



## Review and Reflection

BY  
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**M**UCH OF THE UNREST going on in America centres around Negroes. Attitudes of black people and attitudes towards them are changing. "Black power" has arrived.

Negroes have decided that they want more than they have gotten as "second class citizens" in the century since emancipation from slavery. Their aspirations were given a lift by the Supreme Court in 1954 when it ruled that so-called "separate but equal" public facilities (transportation, schools, etc.) for black and white were unconstitutional and that Negroes were entitled to full access to all public facilities. Since then, there has been a growing movement that has assumed many curious forms, has become more and more far-reaching and has affected so much of American life that the outcome is still uncertain.

Negroes are by no means united in what they want. Some wish merely to advance themselves in society as it is (and are derisively called "Uncle Toms" by others). Some seek full integration for blacks into society and abolition of discrimination. Others, while protesting against discrimination, want to develop a special Negro culture, and some even propose black communities completely separate from white ones. And there are those who are bloody-minded about it, preaching and sometimes practising violence.

All these aims have proponents as well as opponents in the white community, and that is what makes the current scene so interesting, restless and unpredictable. The heaven is working, but we don't know what the loaf will be like.

Negroes have come far in the past fifty years and are still moving. We are no longer surprised to see them as business managers, public officials and professionals, although they have not yet attained the top ranks — corporation presidents, State governors, Wall Street magnates. With all this progress, it may seem odd that there is so much "black rage." Negro writers like LeRoi Jones and James Baldwin reap plenty of royalties on their works, yet they put on long faces. Highly-placed Negro officials keep being outraged by wrongs done to blacks. One Negro leader James Forman has demanded that the churches donate a half billion dollars to help make up for past wrongs

# BLACK POWER

done to them. Militant Negroes urge their black brothers to carry guns.

The reason for this was pointed out long ago by Macaulay who said that revolutions do not spring out of distressing conditions, but out of rising expectations. When the lot of the down-trodden improves a little, they become hungry for more. The current "black revolution" is no exception.

The militants are not as reckless as they may seem. Even H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael are not crazy. They realise that if there were to be an armed struggle, the black 10 to 15 per cent of the population would be crushed and their aspirations permanently crippled. What they are counting on is white support for their aims, and they are getting it.

Disorders in universities make a dent because upper and middle class students come out in force on behalf of black demands. The revolt on the campus has been fairly successful and has shaken up the entire academic establishment. Negro leaders say that their next move will be into industry—but I would not be surprised if they found the going tougher there. Corporation presidents are not so prone to be as mild as college presidents. And lower middle class blue collar workers, struggling to keep above the poverty line, are not going to be as sympathetic as upper middle class college youths looking for a cause. The "white back-lash," in fact comes chiefly from lower and lower-middle white classes.

In spite of the relative openness of American society, there has always been an underdog. More fluid than European society, it has not had fixed hierarchies, but continually changing ones, and this has made social climbing more intense. (To some extent this is becoming true of Europe, but it has always been the case in America.) Usually the latest immigrants form the bottom layer as previous comers rise. (In this respect, Negroes have a legitimate gripe—they are not exactly newcomers, as African slaves were in America before the Pilgrim Fathers—so their rise is long overdue). Irish, Germans, Italians, Jews have in turn been the first scapegoats, then the parvenus, then the establishment.

There was a temporary alliance of Negroes and Jews

in the 1930s to agitate for better social conditions. The Jews have since made it into society, and the Negroes are right behind them breathing down their necks, resulting in a "Jewish-Negro confrontation." There is now an *ad hoc* alliance between Negroes and Puerto Ricans in New York and other cities, and between Negroes and Mexicans in the south-western States. But for the present, the Negroes are more highly motivated, whereas the Spanish speaking peoples have more modest aims—they just want to make a better living than where they came from. The Negroes are going to make it—and we may then witness a "Negro-Spanish confrontation," as the latter start getting more ambitious.

Many Negroes see the current situation as a racial issue, black versus white. They have pressed for "black studies" in schools and universities on a scale that no other ethnic minority has had. They seek an identification with Africa and often refer to themselves as "Afro-Americans." They affect what they think are African styles of clothes and manners, but their view of Africans is romantic and unrealistic. While they are sharply conscious of Rhodesia and South Africa, they almost never speak of Nigeria and Biafra, as that collides with the dream of all black people as "Soul Brothers."

## Seeds of Treason

PAULINE DAY

IT MIGHT seem to be stretching a point to absurdity to suggest that the espionage work of Kim Philby and his co-spies, Burgess and Maclean, could possibly have anything to do with the economic and social problems arising from the mal-distribution of wealth in society—and yet this is so.

A recently published book\* lays bare the sorry state of the British security services during the period of Philby's activity, and there are times when one is stupefied at the apparent disregard by those who are supposed to watch over our interests, of the men in their midst whose personal conduct alone should have aroused concern for our reputation, even if their treachery remained undetected. Their behaviour, however, seemed to evoke no more than a tolerant reprimand in diplomatic circles.

But it is in the origins of their conversion to Communism that this book reveals its most interesting side. Philby, Burgess and Maclean all belonged to a protected strata of society. Good family background, public school, Cambridge, the right clubs, the right friends, all were their prerogative. How was it that these men able as they were to earn a good living in Britain and

Many Black Americans think that poverty is their private possession, whereas there are more poor whites than blacks throughout the country (although it is true that there is a higher incidence of poverty among Negroes) but, because the whites are less visible, many of them in rural areas, and because they are "WASPS" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) nobody pays any attention to them. After all, WASPs make up the "white power structure"!

The current crisis is basically an economic one, not a racial one, and it is time that both black and white saw it in that perspective. Negroes will make it—some will make it—into high society, and the basic problem of poverty will remain untouched. Puerto Ricans will start clamouring for some of the emoluments. And, since there do not seem to be enough emoluments to go around, many blacks, whites and Puerto Ricans will remain without.

Negroes are right to protest against discrimination because of skin colour; they are wrong to make skin colour the focus of their revolution. It is to be hoped that blacks will make use of their newly-felt power to rise above this superficial consideration. If blacks and whites can be persuaded to sit down together to discuss and solve their economic problems, then some good will have come out of all this ferment.

enjoy the privileges of the social group to which they belonged, were attracted and remained faithful to a philosophy dedicated to destroying such privileges? For these men seem to have been not merely spies for cash gain; they were so convinced by Communist theories that they believed their sordid occupation of long term treason was justified.

The answer lies, I think, in the formative undergraduate days. They were all at Cambridge during the early 1930s; they witnessed the suffering of the depression years and were obviously appalled that the rulers of the society to which they belonged could offer no solution to the poverty and distress of the working classes.

At about this time, a young man recently returned from a stay in Braunschweig prison (he had participated in a demonstration the Nazi-controlled police believed to be Communist inspired), started a Communist cell at Cambridge which operated through the university Socialist Club. Many of the young intellectuals joined its ranks, and Keynes, a leading figure at Cambridge at the time, was saddened to see so many of the young men, like the three who later became spies, attracted away from the Apostles (an elite society drawn from King's and Trinity which hitherto

\*Philby, *the Spy Who Betrayed a Generation*, by Bruce Page, David Leitch and Phillip Knightley, Penguin Books 7s. 6d.