

"An Economic Development Budget for Equal Rights." With the assistance of social scientists from metropolitan New York universities, research has already been done on the basis of which an estimate of \$32 billion per annum is seen as needed for housing and slum rehabilitation, education, job-training and job-creation programs, health and medical facilities. We will soon prepare a budget for the metropolitan area of New York, and we hope that social scientists and churchmen in other metropolitan areas will do the same thing.

This kind of program is designed to aid not only Negroes but all of the disinherited who have been robbed of their birthright of freedom and equal opportunity. Pushing for such a program is the next and more profound stage of the struggle for equal rights.

B. AN ADDRESS BY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.*

[Editors' note: This address was delivered at Abbott House, Westchester County, New York on October 29, 1965. Dr. King has made essentially the same observations about the Negro family and civil rights on several subsequent occasions; for example, at the University of Chicago on January 27, 1966. See page 402.]

I have been asked to speak tonight on the subject of the dignity of family life. It is appropriate that a Negro discuss the subject because for no other group in American life is the matter of family life more important than to the Negro. Our very survival is bound up in it. It is a particular privilege to speak under the auspices of the Abbott House because they are combining the treatment of symptoms with a probing of causes. Their experimental work to discover new aspects of the dynamics of family relationships is fresh and creative.

For a number of years a good many writers have tartly denigrated the role of the family. Some have asserted the family will disappear in 50 years; others have argued its preservation is hopeless because sex is now used for recreation rather than pro-

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creation. One writer summed up the prevailing contemptuous attitude with the statement that "Family life is obviously a study in lunacy."

Some 30 years ago Malinowski refuted these pessimistic and negative appraisals with the striking statement, "The family, that is, the group consisting of mother, father and child, still remains the main educational agency of mankind. Modern psychologists agree that parenthood as the dominant influence of infancy forms the character of the individual and at the same time shapes his social attitudes and thus places its imprint upon the constitution of the whole society."

In more recent years the writings of Dr. Benjamin Spock have not only reinforced these views but extended them through popular media to hundreds of millions around the world.

I endorse these conclusions and would emphasize one in particular. Family life not only educates in general but its quality ultimately determines the individual's capacity to love. The institution of the family is decisive in determining not only if a person has the capacity to love another individual but in the larger social sense whether he is capable of loving his fellow men collectively. The whole of society rests on this foundation for stability, understanding and social peace.

At this point in history I am particularly concerned with the Negro family. In recent years the Negro as an individual and Negroes as a community have been thrust into public attention. The dignity and personality of the Negro as an individual has been dramatized by turbulent struggles for civil rights. Conditions of Negro communities have been revealed by the turmoil engulfing northern ghettos and southern segregated communities. But the Negro family as an institution has been obscured and its special problems little comprehended.

A recent study offers the alarming conclusion that the Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling and disintegrating. It suggests that the progress in civil rights can be negated by the dissolving of family structure and therefore social justice and tranquility can be delayed for generations. The statistics are alarming. They show that in urban cities nearly 25% of Negro women, who were married, are divorced, in contrast to a rate of 8% among whites. The rate of illegitimacy in the past twenty years rose slightly more for whites than Negroes, but the number of Negro illegitimacies in proportion to its population is substantially higher than whites. The number of Negro families headed

by woman is 2½ times that of whites and as a consequence 14% of all Negro children receive aid to dependent children and 56% of Negro children at some point in their lives have been recipients of public aid.

As public awareness increases there will be dangers and opportunities. The opportunity will be to deal fully rather than haphazardly with the problem as a whole — to see it as a social catastrophe and meet it as other disasters are met with an adequacy of resources. The danger will be that the problems will be attributed to innate Negro weaknesses and used to justify neglect and rationalize oppression.

We must therefore, learn something about the special origins of the Negro family. If we would understand why Negroes could embrace non-violent protest in the South and make historic progress there while at the same time most northern ghettos seethe with anger and barely restrained fury we will have to know some lessons of history. The flames of Watts have illuminated more than the western skies — they lit up the agony of the ghetto and revealed that hopeless Negroes in the grip of rage will hurt themselves to hurt others in a desperate quest for justice.

The Negro family for three hundred years has been on the tracks of the racing locomotives of American history and was dragged along mangled and crippled. Pettigrew has pointed out that American slavery is distinguished from all other forms because it consciously dehumanized the Negro. In other cultures slaves preserved dignity and a measure of personality and family life. Our institution of slavery began on the coasts of Africa and because the middle passage was long and expensive, African families were torn apart in the selective process as if the members were beasts. On the voyages millions died in holds into which blacks were packed spoon fashion to live on a journey often of 2 to 6 months with approximately the room for each equivalent to a coffin. The sheer physical torture was sufficient to murder millions of men, women and children. But even more incalculable was the psychological damage. For those who survived as a family group, once more on the auction block many families were ripped apart.

Against this ghastly background the Negro family began the process of organization in the United States. On the plantation the institution of legal marriage did not exist. The masters might direct mating or if they did not intervene marriage occurred with-

out sanctions. Their monogamous relation of all, the tearing apart were sold to other people not yet the whole of women to satisfy their attitude prevailed, a certain states, notable state of presidents. Incasually or incidentally produced enormous program was the economic early in the 19th century.

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out sanctions. There were polygamous relationships, fragile, monogamous relationships, illegitimacies, abandonment, and most of all, the tearing apart of families as children, husbands, or wives were sold to other plantations. But these cruel conditions were not yet the whole story. Masters and their sons used Negro women to satisfy their spontaneous lust or, when a more humane attitude prevailed, as concubines. The depth was reached in certain states, notably Virginia which we sentimentally call the state of presidents. In this state, slaves were bred for sale, not casually or incidentally, but in a vast breeding program which produced enormous wealth for slave owners. This breeding program was the economic answer to the halting of the slave traffic early in the 19th century.

Through the ante-bellum era, the Negro family struggled against these odds to survive, and miraculously many did. In all this psychological and physical horror many slaves managed to hold on to their children and developed warmth and affection and family loyalties against the smashing tides of emotional corruption and destruction.

The liberation from slavery which should have initiated a birth of stable family life meant a formal legal freedom but as Henrietta Buckmaster put it, "with Appomatox, four million black people in the South owned their skins and nothing more."

Government policy was so conflicted and disinterested that a new inferno engulfed the Negro and his family. Thrown off the plantations, penniless, homeless, still largely in the territory of their enemies and in the grip of fear, bewilderment and aimlessness, hundreds of thousands became wanderers. For security they fled to Union army camps, themselves unprepared to help. One writer describes a mother carrying a child in one arm, a father holding another child and eight other children with their hands tied to one rope held by the mother, who struggled after Sherman's army and brought them hundreds of miles to safety. All were not so fortunate. In the starvation-induced madness some Negroes killed their children to free them of their misery.

These are historical facts. If they cause the mind to reel with horror it is still necessary to realize this recital is a tiny glimpse of the reality of the era. And it does justice neither to the enormous extent of the tragedy nor can it adequately describe the degree of human suffering and sorrow. The enormity of the tragedy utterly defies any attempt to portray it in terms the human mind can comprehend.

white people are ignorant of the extent to which crime surrounds the Negro in the ghettos, or the degree to which it is organized and cultivated there by crime syndicates. Numbers, prostitution and narcotics rackets pervade the ghettos and because they are white-owned enterprises they drain staggering economic wealth out of the community, leaving a wealth of misery and corruption behind. Even when he and his family resist its corruption, its presence is a source of fear and of moral debilitation. For many Negro children, the care and protection of a mother is unknown because she is busy caring for a white child in order to earn the money to keep her disintegrating family together. Dick Gregory, telling of his youth, describes how his mother stole food from her employer to keep the family adequately fed. When she called her children to the table to bless the food, he responded with the sardonic, poignant humor for which he is now so well-known by saying, "You come down to the basement and bless what I stole and I'll bless what you stole."

The shattering blows on the Negro family have made it fragile, deprived and often psychopathic. This is tragic because nothing is so much needed as a secure family life for a people seeking to pull themselves out of poverty and backwardness. History continues to mock the Negro because even as he needs greater family integrity because he had so little in his heritage, in the larger American society today severe strains are assailing white family life. Delinquency is not confined to the underprivileged — it is rampant among middle and upper social strata, and more than one observer argues that juvenile delinquency is a product of widespread adult delinquency. In short, the larger society is not at this time a constructive educational force for the Negro.

The dark side of the picture appears almost to make the future bleak, if not hopeless. Yet something says this is not true. Back two hundred years on the coasts of Africa mothers fought fiendish slave traders to save their children. They offered their bodies to slavers if they would leave the children behind. On some slave ships that are known, and many that will never be known, manacled Negroes crawled from the holds and fought unarmed against guns and knives. On slave plantations parents fought, stole, sacrificed and died for their families. After liberation countless mothers wandered over roadless states looking for the children who had been taken from them and sold. And finally in the modern era mothers, fathers and their children have marched together against clubs, guns, cattle prods and mobs, not

or conquest but only to be allowed to live as humans. The Negro was crushed, battered and brutalized, but he never gave up. He proves again life is stronger than death. The Negro family is scarred, it is submerged, but it struggles to survive. It is working against greater odds than perhaps any other family experienced in all civilized history. But it is winning. Step by step in agony it moves forward. Superficial people may superciliously expect it to function with all the graces and facility of more advantaged families. Their unfeeling criticism may hurt, but it will not halt progress. If the Negro is called upon to do the impossible, he may fail in the eyes of those ignorant of his tortured history, but in his own eyes the Negro knows he is imperceptibly accumulating the resources to emerge fully as a total human being. In the past ten years, he has learned how to win battles against vicious adversaries. In the process he has learned also how to win battles with himself. No one in all history had to fight against so many physical and psychological horrors to have a family life. The fight was never lost; victory was always delayed; but the spirit persisted, and the final triumph is as sure as the rising sun. A hundred times I have been asked why we allowed little children to march in demonstrations, to freeze and suffer in jails, to be exposed to bullets and dynamite. The questions implied that we have a want of family feeling or recklessness towards family security. The answer is simple. Our children and our families are maimed a little every day of our lives. If we can end an incessant torture by a single climactic confrontation, the risks are acceptable. Beyond that our family life will be born anew if we fight together. Other families may be fortunate to be able to protect their young from danger. Our families, as we have seen, are different. Oppression again and again divided and splintered our families. We are a people torn apart from era to era. It is logical, moral and psychologically constructive for us to resist oppression united as families. Out of this unity, out of the bond of fighting together, forges will come. The inner strength and integrity will make us whole again.

The most optimistic element revealed in this review of the Negro family's experience is that the causes for its present crisis are culturally and socially induced. What man has torn down, he can rebuild. At the root of the difficulty in Negro life is pervasive and persistent economic want. To grow from within the Negro needs only fair opportunity for jobs, education, housing and access to culture. To be strengthened from the outside requires protection from the grim exploitation that has haunted it for 300 years.

The Negro family lived the hostile environment in a man-made social atmosphere. Many have been subdued. Many have been survived and developed against this strength that society has created by a society that it is prepared to atone for. No doubt about the end.

Much of the ugly experience has been obscured and forgotten. We must not press an ugly past which America owes a debt to remember. If it loses the will to remember, history will recall its crimes. We will lack the most indispensable.

I do not think that the spirit of Concord and Lexington, of the Declaration of Independence, will avoid a responsibility for the future of the Negro family.

G. NEWSPAPER COLUMN

[Editors' note: These two columns appeared in Mr. Farmer's column on 25, 1965. See pages 258-259]

The Controversial Moyne

As if living in the sewer in the pantry weren't enough for the Negroes, I now learn "the tangle of Negro problems diagnosed by Daniel Moynihan in 'The Negro Family.'"

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The Negro family lived in Africa in nature's jungle and subdued the hostile environment. In the United States, it has lived in a man-made social and psychological jungle which it could not subdue. Many have been destroyed by it. Yet, others have survived and developed an appalling capacity for hardships. It is on this strength that society can build. What is required is a recognition by a society that it has been guilty of the crimes and that it is prepared to atone. With that beginning there need be no doubt about the end.

Much of the ugly experiences of Negro history have been obscured and forgotten. A society is always eager to cover great misdeeds with a cloak of forgetfulness, but no society can repress an ugly past when the ravages persist into the present. America owes a debt to justice which it has only begun to pay. If it loses the will to finish or slackens in its determination, history will recall its crimes and the country that would be great will lack the most indispensable element of greatness — justice.

I do not think that the tiny nation that stood in majesty at Concord and Lexington, that electrified a world with the words of the Declaration of Independence, will defame its heritage to avoid a responsibility. That is why I believe not only in the future of the Negro family but in the future of the family of man.

C. NEWSPAPER COLUMNS BY JAMES FARMER*

[Editors' note: These two discussions of The Moynihan Report appeared in Mr. Farmer's column, "The Core of It," on December 18 and 25, 1965. See pages 258-259.]

The Controversial Moynihan Report [December 18, 1965]

As if living in the sewer, learning in the streets and working in the pantry weren't enough of a burden for millions of American Negroes, I now learn that we've caught "matriarchy," and "the tangle of Negro pathology" . . . a social plague recently diagnosed by Daniel Moynihan in his celebrated report on "The Negro Family."

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After tracing the long history of Negro oppression in this country, Moynihan concludes that our current difficulties are rooted in the effects of that oppression dramatized in the shattered Negro family, stripped of its male and going to Hell in a basket.

On the surface, this would seem to be a fairminded exercise in the Life Sciences but in fact the Moynihan Report, which seems to have been given a good deal of currency by the present administration, is another one of those academic efforts to get our eyes off the prize.

By laying the primary blame for present-day inequalities on the pathological condition of the Negro family and community, Moynihan has provided a massive academic cop-out for the white conscience and clearly implied that Negroes in this nation will never secure a substantial measure of freedom until we learn to behave ourselves and stop buying Cadillacs instead of bread.

This well-enough intentioned analysis provides the fuel for a new racism . . . it succeeds in taking the real tragedy of black poverty and serving it up as an essentially salacious "discovery" suggesting that Negro mental health should be the first order of business in a civil rights revolution.

Nowhere does Moynihan suggest that there may be something wrong in an "orderly and normal" white family structure that is weaned on race hatred and passes the word "nigger" from generation to generation.

Nowhere does Moynihan suggest that the proper answer to a shattered family is an open job market where this "frustrated" male Negro can get an honest day's work.

And nowhere does Moynihan suggest that high illegitimacy rates in the black community may be partly explained by the fact that birth control information and covert abortions are by and large the exclusive property of the white man.

I say all this because I'm angry . . . really angry and I intend to spell out this anger in just one more effort to convince somebody, anybody, down in the places of power that the cocktail hour on the "Negro Question" is over and that we are sick unto death of being analyzed, mesmerized, bought, sold and slobbered over while the same evils that are the ingredients of our oppression go unattended.

It has been the fatal error of American society for 300 years to ultimately blame the roots of poverty and violence in the Negro community upon Negroes themselves. I honestly felt that the Civil Rights and Voting laws indicated that we were rid of

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this kind of straw-man logic, but here it is again, in its most vicious form, handing the racists a respectable new weapon and insulting the intelligence of black men and women everywhere.

I intend to devote a good deal of space to this Moynihan Report for a number of reasons. First and most important, it is fast becoming the scriptural basis for several new brands of bigotry, even without the consent of its authors.

Secondly, it has been specifically hailed by the American right wing and is currently being used to "explain away" the Negro Revolution as the hysterical outburst of a mentally unbalanced sub-culture.

Third, it provides a documented basis for men in elected authority to divert practical anti-discrimination programs into an open season on "pathological" Negroes.

And fourth, the report is especially bad in that it contains a great number of statistical facts, misread, misinterpreted and warped into a series of conclusions that could make Robert Shelton into a holy prophet. In many ways, this report, when studied carefully, emerges in my mind as the most serious threat to the ultimate freedom of American Negroes to appear in print in recent memory.

I cannot possibly in the course of this article cover even a small part of the report's analyses and conclusions. I will deal with those in subsequent columns. I must say, however, that I am convinced that the author or authors of this document did not consciously intend to write a racist tract . . . but the fact that it may be used as such makes their innocence inexcusable.

They have forgotten that we are bottled into our ghetto and held down not simply by the restraints of our past, but by the clear and present acts of subtle and unsubtle discrimination that continue to destroy our option for self change and make our life a living Hell. And to forget that while focusing on "the tangle of Negro pathology" is very much like curing Yellow Fever by painting the patient white and ignoring the mosquitoes.

More on The Moynihan Report [December 25, 1965]

Contrary to most folks, I relish a good fight . . . particularly when the stakes are high enough materially to affect my life. And that's exactly what's involved in the current scramble

around Daniel Moynihan's report on the Negro family. Last week, I took considerable time to classify the report as a tactical blunder, a post-facto "discovery" of Negro pathology that could easily be fashioned into a weapon of the racists. This week, I intend to challenge its accuracy and raise questions, serious questions as to the responsibility of its "proofs" and the wisdom of its authors.

Before doing that, however, I would like to discuss two points that have surfaced in the past few days of debate. First off, Daniel Moynihan did not invent candor and most certainly did not courageously "talk truth" for the first time about the American Negro family. Even beyond E. Franklin Frazier's first-rate studies of the Negro community written in 1937 and 1948, the Civil Rights movement has for nearly a decade been demanding that the plight of American Negroes be viewed as a hard fact of life rather than a political push-up for American reformers. The concept of preferential hiring, for example, came directly from the movement's candid assessment of a depressed Negro community, despite Mr. Moynihan's implication that we have been burying our heads in the sands of romantic protest. We know how tough it is to be black, but more important we know what continues to fence us into a circle of emotional and economic depression. In a word, we don't suffer and die by choice, we suffer and die from lack of choice. Secondly, I am pleased to report that Mr. Moynihan has broadened the conclusions of his report. In his recent public statements he has agreed with our contention that improved jobs, housing and educational options are essential in the fight to stop community erosion. These late refinements, however welcome, serve to confirm the haphazard judgement at work when the unqualified report was originally issued.

Now as to matters of "proof." In dramatizing the "tangle of Negro pathology" Moynihan relies heavily upon illegitimacy statistics from the U.S. Census, which indicates a rate of 3% illegitimacy in the white community and 22% in the black. On the face of it, this would be a sobering revelation, indicating that black folks are, among other things, a pretty promiscuous lot. But it just isn't true. And, as usual the numbers are misleading. When you begin to compute the hidden factors: the availability of contraception, divorce, abortion, and adoption advice, you suddenly discover that illegitimacy in the Negro community is not eight times as much as among whites, it simply is recorded eight times more often. White folks have access to a whole fabric of social

machinery to prevent not widely available complete reading of many illegitimate (that's about what pocket of American

The same sloppy criminal behavior that disproportionally America's Negro community and continued dispute the effects of politics is irresponsible

D. TWO NEWSPAPERS

Whitney Young, Jr.

[Editors' note: These are reprinted in Mr. Young's column in *Black World*, 1966. See pages 265-266.]

White House Confession

The White House confession on race relations with the Negro male.

Stirred by the recent spread of disorganization in the Negro community, the White House has asked his brain trust to produce some far-reaching recommendations.

"There will be no recommendations" (unless the Negro community and its white counterparts) to

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machinery to prevent or hide the illegitimate child that is simply not widely available in the Negro community. In fact, a more complete reading would show that whites have closer to *half* as many illegitimate children as Negroes rather than an eighth. And that's about what any sociologist would expect in a 300-year-old pocket of American poverty.

The same sloppy research applies to Moynihan's statistics on criminal behavior and welfare dependency. There is no question that disproportionate illegitimacy, felony and poverty exist in America's Negro community, but it exists because of systematic and continued discrimination, and any analysis that doesn't compute the effects of discrimination in reporting Negro social statistics is irresponsible, dangerous and just plain wrong.

D. TWO NEWSPAPER COLUMNS*

Whitney Young, Jr.

[Editors' note: These two discussions of the Moynihan Report appeared in Mr. Young's column, "To Be Equal," in October, 1965 and January, 1966. See pages 265-266.]

White House Confab [October 1965]

The White House has indicated that its forthcoming conference on race relations will emphasize the tragic plight of the Negro male.

Stirred by the recent U.S. Labor Department study of widespread disorganization among the Negro poor, President Johnson has asked his braintrust to plumb beneath the surface and to produce some far-reaching solutions.

"There will be no social peace in the United States for generations" (unless the Negro male has the same opportunities as his white counterparts) the report warns. His lot is regarded as the

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