REPRINTED FROM anvil FOR THE HYDE PARK UNIT OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY—SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES WRITE TO SOCIALIST PARTY 400 S. STATE STREET CHICAGO 5, ILLINOIS
Integration—A Means or an End?

By DEBBIE MEIER

The word integration—a word which today dominates the civil rights movement—means different things to different groups and individuals.

Some cynical, argue that the average Negro in Chicago remains loyal to the Dawes machine because both are largely indifferent to integration. The average Negro wants at least only more of the material comforts which American life offers to whites and still denies him. There is, I suspect, more than a kernel of truth to this, but perhaps it is less "simple" than many civil rights enthusiasts think. Most Negroes went to better schools and better housing and are not, at best, too interested in the racial composition of either. They share, I would however argue with the militant integrationists a desire to be treated as individuals, and not to be excluded or pushed around or afraid because of their race.

However for some middle class Negroes and for a great many of the liberal activists of the civil rights movement, integration has a meaning quite apart from non-forehead or non-white. They may stress an inter-racial-white and-black together image. They sex racism as both the means of creating prejudice and as the purpose and goal of the civil rights movement.

For the blacks the means of the individual are the ends. Progress for them is the extent to which the other means of creating such conflict as the so-called "Negro dilemma." For the middle class Negroes however this means can be a means of propaganda and since its popular label names the race where the housing that is available to Negroes is in great scarcity and where such quotas are backed by institutional pressure. But I think that more important than the decisions on whether to use this as the extent of civil rights enthusiasm is the extent of the housing that is available to Negroes is in great scarcity and where such quotas are backed by institutional pressure. But I think that more important than the decisions on whether to use this as the extent of our sensitivity to the dangers involved.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Our point is actually not integration, but a society in which the rights of the individual and the respect accorded to such individuals are protected by the law. None deny that the quota is an absolute one, for it is determined entirely with respect to skin color. Despite our occasional demagogue attacks on others for using numerical means for moral ends we all recognize that the most successful racial conflict is one where the most potent of all weapons—numbers—are used effectively. We would hope that in the near future numbers would be more sensitive to the fact that in the midst of a long and difficult struggle for equality and human dignity in all corners of the globe we turn hopefully the meaning of the words that we are likely to have to pay some price for the resulting confusion.

In using quotas to achieve equality, we may lose sight of what is, in the meantime, happening to the young civil rights militant (the so-called "New Negro") and possibly what is building up among the Negro "masses.

NATIONALISM

The latter, whose conception of integration is least affected by a desire to live in a proper racial balance, like a brotherhood poster, may become increasingly associated with the various forms of civil rights activity. For Negro militancy is more and more the product of paternalism in an era when he is seeking his individual "abstract" right to be treated with equality and dignity. There are signs of this clash elsewhere, it seems likely that we are seeing the end of the "Powers' time society" and in the labor movement. We tend to attribute it to the slowness of our progress toward integration. But the nationalism and bitterness directed so often toward liberal white allies, which so surprises and frustrates us at the time, may have its roots also in the insensitivity of those whites closest to the Negro movement. For no matter how reasonable we think we sound we are always asking for patience until we are ready. The joke circulating these days among the liberal Negroes, even among the ones who warned the big driver that he was "one of them passive, non-violent Negroes you have been hearing about" is symptomatic.

What passes for realism in white liberal circles today (e.g., the quota system) is too often limited to solutions which take into account the temerity and psychology of Negroes, and the young Negro leadership arising today, may in the end prove more effective.

My recent experiences in civil rights projects and a small part of civil rights literature during the past few years have convinced me that to this young leadership's hard-to-define position is more in the realm of "psychology" than "ideology." Howard Thurman, though rather profoundly remarked once that Malcolm X's followers were no more interested in separate solutions than were his own. He pointed to the way the Negro nationalism movement is the basis of their appeal. What the young Negro is telling us is that we must look for solutions palatable to Negro dignity (thereby reversing the old "Uncle Tom" concept). The black of passive resistance, standing as it does at the root of unhappy that is perfectly suited to this attitude. It is an attitude that doesn't even seem in sight of the problems and is being a dimension of liberal schemes, until such prove successful. It is therefore obvious that the Negro nationalism movement is the basis of their appeal. What the young Negro is telling us is that we must look for solutions palatable to Negro dignity (thereby reversing the old "Uncle Tom" concept). The black of passive resistance, standing as it does at the root of unhappy that is perfectly suited to this attitude. It is an attitude that doesn't even seem in sight of the problems and is being a dimension of liberal schemes, until such prove successful. It is therefore obvious that the Negro nationalism movement is the basis of their appeal.

CONSERVATIVES, PLEASE NOTE
CONSERVATIVES, PLEASE NOTE

As free trade unionists, we of the AFL-CIO, do not hesitate to support the principles of democracy and reject all forms of dictatorship. Totalitarianism—whether it be communism, fascism, Nazism, Falangism, Castroism or Peronism—is reprehensible to us. American labor yields to no one in the vigor and consistency of its opposition to every type of tyranny. Nor has our trade union movement ever shown any preference for one communist clique as against another. We see nothing but evil in communism, whether Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Mao Ts'edong, Tito or Castro is its doctrinal standard-bearer.

Experience has taught us, however, to avoid certain dangerous mistakes in the fight against communism. One mistake often made by sincere anti-communists is to lump together all critics of our economic system with the communists who seek nothing less than the total destruction of that system. Opponents of communism who take this position render great service to the communist conspiracy when they equate democratic socialists and other serious critics of our social system with communists as enemies of liberty. In the present world situation, fraught with danger in Soviet aggression, this mistake can be very harmful to the forces of freedom and peace.

It is not hard to see why rock-rubbed reactionaries should, cautiously or otherwise, resort to such a fantastic amalgam. They are anxious to preserve their privileges. That is why they resist the efforts of the trade unions to assure the workers decent conditions of life and labor and a just share of the national product. For the same reason they consider every urgent need possibly reform, no matter how much it might improve and strengthen our trade unions, as a threat to their “good old days.”

It is, however, very unfortunate when those who take pride in calling themselves liberals fall into the same error. Some of these self-styled liberals have only contempt for trade unionists and democratic socialists. They resent and reject the democratic socialists, especially when they also happen to be trade unionists. Such prejudices, at best, rooted in ignorance or in the utterly unwarranted and dangerous notion that they can speak for labor better than labor can speak for itself.

GEORGE MEANY