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The strategy of protest: problems of negro civic action

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The logical and empirical elements of bargaining are receiving increased attention as the effort proceeds to fashion an analytical tool useful for better understanding the nature of controversy. In many of these discussions, the focus has been on those who enter into the bargaining relationship out of either necessity or hope of gain (4, 9). The notion of bargaining is simplified if one assumes that the need for or desirability of bargaining is given. This is the case when two businessmen, for example, seek goals which are partially incompatible but individually attractive. Each stands to gain if his end can be realized, and to realize it he must deal with the other fellow. There is, in short, an inducement for each to bargain.

Equally interesting is the situation in which one party seeks a goal which it can realize without obtaining concessions from a second party. The second party opposes the realization of that goal, but has nothing which the first party needs or wants, and hence finds it difficult to place itself in a position in which the first party must bargain. This might be called the problem of the powerless. It arises, for example, when a disfranchised group seeks a law giving it the right to vote but, lacking the vote, has difficulty recruiting lawmakers who will support its cause. The most important group today which must act from a position of near powerlessness is the Negro. This article will (a) sketch some of the logical elements

involved in attempts by the powerless to wield power, (b) relate these elements to certain empirical factors characteristic of the Negro in large Northern cities, and (c) describe the consequences of this situation as revealed by issues implicating Negro interests which were studied in Chicago.

Bargaining

By *bargaining*, I shall mean any situation in which two or more parties seek conflicting ends through the exchange of compensations. The ends must not be wholly incompatible (if they were, bargaining would be impossible) nor need the compensations be tangible. Intangible compensations are of importance as well. Bargaining will be distinguished from those cases in which one party seeks its ends by simply persuading the other party to accede by argument or rhetoric. It will also exclude cases of compulsion, in which one party endeavors to use physical force on a second party or so rearranges his situation that literally no alternative is open to him other than the one desired by the first party. The essential element in bargaining is that concessions are rewarded. The task is to find a mutually agreeable ratio for the exchange of those rewards.

These rewards may be either positive or negative. Banfield distinguishes between positive and negative inducements by noting that a *positive* inducement is given "if action

in accordance with A's intention is made absolutely more attractive to B . . . and not because other possibilities have been made less desirable." In contrast, a *negative* inducement is given "if action in accordance with A's intention, although no more attractive absolutely than before the change was made, is nevertheless more attractive relative to the other possibilities that now exist" (1, 2). All other courses of action are made more disadvantageous than the desired course, which is also somewhat disadvantageous.

Certain individuals and groups may wish to bargain, but they may lack the resources to do so—i.e., they may lack any stock of inducements (positive or negative) which they can use to influence other parties to act in accordance with at least *some* of their intentions. Others feel no need to bargain with these people. The question then becomes, how such a group (which I shall call the "excluded" group) can acquire a supply of compensations such that others will want to bargain. In the typical case, the excluded group is separated from others by differences in status, class, caste, or authority, and thus neither persuasion nor compulsion is available as a tactic of influence. Bargaining is not available because the excluded group has nothing the others desire, either in relation to the issue in point or to any future issue which might arise.

It is, of course, not sufficient that the excluded group have some compensations. The leaders of that group—the would-be bargainers—must show that they in fact control the resources and can "deliver" if they commit themselves. Negroes, for example, may represent customers or voters to businessmen and politicians, but if Negro leaders cannot alter the buying habits or switch the votes of their followers, the potential resources are useless. At this point, deception may become important. To the extent that Negro leaders are able to bargain

at all, it is frequently a result of ignorance (or at least imperfect information) on the part of those with whom they are dealing. Since excluded groups (like Negroes) are often excluded precisely because of great status and class gaps, and because these gaps work to reduce information which each party has about the other, ignorance and deception can become very important factors in the strategy of Negro leadership.

Deception is of limited value, however, since it is easily exposed when the bargain is consummated. (It is nonetheless remarkable, the extent to which influence continues to be imputed to leaders of excluded groups even after their inability to deliver has been revealed. This may be a function of uncertainty as to their influence in future cases or a doubt as to whether the revealed failure was a valid test.)

Protest

The problem of many excluded groups is to create or assemble the resources for bargaining. Many often select a strategy of protest. *Protest* is distinguished from bargaining by the exclusive use of negative inducements (threats) that rely, for their effect, on sanctions which require *mass* action or response. Excluded groups often make up in number what they lack in resources, or their cause finds sympathizers among relatively large numbers of other groups. Bargaining might (as noted above) involve the use of negative inducements as compensation—i.e., a promise by one party *not* to act in a certain manner can be, relatively, a reward for the other party. This bargaining situation is based on protest only when these threats rely, for their effect, on the possibility of a mass response. The party against which the protest is directed values something which the excluded group can place in jeopardy. This could range from a certain reputation (which could be harmed

by unfavorable publicity) to a business (which could be hurt by a boycott) and would include, in some cases, a desire to further some civic program without controversy.

There are various forms of protest action: verbal, physical, economic, and political. *Verbal* protest would include issuing denunciatory statements, mounting a campaign of adverse publicity, submitting petitions and memorials, holding mass meetings, and sending deputations to confront the other party. *Physical* protest would include picketing, sit-down strikes (as in places of business), "marches" (as the famous "March on Washington Movement" of 1940-41 [5]), and (in the extreme case) violence (as in the Harlem race riots of the 1930's and later, which, in contrast with many riots in other places, were often initiated by Negroes). *Economic* protest characteristically involves a boycott or threat of a boycott (as in the "Buy Black" and "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns in New York and Chicago in the 1930's) or a strike. *Political* protest requires voting reprisals, taken either by the excluded group or others who are sympathetic to its cause.

The strategy of protest requires more than the possibility of mass action, however. First, there must be an agreed-upon goal on behalf of which mass action can be mobilized. Such goals may be either specific or general, defensive or assertive, welfare or status. The precise nature of the goal sought has important consequences for the kinds of incentives which can be distributed to generate and sustain mass action. A *specific* goal is more typical of successful protest (i.e., protest which in fact involved overt mass action and which thus created a situation with which other parties had to deal in some measure). The March on Washington Movement had the specific goal of securing the adoption of a fair employment practices law (or, failing that, an executive order to the

same effect). The student sit-down strikes had the specific goal of inducing white proprietors to serve Negroes when seated at luncheon counters. Economic boycotts have the specific goal of inducing businessmen to hire Negroes or offer for sale products manufactured by companies which hire Negroes. At the same time, the specific goal is always related to a general, more vague principle. Each specific goal is the immediately sought application of some *general* notion concerning equality, opportunity, or status. This is essential, inasmuch as such principles are an essential incentive with which to mobilize large numbers of contributors to the protest action. Few will benefit personally from the attainment of the specific goal; therefore, general reasons of an ethical character must be offered to attract the support of the many.

The offering of general reasons for specific goals is an important constraint on the leaders of protest movements. It usually means that the specific goal is endowed with a moral or sacrosanct quality which renders it difficult to compromise. This suggests that the discretion of the protest leader to bargain after he has acquired the resources with which to bargain is severely limited by the means he was forced to employ in order to create those resources. Getting into a bargaining relationship for a leader of an excluded group often means, therefore, a reduction in his ultimate ability to bargain. This was revealed in the case of the Negro leader, A. Phillip Randolph, who organized the March on Washington Movement. He was heavily criticized by many Negro followers when the actual march was called off because President Roosevelt issued an executive order creating an FEPC. Some demands were made that the march be carried on for broader goals, demands which Randolph had to resist (5).

Goals may be either defensive or asser-

tive. The excluded group may be seeking to defend itself against some maltreatment or injustice by seeking to block changes in the status quo (such as a land clearance project) or by demanding a redress of grievances (such as police brutality or racial violence). It may assert certain goals, such as a demand for certain jobs, public services, housing, an improvement in the quality of public facilities, or the passage of a law which will alter the status quo in favor of the excluded group.

Goals may involve either the welfare or the status of the group. Welfare goals refer to the direct, tangible improvement in the lot of the group or its members through providing some job, service, facility, or revenue. Status goals imply the elimination of barriers, the creation of opportunities which members of the group may or may not take advantage of. The choice between improving the quality of Negro schools and integrating all-white schools is an example.

A second requisite exists for protest action. There must be an identifiable group or agency or firm which is capable of granting the end sought. There must, in a sense, be not only a specific goal, but a specific *target*. An opportunity for bargaining cannot be created when the target of protest action does not have it in its power to respond to the demands made. A secondary relationship might, of course, be found. Demands might be made by A upon B through a protest strategy even though B cannot satisfy these demands. It may nonetheless be a valuable strategy if C can grant these demands and C is in a bargaining relationship with B. B, in effect, can be compelled to become an intermediary and extract concessions from C (on the basis of an exchange of rewards which B and C value) which are then made available to A.

The target of protest action must not only be capable of responding; there must be

some likelihood that he can be induced to respond. Responses to protest can be conceived of as a weighing of the probable costs of enduring the protest against the probable costs of making the concessions. The cost of being the target of protest action depends on the situation. For government officials and politicians (at least in the North) it *may* mean the loss of votes from Negroes or from sympathetic whites, criticism by articulate elements in the community, adverse effects on the opinion of foreign allies, and so on. For private parties (businessmen, unions, etc.) the costs would involve a deterioration in public relations, a possible loss of business, a fear of government intervention, a loss of manpower, and the exposure to controversy and unpleasantness. (It should be counted as a gain for protest that it might enable some parties to implement goals they feel *ought* to be realized with the rationale that they were "compelled" to do it and hence should not be criticized by opponents of the protest group.)

Limits of Negro Protest

It is clear to anyone who has investigated the matter even casually that there is today among Negroes, in both North and South, a quickened sense of mission and a rising level of expectations. More and more Negroes are expressing a deep discontent with their lot as individuals and as a group. The voices advocating "gradualism" and unhurried change have become fewer and fewer (even though the opinions behind these voices have not, in many cases, been altered). As the Negro has progressed, he has come to expect more and more in terms of equal treatment and improved conditions. Yet for all this heightened sense of urgency, relatively little in the way of Negro protest activity seems to occur. Negro organizations such as the NAACP continue to press legal suits seeking an expansion of opportunity,

while other organizations, such as the Urban League, endeavor to extract concessions by persuasion, re-education, and the dissemination of information. But few protest actions (in the sense in which I have been using the word) are evident. Paradoxically, it would seem that more protest movements are found today among Negroes in the South than in the North. The Montgomery bus boycott, the student sit-down strikes, and other incidents are without parallel in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and St. Louis. Sporadic outbursts occur in New York, but they seem to lack clear direction and firm leadership.

This situation offers an opportunity to apply an analysis of protest strategy to an empirical situation to see if reasons can be found to account for the relatively low level of organized protest among Northern Negroes. To begin, it is apparent that an improvement in the leadership skills and organizational resources of the Negro has occurred at a time when the goals of Negro public life have become less clear and the targets have become more uncertain. In Northern cities in the past, and in the South today, most Negro community goals were specific, defensive, and of a welfare character. The Negro community responded to what were regarded as manifest injustices and public outrages. Anti-Negro violence, police oppression, the denial of ordinary public services, and other oppressions represented specific causes. They tended to unify the Negro community. Few could doubt that they were injustices. They touched, in a visible, direct, and personal manner the lives of identifiable individuals. Verbal forms of protest were often effective in branding the injustice and, given its character, the offense was usually condemned by the norms of the community. Newspapers and civic groups could not defend such offenses. Common decency seemed to demand a redress, and by simply

calling attention to it in a forceful manner, some corrective action could be had—or at least (and this is what is important in this paper) responsible officials could be induced to deal in some manner with the situation. They could not easily avoid bargaining. They sought compensation—the prevention or cessation of criticism from the spokesmen for the community's mores. In an extreme case (such as a race riot), Negroes might organize (as they did on one occasion in Chicago) a picket line around the City Hall in order to acquire bargaining resources in dealing with the police commissioner and the mayor.

Today, the ends which are receiving the greatest attention are those which are often general, assertive, and of a status character. Negroes seek changes in the status quo in their favor in the fields of housing and employment. The problems which are of most concern and which are frequently spoken of as appropriate issues for protest action involve an uncertainty as to specific goals. Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of housing. There is disagreement among influential Negroes as to the source of the problem, what ought to be done about it, and what can be done under the circumstances (12). There is considerable uncertainty as to what Negroes should protest *for*—liberalized mortgage requirements, more police protection in changing neighborhoods, the ending of restrictive real estate practices, legislation barring discrimination in sales and rentals, or some combination of all. Further, anti-Negro practices in real estate do not violate clear community norms as does violence or manifest oppression. In the great majority of cases, no moral stigma attaches to the man who refuses to sell his home to a Negro. The exposure of such acts, by public protest, rarely carries with it any effective sanction. Whites may grant that Negroes have a moral

right to housing, but they usually insist with equal conviction that whites have a right to preserve the character of their neighborhoods.

Second, the targets of protest action have become unclear or ambiguous. In issues where the exercise of specific public powers or the making of definite private decisions were clearly adapted to the ends sought, the target was obvious. The police could be asked for protection, the hotel required to admit Negro guests, the bus line requested to hire Negro drivers, or the legislature asked to pass a law. As the goals of protest action become broader and more general, the targets of that action become similarly diffuse. What is the target for protests aimed at "equal opportunity in housing?" One cannot picket, or boycott, or send deputations to all the real estate brokers, all the mortgage bankers, all the neighborhood improvement associations, or all the community newspapers. If one selects a single target—one house or one block in a certain neighborhood—one *may* gain concessions, but these concessions will be limited to the specific case and will represent no change in policy. Discriminatory practices in housing, in brief, are not the product of public or private decisions by some identifiable decision-maker. They are the result of an infinite number of social choices made by tens of thousands of home owners, landlords, realtors, bankers, loan officers, community groups, and individuals. Some practices undoubtedly can be curbed by legislation, but since the housing market involves many forces beyond legislative control (or any centralized control), laws would be of limited value. This is particularly the case if the goal is *integrated* housing and not simply *more* housing for Negroes. Individuals can be compelled to show that a refusal to sell to a Negro is not based on racial grounds, but they cannot

be compelled to remain in the neighborhood and live side-by-side with the Negro.

Third, some of the goals now being sought by Negroes are least applicable to those groups of Negroes most suited to protest action. Protest action involving such tactics as mass meetings, picketing, boycotts, and strikes rarely find enthusiastic participants among upper-income and higher-status individuals. Such strategies often require recruiting, through intangible appeals, lower-income, lower-status groups that do not consider mass action beneath their dignity. This was not crucially important when the Negro community could respond, with near-unanimity, to indisputable outrages—when, in short, they sought specific, defensive, welfare ends. Many of the goals being sought today, such as access to desirable housing in middle- and upper-income neighborhoods and employment in supervisory, skilled, or professional jobs, do not involve rewards for groups not equipped, by income, training, or disposition, to avail themselves of such opportunities. Even when the goal can be made specific, it becomes difficult to mobilize the masses when (a) the end sought clearly benefits, at least immediately, only middle- and upper-class Negroes and (b) no general, principled rationale can be developed which will relate the specific goal to the aspirations or needs of the rank-and-file. Indeed, as some recent cases suggest, there may be an actual conflict of ends between upper-status Negroes who seek access for their children to desirable white schools with high-quality instruction and the possibility of integrated living and, on the other hand, lower-status Negro parents who desire, simply, more schools and teachers even if they are all-Negro (6, 8).

Fourth, many specific goals toward which action can be directed occur in situations that place a negative value on protest. For example, when (as happened in Chicago

recently) a builder proposes constructing a tract of homes in a white community which will be sold to whites and Negroes on a non-discriminatory basis, an intense controversy is immediately precipitated. Whites offer resistance. A specific issue is at stake—will or will not the houses be built. In this case, Negro protest organizations often feel, with some justification, that mounting a protest campaign against the whites would only aggravate the situation and reduce the likelihood of getting the homes built by giving credence to white fears that the integrated homes are part of a “conspiracy” created by the NAACP and other Negro organizations to “force” Negroes into white areas. Similar problems arise when a single Negro family attempts to buy and occupy a home in a white neighborhood. Often public officials come to the conclusion that the family’s chances of establishing itself are reduced if Negro protest is organized in its behalf. Inducing whites to accept one Negro family is difficult; inducing them to accept a family which the whites believe was “planted” by the NAACP and is, thus, the vanguard of a host of Negro families is much more difficult. To be sure, there are some Negro leaders who seize upon such explanations as a rationale for not doing what they have no taste for doing anyway. But in many cases the problem is genuine. Protest appears to be dysfunctional in just those cases where a specific goal exists to make protest possible at all.

Fifth, Negroes are not organized on a continuing basis for protest activity. The on-going voluntary associations to be found in a northern Negro community are almost always led by middle-class Negro business, professional, or church groups, with a sprinkling of labor leaders (10). These associations invariably lack a mass base. Even more important, those leaders who do command mass organizations are often un-

der clear constraints to avoid protest tactics. At least two of the three principal Negro mass organizations (labor unions and political organizations) are part and parcel of city-wide unions and political groups. They derive the incentives used to maintain their organizations (jobs, patronage, appointments to staff positions, money, slating for office, etc.) from sources controlled by whites. Negro labor leaders and politicians tend to reflect the character of labor and political movements in the city as a whole. It is only when the labor or political groups of the city are weak, divided, or faltering that Negro leaders in these organizations can act with some independence. (This is the case in New York, for example, in the relationships between Tammany Hall and Harlem.) It becomes very difficult to organize political or economic protest movements that require strikes or switching votes. To attempt this would involve challenging established leaders in these fields. Even assuming such leaders could either be induced to protest or somehow bypassed, it is not at all clear that traditional voting allegiances could be overcome in a manner that would permit protest leaders to threaten realistically election reprisals against public officials.

This means that Negro protest leaders, in dealing with white politicians, often must employ deception or rely on imperfect information when they suggest that they speak “for” Negro voters. Surprisingly, many politicians can be influenced, at least marginally, in this way. Doubts exist, if not as to which way Negroes will vote, then as to the size of that vote. Hopes exist of improving one’s individual position with Negro voters. But these are minor bargaining resources. Usually both sides realize that no organization exists which can switch any significant number of Negro voters in a predetermined manner.

Problems of Coordination

If these observations are correct, the prospects of vigorous, extensive, and organized Negro protest in large northern cities are poor. The danger confronting the Negro community in many places today is not extremism, but impotence. However, these conclusions regarding the logic and nature of protest do not cover all cases. Opportunities remain for this strategy, but these opportunities are of a limited character and present problems in themselves.

Protest action is best suited to situations in which the goal sought is defensive, specific, of a welfare character, relevant to the wants of the Negro rank-and-file, and has an explicit target. Such opportunities are found in greater number in the South than in the North today, but they are by no means absent in the North. Discriminatory practices are still to be found in many hotels, hospitals, restaurants, and places of employment. Existing voluntary associations in many, although not all, Negro communities are not absorbed in these tasks. For a variety of reasons—including the kind of people recruited to these agencies, the interests of the professional staffs, and budgetary needs—many of these associations are more concerned with broader problems involving goals which are assertive, general, of a status character, having multiple targets, and relevant more to the interests of the Negro middle and upper class. (This is not to dispute the possible validity of the argument that gains for middle-class Negroes in the long run mean gains for Negroes as a whole, because of the precedent or symbolic value of such advances. But people are hard to mobilize for protest action aimed at goals which, for them, have only indirect or symbolic value.) This means that stimulating protest action may require, in many cases, focusing attention on goals of a lesser order than those now being discussed.

Further, it may well mean creating organizations specifically adapted to these protest ends. Neither the NAACP nor the Urban League, in almost any city, is equipped to engage in such activity as it is now organized. Persons with the necessary leadership skills would, of course, be hard to find, as most are already either (a) committed to an existing Negro association, or (b) indifferent to civic action, or both. Further, the resources—in terms of time and money—for civic action are very scarce, and a new organization would only intensify the competition for these resources. At present, the NAACP is competent to issue verbal protests, provide legal assistance, and initiate court fights on behalf of Negroes, while the Urban League is sometimes able to negotiate (although usually with few, if any, bargaining resources). Other forms of protest are typically outside the province of most existing Negro associations as they are generally organized.

The task is to create the possibility of meaningful bargaining on a whole range of issues by being able to offer other parties the compensation of ending a protest campaign. This implies a division of labor between protest leaders and bargainers. In some cases, such a division in fact exists. In New York City, for example, the Urban League often finds itself presented with opportunities for negotiation because an extremist leader, such as Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., has brought some city agency or private party under heavy fire. This is true even though many Urban League leaders often deplore Powell and his tactics; for them, Powell is a useful nuisance. An ideal strategy would include a protest organization campaigning against certain targets (a, b, and c) while another agency bargained for certain ends (A, D, and E). In one case, the target (a) and the goal (A) would be identical, and the strategy would

be a *primary* one. If the goal (A) is conceded, the protest against the party which concedes the goal (the target, a) would be ended. In another case, the goal (D) differs from the target (b). Concessions from b would be extracted because b stands in some bargaining relationship with d, who can grant the goal (D). This would be a *secondary* strategy. For example, obtaining more middle-income public housing units might be the goal, but the target would be an urban renewal program which would displace Negroes. The campaign against urban renewal would be reduced if the goal were granted. The bargaining linkage here might be between the Negro association which induces the backer of the urban renewal project to prevail upon the city housing authority to construct the housing project.

Some approximation of this does, in fact, occur on occasion. The difficulty is that it places a great premium on coordination among Negro leaders and organizations. This coordination is rarely easy to obtain. First, the various leaders may not agree on what goals should be sought. The would-be bargainers, in a typical case, might very well find more Negro public housing an objectionable goal since it might easily result in the placing of lower-status Negroes in the neighborhoods of upper-status Negroes. Second, the protest association might well resist being "called off" for the price of a few housing units. This limited goal may not be sufficiently endowed with ideological significance to be the basis for mobilizing support for the campaign. The rank-and-file might feel that they were "sold out" by leaders who accepted such a concession rather than fighting the urban renewal project to the bitter end. The problem is to select a limited goal (so that there is some hope it can be obtained and so that it can plausibly be the subject of bargaining) and

imbue it with enough significance so that it can provide incentives for action. Third, the protest and the bargaining groups would be radically different in character and thus find it difficult to work together comfortably. Each would be in competition with the other for scarce resources (personnel, contributions, publicity, etc.). Further, each would recruit members and leaders from different walks of life with differing temperaments and interests. There is no logical necessity that would prevent these two groups from coexisting peacefully and cooperating smoothly, but in fact cooperation (and sometimes even coexistence) seem impossible.

This raises a point about which Negro leaders themselves often speak. It is customary to assign to the NAACP and the Urban League, for example, distinctive roles and equal credit. Each has its function and each deserves support, one is told. One may prefer the League to the NAACP, but one recognizes the need for the other group. These amiable statements, however, often thinly conceal a great deal of tension between "League" types and "NAACP" types, particularly if (as is often the case) the leaders of the two organizations display strongly differing political styles (12). One group tends to be suspicious of the other. Normal organizational rivalries are intensified by tactical and temperamental differences. Suspicions are aroused about the motives and purposes of the other party. Cooperation becomes more difficult because one group has grave reservations about the ends and tactics of the other and thus finds a coordinated venture filled with uncertainties and possible risks.¹

¹ An apparent exception to the difficulty of coordinating protest action is the case of some Southern sit-in demonstrations. In cities such as Nashville, Tenn., and Montgomery, Ala., the spontaneous student sit-in strategy caused deep

A strategy of secondary protest, with its attendant problem of coordination between two associations with differing end- and incentive-systems, points once again to the practical virtues of emphasizing narrow, specific goals with unambiguous targets. That such goals and such targets are to be found in abundance cannot be doubted. The immediate and tangible needs of Negroes, particularly for more and better jobs, are manifest. An argument can be made that increasing the net disposable income of a minority group is, over the long run, the best way to make possible those larger gains which seem to elude protest action at the moment. In part this can be justified

concern among both white and "established" Negro leaders. The problem for the established Negro leaders (the lawyers, ministers, politicians, etc.) was to bargain with their white counterparts in order to gain some concessions in policies governing white lunch counters in return for ending the sit-in movement. Successful bargaining required that the Negro leaders be able to control the student demonstrators. In Nashville and other cities, when some agreement was reached, the sit-in strikes were in fact ended. This suggests a remarkable degree of coordination among Negro groups which, at the outset, were somewhat suspicious of one another and which had few common goals or common organizational memberships. I am told by certain Southern Negro leaders that the device by which the "established" Negro leaders acquired control over the student strikers was the bail money which the arrested students could not furnish themselves. In Montgomery, for example, a large sum was apparently collected by Negro leaders to use on behalf of student strikers. It is reported that when some students showed a reluctance to agree to tactical moves suggested by adult leaders, a withdrawal of this financial support was threatened. The threat proved effective in most cases. Some student leaders attempted to assert their independence with the slogan, "Jail, Not Bail," but did not command a large following when it became apparent that a jail sentence could be for as long as 30 or 60 days.

by the fact that in some areas, opportunities for Negroes are appearing faster than Negroes can prepare to take advantage of them. This is particularly true in fields where specialized skills, or simply a relatively high level of education, is required. Further, such anti-discriminatory measures as FEPC laws (although of value insofar as they permit Negroes to enter formerly all-white occupations) have not always been equally successful in permitting Negroes to rise into better-paying jobs. Greater access to such positions is probably essential if net Negro income is to be increased substantially. In addition, increased income, held over time and in conjunction with other factors (such as education), will work in the long run to reduce the *class* differentials which account for part (although certainly not all) of anti-Negro feeling. If this has any truth, then there is some real reward in organizing, to the extent circumstances permit, protest action aimed at employment goals—goals which are specific, have a welfare pay-off and identifiable targets, and implicate the interest of the rank-and-file.

Negro Protest in Chicago

That this is the case in at least one Northern city can be seen from an examination of seventeen issues involving Negroes in Chicago during the period 1958–60. These issues, the details of which are reported elsewhere (12), ranged across all areas of public life, including housing, employment, medical care, police protection, and education. The case histories of these issues were for the most part incomplete, as the issues themselves tended to be "truncated"—they were either perennial issues which seemed to have no ending, or they were attempts to influence public policy which came to nothing. In general, Negroes exercised relatively little *intended*

influence over public policy, although they exercised a great deal of *unintended* influence by being the objects of the concern of others. Thus, Negroes were important in the sense that others took their *presence* (but not their activity) into account in making decisions regarding, for example, whether and where to build a county hospital, a new school, or a housing project.

Few Negro-initiated proposals (such as FEPC or open occupancy housing laws) become public policy. Occasionally, Negroes were able to block the proposals of others. These "vetoes" were often effective, in such cases as the opposition to construction of a branch of the county hospital, because the simple act of raising the race issue injected sufficient controversy into the problem that it could not be easily disposed of by "civic leaders" who were anxious to maintain a non-controversial reputation (11).

Of the seventeen issues examined in Chicago, the problem was raised or created by whites and white groups acting on behalf of Negroes in three cases, by both Negroes and whites in seven cases, and by Negroes alone in seven cases. In nine cases, little or nothing resulted—i.e., Negro demands did not affect public policy or private actions. In four cases, minor changes were noted—the Mayor was interested in problems of private hospital discrimination, there was a slight improvement in police protection in Negro areas, there appeared to be a slight lessening of police maltreatment of Negroes, and relocation procedures in urban renewal were improved. In four other cases, there was a clear impact on public policy—a shake-up occurred in a district police station in order to intensify narcotics investigation, a new vocational school was constructed, the building of a county hospital branch was delayed significantly, and some Negroes were hired in a downtown bank.

Several aspects of these limited successes

are of interest. First, the ends successfully attained rested for the most part on demands for public services or minimal standards of justice that are difficult for whites to deny publicly or reject. They seemed to be demands for things that any citizen is entitled to as a matter of obvious principle. They were, as compared to demands for equal opportunity in housing or employment, relatively easy to justify, although not easy to attain. Second, they were demands which, in most cases, involved only the Negro community and not the city as a whole. Relatively few whites would be affected by the attainment of such ends. In those cases where whites were significantly affected (the demand for Negro employees at a large white bank and the placement of Negro physicians, to treat Negro patients, in white hospitals), the greatest effort was required. In the former case, a picket line was organized over a period of many days. In the latter case, a sustained effort by a *white* organization (the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, a public agency in the Mayor's office) has thus far produced only an interest and some action on the part of the Mayor. Finally, most of the issues in which some progress was made were not part of the agenda of existing Negro-led voluntary associations. In the instances in which relatively dramatic and clear progress was made (the police district scandal, the bank picketing, the new vocational school, and private hospital discrimination), the effective agents of change were neither the NAACP nor the Urban League. In the school and hospital cases, white groups (a citizen's committee in the former case and a public commission in the latter) took the lead, albeit with Negro cooperation and assistance. In the other two cases (the police and bank issues), the issue was waged by simple protest tactics by *ad hoc* groups of Negroes.

Although neither the NAACP nor the Urban League was indifferent to these matters, for a variety of reasons they tended to stay out of them. In the police and bank cases, the issue seemed to be in the hands of people of uncertain reputation, lower-class backgrounds, or dubious motives. In the other cases, the established voluntary associations were divided as to ends or tactics and hence constrained from acting vigorously.

It has been frequently observed that these on-going Negro organizations lack the capacity for mass leadership. Indeed, that is a continuing theme of Negro criticism against them (7). The importance of this lies in the possibility, which this analysis of the logic and data of a protest strategy suggests, that the emerging center of gravity in the Negro civic life—the voluntary associations—may be pursuing in great part ends which neither reflect the direct and tangible interests of rank-and-file Negroes nor represent the areas of most likely success. Other areas, of less interest to the associations, may be the most vulnerable points in the defense of the larger community. The “agenda” of the associations may well be significantly different from the agenda of the Negro community.

The Meaning of Apathy

Many Negroes and some whites frequently comment on the lack of “Negro leadership.” The absence of effective Negro civic leadership is usually ascribed to apathy, indifference, or conservatism. Such “explanations” actually explain very little. They are, for the most part, merely another way of stating the problem. In this paper I have suggested that the apparent absence of concerted protest action among northern Negroes can be accounted for by the nature of the ends sought, the diffusion of relevant targets, the differentiation of the Negro

community along class lines, and the organizational constraints placed on Negroes as they enter into partial contact with the white community. If these factors, rather than “apathy” or “Uncle Tomism” provide a plausible explanation, then additional research is called for into the manner in which the relationship between ostensible ends, organizational constraints, and social stratification will vary among Negro communities. The task would be to uncover the variations which exist between stated goals and existing incentives for action toward those goals in a number of cities.

Preliminary research (12) suggests that the reason for the higher level of protest activity among New York Negroes as compared to those in Chicago is that the formal and informal political leaders and the officers of prestige-conferring voluntary associations in New York feel they must reward, as a result of their own maintenance needs, vigorous Negro leaders. Negroes protest more in New York because the desired outcome of protest (i.e., entering into a bargaining relationship with the other party) is much more likely than in, say, Chicago. In turn, this outcome is more likely because target organizations in New York have a greater need for the compensations which Negro protest leaders can offer—a cessation of public criticism and controversy. To explain why these compensations are valued more in one city than another would take us too far afield here; the example is offered only to show the possible lines of theoretical and empirical research which emerge out of an examination of protest as a civic strategy.

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