

Negroes than ever before, but we have more poor people than ever before, and we have fewer people in that income ~~class~~ class that we put them. So I'm talking sheer economics now, and the figures will show that we have more unemployment and more impoverished Negroes today than we had ten years ago. But we also have more in the middle class; so just from the economic standpoint, the gap is there.

MR. WARREN: The question is what is the spiritual gap? What is the gap in-- of a failure of identification?

MR. YOUNG: Yes.

MR. WARREN: Well, that's the distinction I'm getting at now. I'd like to talk about that now.

END OF TAPE 1 in a Conversation with MR. WHITNEY YOUNG.

MR. WARREN: Now you were going to say something about the split between lower-class Negro life and middle-upper-- upper class Negro life. First, economic split; you were talking about, and now the matter of the spiritual split-- is it widening or narrowing?

MR. YOUNG: Two things are happening. On the one hand there is a greater sense of pride in race and there is a solidarity as far as goals are concerned, but there has developed and is developing this gap on an economic basis that sets up social and geographic distances; and in the North it poses another problem in that the ability to

communicate and to understand common goals and make common cause was much greater in the South, where regardless of the affluence of an individual Negro or his education, he was still denied the same things that a poor Negro, so the poor Negro and the middle-class educated Negro could make common cause easily, and this brought a sense of restraint and balance and everything else to the groups seeking its rights. Now when you get to the North, because the Negro of affluence can, in most cases and increasingly so, escape in the sense that he can move away from the ghetto, he can move-- go to the theatres, he ~~can~~ can go to the restaurants and the schools, the better schools, it makes the identification of the common cause between the lower-class Negro and the middle Negro much more difficult to identify. Now this-- what this means is that the lower-class Negro in the North can say, or at least be suspicious of the intervention of the middle-class Negro, and he makes it much more difficult, he makes him prove why he is involved in civil rights, why is he concerned about it. This means that many Negroes who aspire to get involved become discouraged because they aren't warmly and immediately accepted by the masses, and it also means that the ambitious demagogue or rabblrouser in the lower class is able to influence, and the masses easier and to discredit responsible leadership.

MR. WARREN: You've answered my question right on the tip of ~~me~~ my tongue: the great problem of leadership that

is caused by this fact, that's the real danger, isn't it?

MR. YOUNG: This is the real danger, especially as long as the climate is so fraught with poverty and with the type of conditions that would make demagoguery easy, as long as there's mass unemployment, as long as there's poor housing and all of this, this makes a natural breeding-ground, the arguments are so plentiful. Also, the Negroes have learned through observation of the southern demagogue, how he has exploited the fears and the ignorance of poor white people, using race as a factor. He watched Bilbo, he saw him, he listened to him, he saw Gene Talmadge with his red suspenders do the same; and now that Negro who's opportunistic, he certainly uses what he has learned so well in the South, and has seen, to exploit and to capitalize on the impoverished illiterate, unemployed Negro.

MR. WARREN: Has this led to serious cracks in leadership in terms of bids for power, do you think?

MR. YOUNG: It's made it much more difficult for responsible leadership to intervene and to get the emotional response out of the masses of Negroes-- but I think another thing in that picture is that the mass media has, either, I hope, unconsciously enough, not consciously, they have helped in the build-up of the demagogue.

MR. WARREN: I read your speech.

MR. YOUNG: Yes, and this, you see, is in effect the only person that the masses see on television, on the front

pages of the newspaper speaking for their hopes and their dreams and their aspirations, is a demagogue, and this contributes to this inability or the difficulty of the responsible leader getting the confidence, and even getting the awareness of the masses that he is working in his behalf.

MR. WARREN: What do you think of the remark that one encounters now and then, that the people who should be most alarmed about Malcolm X are the Negro leaders, responsible Negro leaders, and not whites.

MR. YOUNG: No, I disagree with this. I think the people who should be most alarmed are white people, because ~~Malcolm~~ Malcolm X is but a symptom. There are many Malcolm Xs around; there are people who have a genius for cussing out white people, and we will have many more developing. This is a symptom of an evil and a frustration and a feeling of despair and hopelessness in a society, and it seems to me that it reflects the feelings of white people. The other thing is is that white people will temporarily buy or will even find interesting and amusing, and certainly newsworthy, in Malcolm X, not because they really feel that he can mount a massive military activity against them, but because he is preaching a kind of separatism and a kind of Negro self-help and isolation which many white people find very appealing, and there is a lot of wishful thinking. What they forget is is that Hitler was able and Mussolini were able to develop great efficiency and build roads and hospitals by preaching hate, and that eventually this hate will turn

against people. But I-- Negroes, per se, find Malcolm X entertaining, they get a vicarious pleasure out of hearing him curse out white people; since they've been kicked around all day, and they are quite amused by the way the white press and the white community seems to get aroused, and this tickles them -- how he can get front-page coverage and he can scare people and all of this, but the Negro community wouldn't ten people follow Malcolm X to a separate state.

MR. WARREN: Not to a separate state.

MR. YOUNG: No, even if America gave him one. And Africa doesn't want our caseload, welfare load any more than New York wants it. They want chemists and physicists and engineers, so they're not fixing to open up their doors to impoverished Negroes in New York.

MR. WARREN: Would you say to this remark by Adam Clayton Powell, that the leadership of all the old-line organizations is finished? They have no political-- no significance anymore.

MR. YOUNG: Well, I think this--

MR. WARREN: Count the votes he says 900,000 is the biggest you could think of-- your wildest dreams. A source of votes, 12- or 14- thousand available elsewhere to other kinds of organizations and to other kinds of impulses.

MR. YOUNG: Well, I think here again Mr. Powell is reflecting in his attack on national Negro leadership, his frustration and his own inability to reach this kind of national status. He would like a great deal to be seen not

as just a leader of a district here in New York City or a Harlem, leader; he would like to be seen as a national leader and he has been constantly rejected in this role, and I guess the climax to this and this is what really started this, set this thing off, was the march on Washington; when Adam Powell managed even to get in the pictures, was not called upon in any major role. I think also that Adam Powell has a choice. He has to decide whether he's going to do like the Southerner whether he's going to keep his position in Washington by doing a daily dedicated visible work for Negroes, and make a real contribution; or whether he's going to use the technique of the demagogue and stay in office simply by building up a strawman called the white man who's out to ~~get~~ get him, and he's their great protector.

MR. WARREN: It's very funny how discussions of him provoke in some quite responsible Negroes with great evasions, unlike your reply. That it really offers a test case of this.

MR. YOUNG: Usually they pull away on-- where they're afraid to take him head-on.

MR. WARREN: a discussion like this.

MR. ? I've done it publicly and Whitney has taken

MR. WARREN: I know that, I know that, I know that, I'm not--

MR. YOUNG: Well, I understand the other reason. I understand the other reason, that in a war, and many Negroes conceive of this as a war, that you should not criticize anybody who's out cussing out white people for whatever reason, and there are a lot of Negroes who find Adam Powell

again, entertaining, because he acts like white people, and this, they think, is a thing that's upsetting white people, again. If white people didn't attack Adam Powell so much, Negroes would not rally to his defense so much. If--

MR. ? through the United States.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. But they do attack him, and as such Negroes just get defensive any time a white person who attacks a Negro.

MR. WARREN: This element's there, this is--

MR. YOUNG: But I would like to say this: that's example. Again, that established Negro leadership has the support when the issues really get serious and crucial, not facetious, was the march on Washington, for example, its success which was spearheaded by the established organizations through their machinery, and the failure of the stall-ins.

MR. WARREN: You think to tie those two together is not necessarily the side of the same coin?

MR. YOUNG: Yes.

MR. WARREN: I forgot to ask you that.

MR. YOUNG: You see these are the only organizations, particularly the Urban League and the NAACP that actually has the machinery in terms of local affiliates and established knowhow in community organization, and the basic confidence of the Negro community. You see many people did not bring their cars to New York because they were not at all sure that an Isaiah Brunson could bail them out if they got put in jail, and all this. So again, there is an emotional reaction

which many reporters pick up and identify as these are the people speaking, that Negroes are following and all this; but when it gets down to meat, bread and potatoes, they show up at the Urban League office. When they really get in trouble, need a lawyer or something, they go to NAACP. But as long as it's an entertaining evening then they'll listen to some of this other.

MR. WARREN: Tell me this: How much liability has the white affiliation of the Urban and NAACP been, do you think?

MR. YOUNG: I think it's made us vulnerable to certain attacks, but I would think that if it hasn't seriously hurt us that deep down inside Negroes know that they cannot go it alone, they cannot establish their own General Motors, their own A & P chain of stores, their own chain of banks; that we are dependent, that certainly the two societies are interdependent, and the reason that I know that Negroes are never taking this type of philosophy seriously, is that none of the people who espouse it ever suggest that they themselves will withdraw from an association and dependency ^{all} on white people. Mr. Powell, for example, doesn't withdraw from the Democratic Party; and Negroes certainly don't dominate it; he doesn't withdraw from Congress. And Negroes certainly don't dominate it. He doesn't turn down the salary that he receives from Congress -- and I'm sure Negroes pay a very small per cent of it. Malcolm X and the Muslims don't tell their Negro followers who pay them big dues, that they should quit their jobs if ~~what~~ white people are

in charge. So it's not a consistent-- nobody says Negroes ought to move out of their houses unless they're owned by Negroes. So that it falls down at the level of serious consideration.

MR. WARREN: What about the ~~his~~ role of you-know, this poor fellow, the white liberal, who's been so beaten around the ears lately by Jimmy Baldwin and some others, who's called a plague and a nuisance and goodbye to all this, what is the role of a white man in such a thing as the Negro revolt, revolution, movement or whatever you choose to call it? What is his reasonable role?

MR. YOUNG: Well, I think the role of the white liberal now is to mass a real assault on getting the Negro included in basic social reform movement of this country. You see the liberal's role earlier ~~q~~ was to help-- to help bring about, say, some of the social welfare measures and labor legislation, some of the things that went on during the earlier, the New Deal period of Franklin Roosevelt and all that, but when these things got established, then the labor, you see, became conservative and liberals really had nothing to hold on to, because they had not extended the social revolution to the Negro in the sense that the Negro was any-more than a partial beneficiary. He was not in the strategy of policy-making, he had not been included as a participant in the social reform. Now liberals missed a real bet, I think, when they did not immediately jump on the Urban League's proposal for a massive Marshall Plan. This is a point at which the liberal could have intervened and been

very meaningful. Instead, he let the other people call this preferential treatment, and so the Negro situation moved on in to some more extreme demands where the liberal found he could not identify. Now we're at a point where the Negro ought to be able to say to the liberal: Look, I'm upset about the discrimination in the Labor Movement, but I know that I must not be against the labor movement. I'm upset about some other things, but I know that we have to work together on the common goals of better housing and better education and better social legislation. In turn, the liberal ought to be able to say to the Negro that I am opposed, maybe, to the activities of the Triborough bridge or the stall-ins, but I am all for these other things, and on this we must keep together.

MR. WARREN: Now here is one of the points where some Negroes want to jockey the liberal into an all-or-nothing deal. They ~~ix~~ say you've got to support the stall-ins, the Triborough bridge, anything else, or you're out.

MR. YOUNG: Yes.

MR. WARREN: But that's-- is as a tactic that is used.

MR. It's tactic, that's the problem.

MR. YOUNG: I'm not sure that it's pure tactic. I think what we're witnessing here is a new group that suddenly finds some power and strength and influence and it is able to attract mass tension and it's a new experience to be able to want to have this kind of group solidarity and be able to through one's weight around and be the constant source

of all news stories and television, and there's a period of sort of a tasting this and getting accustomed to it, and then I think the realization will set in shortly, after the Civil Rights Bill is passed, after the signs are down, after Mayor Wagner and the governors submit executive orders and all this, and there will be nothing technical to attack, and the Negroes will still be heard hurting at this point. If liberals are now mobilizing to address themselves to massive remedial programs, there will be a point here within the next year when they will be able to come back together again, but I think the Negro is just like you-
know, ~~same~~ ^{same} case a person just learning to walk, he's trying out his legs and doesn't want anybody to help him. He's-- he's just-- for the first time and he's got to experience this for a while, and the liberal will have to be not just tolerant and patient, but he will have to be mobilizing now to provide this other help that the Negro's going to need, and then when we get back to the other he will have to insist on working with the Negro and in some cases letting the Negro provide the leadership.

MR. WARREN: The Negro must provide, clearly, I should think, a fundamental leadership, his show.

MR. YOUNG: Well, that's as far as the basic civil rights are concerned.

MR. WARREN: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: But when it comes to the basic social

reforms that are needed in this country for all people,
of this isn't a question of the Negro providing leadership;
it's a question of sharing in cooperative leadership of
these people.

MR. WARREN: I would refer to that limited objective
of civil rights.

MR. YOUNG: Yes, but you see what's happened is, even
very liberal papers like The New York Times came out and
instead of grabbing hold of the Marshall Plan they again
called this preferential treatment. Now at the same time,
almost a few days later they applaud the Appalachian, a special
effort for these people, they urge that massive help be
given to Alaskans after the earthquake, they applaud a
special help to the Hungarian refugees and the Cubans. But
with the Negro they come back and say, no, he must be treated
as an individual, not as a community.

MR. WATTEN: Let's put it this way: What's wrong with
an inclusive program? We could say that the highest per-
centage of the underprivileged in New York City are Negroes.

MR. YOUNG: Well-- but this is what--

MR. WARREN: inclusive so that it doesn't
carry this liability which it now carries.

MR. YOUNG: Well, you see we didn't give it-- the
civil rights community, the Negro leaders did not give it
this label, preferential treatment. Now if you'll recall,
this ~~label~~ label was called-- ~~put out by~~

MR. WARREN: It was put out by Stanley Lowell of the Civil Rights, of the Mayor's Committee-- commission.

MR. YOUNG: Now what we called it was a special effort in the low income groups with the people who are especially disadvantaged-- now there are white people who live in those communities and we were thinking, as Commissioner Kepple pointed out, he said thank God for the Negro revolution; it may lift the level of education for everybody in this country. And at this point I think instead of the poor white voting for Wallace as they did in Milwaukee, he should be applauding the effort of the Negro to get some of this because he will be the greatest beneficiary of it, you see, of improved education, improved housing, for everybody.

MR. WARREN: Now this-- I know this is your view, but somewhere, something has gone askew about this, because the emphasis has gotten lost, even among people who ought to know better.

MR. YOUNG: What, I wonder, has the emphasis? Has it really gone askew or are we for the first time, as the revolution has moved to the North, as the liberal in the North is now being called upon to express his real feelings, not just in terms of indignation about lynching in Mississippi, but about people living next door to him and about people going to his schools. Are we now reaching a point where we're just-- we're just beginning to get what the real feelings of people happen to be and they're coming to the

surface. I know the expression, that the Triborough bridge, for example, on the part of these commuters who were being delayed twenty minutes to get to their martinis out in Westchester, that their reactions were as vile, their language was as vicious and as vulgar and as hate-filled as any language that I have ever heard in Mississippi. And the hatred on their faces and the way they threw the things out of the car at the people, would have done justice to any Klan meeting. Now on the surface we say, well, gee, this is terrible; this is too bad, but I wonder ultimately if you're going to get at the roots of a problem and correct it, don't you have to get at the real feelings of people, and for a while it may look ugly? But what's happening here now is that all Americans are on trial to reveal either their great decency or their great evilness, their ugliness, if ~~it~~ in its real form.

MR. WARREN: Do you find any truth in the speculation made by a good many Negroes in the South that the solution there, the crisis we've passed there long before it's passed here, there's more basis for a ^{rapprochement} ~~rapprochement~~ for a working-together there than there is in, say, in the great metropolitan ~~area~~ northern centers?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, I'm one of these people who believes that when the South really gets over this hump of having to have segregation as a crutch to compensate for their other feelings of inferiority about the economy of their system and their lack of a lot of other things, once they

get over this hump and they see that they can't keep the Negro down without keeping themselves down, there's enough basic feeling, tone and experience between white and negro citizens, that they will move off on a level unlike anything in the North, and there will be a much sounder relationship. You see--

MR. WARREN: Many Negroes say this.

MR. YOUNG: Well, this is--

MR. WARREN: They say the opposite too;

MR. YOUNG: I think this is based on a theory that the most vicious expression of hatred toward a person is to ignore him, is not to hate him. It takes feeling to hate, that the worst way-- the thing that destroys people, is not to hate them or to love them, but to ignore them and make of their lives meaningless. I think the average Northerner, because of the separateness, and you know there's more segregation in housing in the North than in the South, because of the separateness, because so few whites have had contact with Negroes, that their feelings-- this is largely an intellectual feeling, it's related to some abstract concepts of justice and equality, but they are still handicapped by a real experience with a Negro who's a peer, who's educated; where the average Southerner has had to deal with him. You take in New York City there's only one Negro principal in all of New York City.

MR. WARREN: I know that. I've read it several times.

Why is that?

MR. YOUNG: Well, they contend that there are certain standards that have been set up and that the Negroes have not been able to pass exams, that Negroes who were capable have not worked toward this goal, have not applied. This is the only city like this in the United States, and I don't know why it's anything unusual. I think it's because there hasn't been special effort made to encourage them, and if necessary to set up realistic standards. I think maybe the test may be culturally ^{askew} astute and there's just not been this concentrated ~~effort~~ effort.

MR. WARREN: Nathan Glazer-- I suppose whose heart's in the right place, says that there has been no discrimination in this. It's just a matter of the way the tests are set up and the way Negroes have just avoided them, haven't driven for this, it's sort of a social accident.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. Well, you see this is one of the big problems in the North, is that they pride themselves on being color blind and this they set as their goal, but it-- you cannot be color-blind today when color consciousness has been the history of the Negro in this country. And it's not enough now to be color-blind. For a while we've got to be color conscious in a positive way, and I think too long New Yorkers have said "but all of our laws are right and all of our doors are open, but haven't provided a previously deprived people with the resources to take advantage of it so that they could very comfortably

open their doors and be assured that ~~any~~ nobody could enter, and that includes the test to get to be teachers and principals. Instead of using the same skill and genius now to include them that they used to exclude them originally.

MR. WARREN: I know you oppose the quota system in hiring and in other things.

MR. YOUNG: Well, with--

MR. WARREN: How do you relate that to the other problem?

MR. YOUNG: Well, let me say I'm opposed to it and-- as an absolute general principle, but I would have to say as it's oftentimes being discussed today, I would have to say in the period of negotiation with a company, say, or in a housing situation, where no Negroes have been employed, or very few, that in order-- because the institutions will take one Negro and say, see, we are integrated, the Negro leader is forced to discuss numbers in order to have any meaningful integration. Well, the minute we start to discuss in numbers then people say, Oh, you're for quotas. So I--

MR. WARREN: How do you discuss-- how do you theorize, yourself, on this apparent contradiction? You see I say apparent. I mean--

MR. YOUNG: Well, I would say that in the period of negotiation and transition, we are establishing a policy, we're changing a practice, and just as it has been artificially arrived at to begin with, when Negroes were automatically excluded, regardless, during this period of

transition, in order to assure that we are actually changing the policy, we have to do this, but I'm only talking about the initial stages. Now I would also take the position, the private position, not the public position, that quotas in certain housing projects that will assure that we will keep these integrated housing projects, is a desirable thing, quotas that would permit--

MR. WARREN: What they call benign quotas.

MR. YOUNG: Benign quotas. Now my public position has to be opposed to this, has to be opposed to it because I reduce it to an individual situation where I would have moved into a neighborhood and-- because I saved my money-- and then I'd say to another Negro who had saved his money and wanted to get better educated and everything for his children: No, you have to pick out another neighborhood; this is mine." Now I have no right to say this, and so I'm publicly opposed to quotas, per se. But I would think we could talk less about quotas and spend more time on being sure that Negroes can move everywhere-- (I'll put it in another way) that no white can escape, then there's no need to sell. The

MR. WARREN: This comes in a-- jobs, doesn't it, definitely jobs, doesn't it?

MR. YOUNG: Well, I suppose so. This is basic, but you can't divorce this from a man's being prepared and trained to work at the job or of remaining in a neighborhood where he can get that kind of preparation and training. So you can't isolate any one-- one thing.

MR. WARREN: No, no, everything is linked together, in a way. But when you actually come down to the rub of negotiation, the job is where it usually gets tough, isn't it?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, and on this no Negro has said to me that he wants to see a white person replaced. What we are saying is this, is that we think there ought to be equal opportunity in unemployment as well as in employment, that we resent very much-- you know that we're 25 per cent or 15 per cent ^{of the} unemployed, and whites are five or-- to 6, and we think that this situation ought to be changed and that's why we're not buying-- I'm not buying the saying that well, the problem of unemployed of Negroes will be solved only when there's full employment for all Americans, because I know there won't be full employment for all Americans in the foreseeable future and in the meanwhile I don't think that we can continue to have this large number of Negroes unemployed.

MR. WARREN: No, the ratio is preposterous!

MR. YOUNG. That's right.

END OF TAPE 2

MR. GUTWILLIG: I wanted to get back to what--

MR. WARREN: Yes, Mr. Gutwillig.

MR. GUTWILLIG: That Whitney and I have talked about before, and that is the fact that the white American, and Whitney, I think will also include the white