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ATTEMPTING TO PUT IN SOME SENSIBLE FORM
THOUGHTS ON AN ISSUE OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THIS
NATION'S COLOR CRISIS BROUGHT TO MIND THE WORDS OF
GERTRUDE STEIN AS SHE LAY ON HER DEATH BED. SHE
REPORTEDLY ASKED HER COMPANION, ALICE TOKLAS, "WHAT
IS THE ANSWER?" MISS TOKLAS REPLIED SHE DID NOT
HAVE THE ANSWER TO WHICH GERTRUDE STEIN RESPONDED,
"AH, THEN WHAT IS THE QUESTION?"

NEVERTHELESS I SHARE WITH YOU THIS
MORNING A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE COLOR CRISIS.

LET ME START WITH THE SUBJECT OF VIOLENCE.

VIOLENCE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT A RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC.

WHITE PEOPLE HAVE RESORTED TO VIOLENCE IN THE NAME

OF EVERYTHING FROM THE CRUSADES OF CHRISTIANITY

TO THE CONTAINMENT OF COMMUNISM. VIOLENCE WAS A

TOOL OF BLACK MAU MAUS IN AFRICA. CHINESE MEN OF

YELLOW SKIN VIOLENTLY CHALLENGED AND OVERTHREW THE

CHIANG KAI-SHEK GOVERNMENT. AND IN MANY OF THE

RACIALLY MIXED COUNTRIES OF SOUTH AND LATIN AMERICA,

VIOLENCE HAS BEEN A COMMON MEANS OF POLITICAL CHANGE.

SPECIFICALLY, I QUESTION HOW WE WHITE DESCENDENTS

OF MEN WHO DRESSED AS INDIANS AND THREW ANOTHER'S

PROPERTY IN BOSTON HARBOR IN VIOLENT PROTEST OF

INJUSTICES, CAN BE TOO SHOCKED BY THE VIOLENCE OF

OTHERS. WE DIDN'T FOOL ANYBODY WITH OUR FEATHERS AND

FACE PAINT.

HOWEVER, THE HISTORICAL FACT OF GROUP
VIOLENCE IS NO JUSTIFICATION IN ITSELF; ANYMORE THAN
THE HISTORICAL FACT OF INDIVIDUAL VIOLENCE IS
JUSTIFICATION FOR MURDER OR RAPE. NOR SHOULD WE
GENERALIZE ON THEORIES OF JUSTIFICATION FOR
VIOLENCE. THE FACT THAT GROUP VIOLENCE MAY SEEM
JUSTIFIED IN ONE INSTANCE DOES NOT JUSTIFY ALL
GROUP VIOLENCE; ANYMORE THAN ONE INSTANCE OF
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE JUSTIFIES ALL HOMICIDE. OBVIOUS
MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS CAN BE RAISED
CONCERNING THE ADVOCACY AND USE OF VIOLENCE. I
MAKE NO EFFORT HERE TO DEAL WITH THESE. THEY INVOLVE
SERIOUS SUBJECTIVE AND EMOTIONAL JUDGMENTS AS WELL
AS INTELLECTUAL ONES. IT IS ON PURELY PRAGMATIC
GROUNDS THAT I QUESTION THE USE OF VIOLENCE IN
TODAY'S COLOR CRISIS.

I FIRST QUESTION WHETHER VIOLENCE HAS ANY
CONSTRUCTIVE EFFECT ON THE PROBLEMS WE FACE. THE
KERNER REPORT ON CIVIL DISORDERS FOUND THE PREVAILING
REASON FOR THE RIOTS OF 1967 TO BE RACISM. THE
PRESIDENT OF SHAW UNIVERSITY, DR. JAMES CHEEK, RECENTLY
STATED THAT "THE BATTLE FOR RIGHTS IS OVER, AND WE
WON IT. THE BATTLE IS NOW FOR EQUALITY." IF WE ARE
TO ELIMINATE RACISM AND ACHIEVE EQUALITY, WE MUST
CHANGE OUR IDEAS ABOUT EACH OTHER. LEGISLATION
ALONE CANNOT DO THIS. IT IS A MATTER OF ATTITUDE.
AND I CANNOT ENVISION IMPROVEMENT IN THE BLACK MAN'S
ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WHITE MAN AS A RESULT OF THE
VIOLENT ACTIVITIES OF SOME WHITE ORGANIZATIONS; OR
THE USE OF FIREHOSES AND CATTLE PRODS ON PEACEFUL
BLACK DEMONSTRATORS; OR AN OVERZEALOUS WHITE POLICEMAN
SPLITTING A BLACK MAN'S SKULL. NOR CAN I ENVISION

IMPROVEMENT IN THE WHITE MAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD BLACK
BY THE LATTER BURNING BUILDINGS, LOOTING STORES AND
BEATING WHITE BY-STANDERS. WE JUST AREN'T GOING TO
CHANGE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES BY CONDUCT THAT SUPPORTS
THESE ATTITUDES RATHER THAN PROVING THEM FALSE. AND
THE FACT THAT THE VIOLENCE OF BLACK PEOPLE TODAY IS
MORE EASILY JUSTIFIED OR AT LEAST UNDERSTOOD AS AN
EXPRESSION OF INDIVIDUAL FRUSTRATIONS AND DEGRADATION
DOES NOT ALTER THE FACT THAT RACISM IS SERVED BY IT.

I AM ALSO CONFUSED AND TROUBLED, AGAIN
PURELY ON PRACTICAL GROUNDS, BY THE CALL OF SOME
BLACKS AND SOME WHITES WHO WOULD HAVE US TAKE TO
THE STREETS WITH WEAPONS BLAZING. THERE ARE 200 MILLION
PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY. ALL WILL NOT BE KILLED AND
THOSE LEFT WILL ONLY HAVE THE PROBLEMS WE FACE TODAY

COLORED AND CLOUDED WITH THE STAIN OF BLOOD. THERE
ARE WHITES TODAY, WHOSE JUDGMENTS AND LIVES ARE
STILL INFLUENCED BY BLOOD SPILLED IN THE CIVIL
WAR FOUGHT OVER 100 YEARS AGO. WE COULD NOT EXPECT
LESS IMPACT FROM A PERIOD OF RACIAL FRATICIDE.

NEXT LET ME COMMENT ON DISCRIMINATION.

THERE EXISTS TODAY A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF PURELY
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. DISCRIMINATION THAT SAYS
A MAN IS BASICALLY INFERIOR OR EVIL OR WHATEVER
BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF HIS SKIN. THERE IS NO
IMMEDIATE CURE FOR THIS. WE CAN AND MUST PASS ALL
NECESSARY LAWS TO PROTECT CITIZENS FROM CIVIL AND
CRIMINAL INJUSTICES. BUT THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACISM WILL COME ONLY AS TIME
PROVES THE FALLACY OF ITS CLAIMS AND HISTORY
MAKES FOOLS OF THOSE WHO PROPOUND IT. EVEN THEN,

I THINK, WILL THERE ALWAYS BE A RESIDUE OF MEN WHO
MUST STAND ON THE BACKS OF OTHERS IN ORDER THAT THEY
MIGHT SEEM TALL.

THERE IS ANOTHER FORM OF DISCRIMINATION
THAT SHOULD CAUSE MORE CONCERN FOR THE SIMPLE
REASON THAT IT IS MORE PREVALENT AND THERE IS A
SHORT-RANGE CURE. IT IS DISCRIMINATION FOUNDED IN
MOST INSTANCES ON AN HONEST PREFERENCE MADE WITHOUT
CONSCIOUS RACIAL MALICE. IT IS THIS TYPE
OF DISCRIMINATION THAT MOST HOBLES THE DISADVANTAGED
TODAY. MOST MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE BLACK CITY OR WHITE
MOUNTAIN GHETTOS WHO ARE REJECTED FOR EMPLOYMENT
BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT QUALIFIED -- ARE NOT QUALIFIED.
MOST OF THESE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE CONSIDERED
SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE -- ARE, BY COMMON STANDARDS, SOCIALLY

UNDESIRABLE. AND, MOST OF THESE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE
JUDGED TO HAVE POOR PERSONAL AND WORK HABITS -- DO HAVE
POOR PERSONAL AND WORK HABITS. BUT THE REASONS HAVE
NOTHING TO DO WITH THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN AND HERE
LIES THE CHALLENGE. A CONCERNED COMMUNITY OF
GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND CITIZENS CAN OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY
TO ELIMINATE THE BASIS FOR SUCH DISCRIMINATION.

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT ALL DISCRIMINATION
IS NOT BAD. IN FACT, THE FULLNESS OF A MAN'S LIFE CAN
BE RELATED TO HIS OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCRIMINATION. A
MAN CHOOSES ONE UNIVERSITY OVER ANOTHER; ELECTS TO BE
A DOCTOR INSTEAD OF A LAWYER; MARRIES A BEAUTY OVER A
DOG, PICKS THIS NEIGHBORHOOD OVER THAT, ETC. THOSE
LOCKED IN THE BLACK GHETTOS AND WHITE MOUNTAIN ENCLAVES
OF DISADVANTAGE, HAVE NARROW LIMITS OF DISCRIMINATION
AND THUS NARROW LIVES. OUR ULTIMATE GOAL SHOULD BE

TO GIVE ALL IN OUR COUNTRY GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR
THIS KIND OF DISCRIMINATION.

JUST AS WHITE AMERICA SHOULD NOT BE SHOCKED
AT VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF PROTEST; WHITE AMERICA
SHOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DESIRE FOR BLACK POWER. WE
ARE SURROUNDED BY POWER STRUCTURES -- IN POLITICS,
CORPORATIONS, AND IN FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS. EVEN IN
OUR CHURCHES, POWER MAKES THE DECISIONS. THERE IS A
CLOSE PARALLEL BETWEEN THE BLACK MAN STRIVING FOR POWER
AND THE EARLY HISTORY OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN THE UNITED
STATES. MANY OF THE INDUSTRIAL LABORERS OF THIS COUNTRY
MOVED FROM SWEATSHOP CONDITIONS TO DIGNITY AND FAIR
WAGES WHEN LABOR ACQUIRED POWER -- FIRST LEGISLATIVE
POWER AND THEN ORGANIZATIONAL POWER. THE BLACK MAN'S PROGRESS
WILL NOT COME, OR IT WILL COME TOO SLOWLY, WITHOUT THAT
SAME KIND OF POWER. BUT EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINED BLACK POWER

WILL NOT COME WITHOUT INDIVIDUAL BLACK POWER. GROUP
ACTION MAY GAIN JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND THE RIGHT
TO RIDE IN THE FRONT OF THE BUS; BUT IT WILL BE THE
INDIVIDUAL WHO MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY
IF HE IS TO QUIT RIDING THE BUS AND DRIVE HIS OWN
CAR. GROUP POWER MAY GAIN FAIR HOUSING LAWS, BUT
IT WILL BE UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL IF SUBSTANTIAL
NUMBERS ARE TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD A HOME IN THE
SUBURBS. GROUP POWER MAY IMPROVE THE CONDUCT OF
CERTAIN POLICE FORCES BUT THE INDIVIDUAL'S
CONDUCT WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT HE IS THEREAFTER
COURTEOUSLY PUT IN JAIL. WITHOUT SUCH INDIVIDUAL
POWER AND INDIVIDUAL PURPOSE THE MOST WE CAN
HOPE FOR IS A HIGHER STANDARD OF GHETTO EXISTENCE.

I KNOW AS TO EACH OF THESE SUBJECTS --

VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, POWER -- I AM GUILTY

OF GROSS GENERALIZATIONS. BUT EVEN WITH THAT

LIMITATION, I THINK SOME VALID CONCLUSIONS MAY

BE DRAWN CONCERNING THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

- (1) A LACK OF POWER -- BOTH GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL -- LEADS TO DISCRIMINATION.
- (2) DISCRIMINATION -- EVEN THOUGH OFTEN NOT THE RESULT OF RACISM -- IS IDENTIFIED WITH RACISM.
- (3) RACISM LEADS TO VIOLENCE.

THE VIOLENCE THUS GENERATED ENCOURAGES MORE RACISM

WHICH IN TURN CREATES MORE DISCRIMINATION AND BLOCKS

THE ACQUISITION OF POWER. AND WE START AROUND THE

CIRCLE AGAIN.

THIS CIRCLE OF FRUSTRATION AND
INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL DESTRUCTION WILL NOT BE BROKEN
BY ANY SINGLE ACTION OR ANY SINGLE SEGMENT OF OUR
SOCIETY. GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE A LEGISLATIVE
BASE AND MASSIVE SUPPORTIVE FUNDS. BUSINESS MUST
ATTACK THE PROBLEM OF TRAINING AND PLACING THE
UNQUALIFIED AND UPGRADING THE UNDERQUALIFIED
WITH THE SAME VIGOR WE PURSUE A PROFIT. LOCAL
ORGANIZATIONS MUST BECOME MORE INVOLVED AT ALL
LEVELS IN THE DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES. IF WE
ARE TO RESOLVE THE COLOR CRISIS ALL ELEMENTS OF OUR
SOCIETY MUST CONSTRUCTIVELY RESPOND.

I RECENTLY ATTENDED A MEETING IN WASHINGTON INVOLVING A PANEL OF BLACK YOUNG PEOPLE, MOST OF WHOM WOULD PROBABLY BE CONSIDERED MILITANT. AT ONE POINT DURING THE DISCUSSION A VERY PROPER BUSINESSMAN ASKED ONE OF THESE YOUNG MEN JUST WHAT IT WAS THE YOUNG BLACKS OF THE COUNTRY WANTED. THE YOUNG MAN LEANED FORWARD IN HIS CHAIR; SLIPPED OFF A PAIR OF DARK GLASSES; AND ANSWERED, "WHAT YOU GOT?" THE BUSINESSMAN DID NOT RESPOND. IT SEEMS TO ME HE COULD HAVE -- FOR WE HAVE A LOT. WE IN BUSINESS HAVE THE ABILITY TO ORGANIZE, TO SET PRIORITIES, TO APPROACH PROBLEMS ANALYTICALLY AND TO GET THE OPTIMUM RESULTS AT THE LEAST COST. WE HAVE THE ABILITIES TO REHABILITATE SLUM BUILDINGS SUCH AS HAS BEEN DONE BY U.S. GYPSUM COMPANY AND SMITH, KLINE AND FRENCH; TO REBUILD WHOLE

AREAS AS HALLMARK CARDS WILL DO DURING THE NEXT
15 YEARS IN ~~MA~~KANSAS CITY; AND TO ORGANIZE HIRING AND
TRAINING FACILITIES SUCH AS POLARIOD HAS DONE IN
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS. THE ONLY THING MISSING
IS FULL APPLICATION OF THESE ABILITIES AND RESOURCES.
HERE IS WHERE YOU COME IN.

AND WHAT A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE.

HOW OFTEN IS THE BUSINESSMAN PLACED IN A SITUATION
IN WHICH HE HAS NOT ONLY THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE
HISTORY BUT HAS THE TOOLS AND ABILITY AS WELL. AND
TO INFLUENCE NOT JUST THE HISTORY OF RACE RELATIONS
AND POVERTY PROBLEMS IN THIS COUNTRY -- IMPORTANT
AS THEY MAY BE -- BUT THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. FOR
THE MANNER IN WHICH WE RESOLVE OUR PROBLEMS OF
COLOR WILL COLOR OUR PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

WE CANNOT FAIL.

END