. These problems will probably be entangled with economic and cultural problems of the students' home attributable at least in part to racial restrictions in employment and in housing. As Dr. Mays observed, slavery under legal segregation has, in many instances, robbed Negro children of the

30 FRANKLIN, FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM 604 (2nd ed. 1956).
desire to study and achieve. It has tended also to condition many parents to be satisfied with the subnormal standards of living associated with the restricted neighborhoods available to Negroes.

Thus, racial segregation results in a restricted environment for many Negroes and this restricted environment tends to have a direct impact on the educational aspirations of Negro children. It seems apparent therefore, that the responsibilities of the Negro community in relation to school desegregation are coextensive with the Negro's responsibilities in relation to enforced racial segregation in any and all aspects of American life. Of course, some of the problems such as those already indicated are more immediate than others and accordingly impose more immediate responsibilities.

I am of the view that from a national viewpoint the negro community has a responsibility to itself, to the dominant white community and to the nation to make clear and unmistakable the negro community's approval of school desegregation and opposition to legal segregation based on race. Differences of opinion as to methods, techniques and plans to be sponsored and used in effectuating desegregation should not be permitted to obscure this basic agreement.

The possible damaging effect of school desegregation upon negro children has been a much debated issue since the Supreme Court's 1954 and 1955 decisions. I am acquainted personally with many negro parents who have expressed deep concern about sending their children to a school in process of being desegregated where they may be exposed to the taunts and jeers of unfriendly and even hostile children from the white community. The decision of a negro mother to send her child to a desegregated school, especially one in transition, must often be a difficult one to make. This mother, from her own experience, perhaps, may be entirely aware of the overall damage suffered by Negro Americans from racial segregation, but she cannot know if her own child will suffer by her decision to support school desegregation. The quiet courage demonstrated by many negro children in schools in transition is both reassuring and inspired. I submit moreover, that the segment of American society frequently identified as the negro community, has a responsibility to demonstrate courage in relation to school desegregation, not belligerence, but the dignified courage that will command the respect of most Americans whether or not they are in favor of desegregation.