

NOW HEAR THIS ...

No Room for Blackmail

By Father Richard Torrey

A bearded black man boldly walked into the chancel of one of New York City's richest churches two Sundays ago and announced to a shocked congregation that black Americans wanted \$500 million from this nation's religious institutions.

He claimed that this money was owed by "racist" white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues as payment for "the reparations due us as people who have been exploited and degraded, brutalized, killed and persecuted" by the white establishment, aided by the churches.

James Forman, a skilled civil rights militant, was speaking for a new group called the National Black Economic Development Conference. This organization made up of black teachers, political and business leaders, had met 700-strong in Detroit last month to discuss the funding of community projects for betterment of black neighborhoods. Forman, respected for his role in the national Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, was insistent on action rather than talk.

Zeroing in on the U.S. churches' tolerance of racism, he presented a "Black Manifesto" in angry language. By a vote of only 187-63 the Conference pledged to back him when he threatened the nation's white religious establishment demanding \$500 million as restitution for generations of black unhappiness.

Approved by only one other major black churchmen's group and some black caucuses in white churches, Forman in a whirlwind week slapped the manifesto at Episcopal, Lutheran, Catholic and Jewish headquarters in New York city and broke up dignified Riverside Church services on May 4th with an uninvited speech.

He demanded specific sums from each church group for such projects as establishment of a Southern Land Bank, black publishing houses, a

black TV network and training centers for black students.

Reaction to his tactics and his thesis about reparation was sharpened by his frightening threats. He said at the N.Y. Catholic Chancery office: "We're dead serious about these demands. If the manifesto is not accepted, either there'll be no church or we'll be dead."

Churchmen and churchgoers could well ask this week: Who is behind James Forman and how would he carry out this threat to invade the churches and synagogues? Is \$200 million from U.S. Catholics realistically possible, as well as socially justifiable?

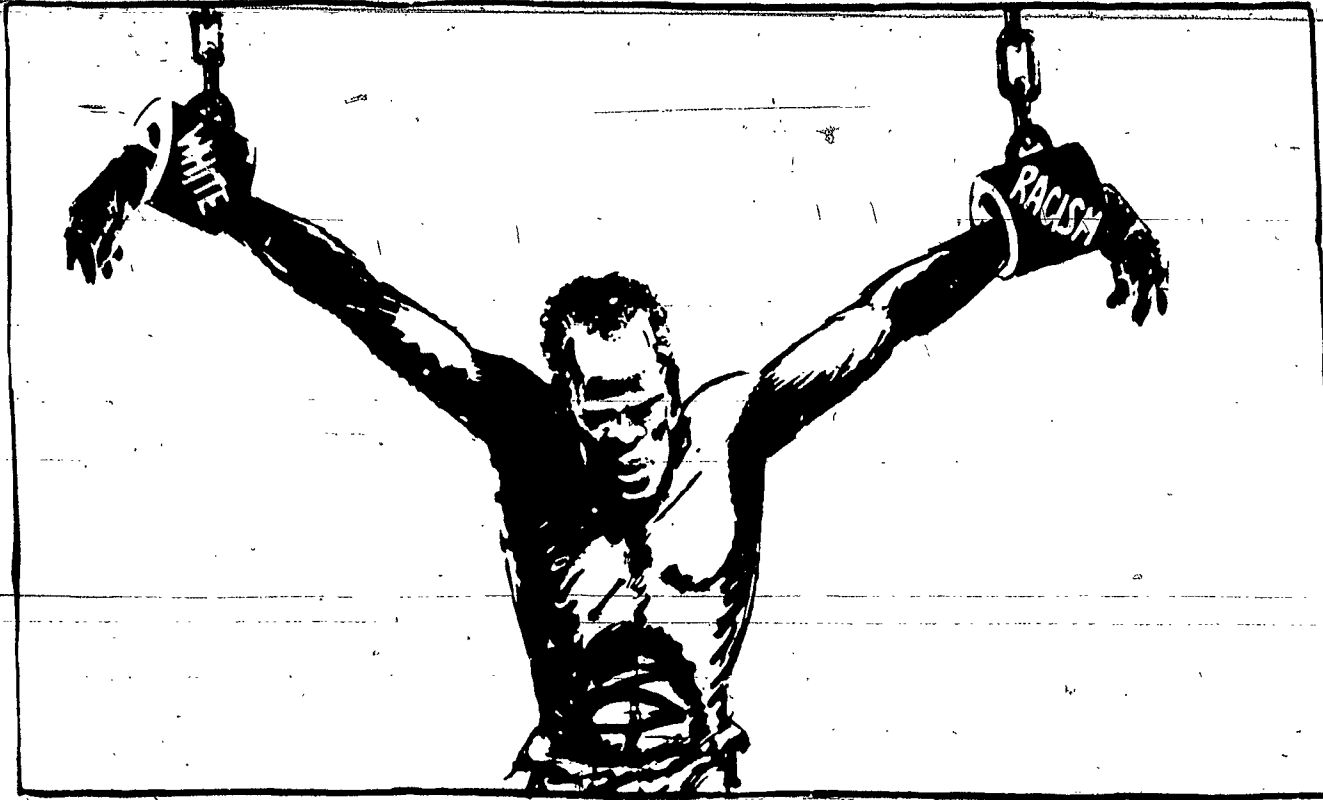
So far the manifesto has not drawn public support from any notable black leaders, nor any promises of cooperation from black power groups. There is no rush to get on the bandwagon. Mr. Forman found only 187 supporters among 700 registered delegates whom he worked on at the NBEDC gathering in Detroit. But a National Committee of Black Churchmen representing several hundred clergymen, endorsing his crusade, called him a "modern-day prophet" and warned white churches that "it is too late to call for propriety and moderation."

This may be window-dressing, because these clerics could not happily watch the threatened, frequent interference with worship by "sit-in" demonstrations at selected black and white churches" as Forman has decreed.

If it be granted that the blacks should have a forum where they may state their impatience with the churches of America for generations of silence about their ill treatment, very few Americans will tolerate the seizure of a sanctuary and the prohibition of worship to provide a dramatic setting and a captive audience.



Fischetti



WHY DON'T THEY LIFT THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR OWN BOOTSLEATHERS LIKE WE DID?

Work of a "Pulitzer" Winner

This scathing attack on "white racism" is one among many of the cartoons of John Fischetti of the Chicago Daily News which won him a 1969 Pulitzer Prize. No specific sketch was named by the judges.

Association of Catholic Laymen

Act for Christ in Opposing Racism

The May meeting of RACL will be devoted to the subject of racial justice. This is the second of two articles addressed to Catholics of the Rochester Diocese on this topic.

themselves out of the comfortable rut which we have provided.

The outrageous fact is quite the contrary. The system under which "we" live won't let "them" in. It provides for economic slavery of the poor.

Too often we equate "poor" with black people. This is certainly not always true but we have been conditioned to that conclusion by a system which is inherently anti-people of color. We are that system. We must feed upon the poor in order that the goals of our society, which exist for the sole benefit of the "haves", may remain unchanged.

We who are white can feel superior to those who are non-white, for after all we can see that "they" who are unclean or ignorant are also incapable, through lack of motivation or pride, of raising their life level.

But our poor, white or black, continue to suffer indignity. They are not considered human except through some neurotic verbalizing to the ef-

fect that "we are all equal" or that we should "pray for them".

Nothing is done to recognize the indignity inflicted by man on his fellow man or the need to change the forces which exist to maintain this system. We are part of the problem simply because we will not act to effect change. Perhaps we don't want change at our own expense.

Christ provided all of us with a way of life, an example which seems to have become lost in the ever-increasing needs for both system and structure. His message of "good news" that He is our brother and that we must be a united family in caring for each other is still there. This caring requires our efforts and our leadership in the daily life of family, work and social environment.

"Together" we must care for each other and, by this action, convince everyone not just of the need to do so, or that it is the humane thing to do, but that Christ has asked it of us.

—W. T. Cannon, St. Ambrose Parish

COMMENTARY

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Ultra Liberals Short on Humor

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Some object to categorizing people or ideas within the Church into liberals or conservatives, progressives or traditionalists, and the like. I have no objection at all. I think it makes sense. Not to make some distinctions to me makes nonsense.

For example, it seems to me, not to peg Dan Callahan or Leslie Dewart clearly as liberals or progressives, and not to recognize William Buckley or Dale Francis clearly as conservatives and traditionalists would betray reason and language.

Nevertheless, categorizing or pegging ideas as well as people, does have its limitations. The extremes in conservatism and liberalism are clear enough. So when we speak of Commonweal as liberal, most people understand what is meant. When we speak of Triumph or Twin Circles as conservative, the meaning is clear enough. When we run into the middle of the road that distinctions fuse.

For example, the best definition of a religious conservative I know is: "one who vigorously preserves all the good inherited from the past (traditionalism), is willing to get rid of what is irrelevant to the present (liberalism), and has a willingness to continue to develop or evolve from the

roots of our supernatural and historical inheritance.

The genuine liberal holds about the same definition for himself. It's the "ultras" in both camps that create the confusion and confusions within the Church. Each moderate camp would emphasize or de-emphasize certain aspects.

For example, the moderate Conservative would probably feel stronger about the need of prudent and just laws to preserve healthy social units, whether family, civil or Church. He would expect the laws to be honored and executed. The moderate Liberal would probably emphasize more strongly, individualism, freedom, openness. But fundamentally the moderates are pretty much in agreement. Law is necessary to maintain normal society; and as sons of God we are precious individuals, maintaining individual rights and freedoms.

It is not 100% so, but I do think that more ultra liberals than ultra conservatives have little sense of humor. My theory is that they are so agitated in their passion for quick, spectacular change and evolution, that they suffer from intellectual and spiritual hypertension.



A Rochester friend was chuckling as he narrated this event:

"Recently I was lectured for a quarter of an hour on the subject of 'openness' by one of your young liberal friends. As he described it, I am supposed to keep my mind 'honestly open' to all thoughts and ideas any one wants to foist upon me. The idea is that there are kernels of value in all things. And on and on he talked. Finally he came to his conclusion on 'openness'.

"Innocently I asked him: 'Have you read 'How to Keep Your Balance in the Modern Church' which Father Cuddy recommended in his column?' The openist looked a bit blank. Then he replied soberly: 'No. There's something about Father Cuddy that turns me off.'"

In the "think-speak" language of Orwell's book, 1984, "open" means "closed." The strange thing is that the young liberal saw absolutely no humor in his reply!

Would to God we had a new G. K. Chesterton, who could laugh, and who could teach trenchantly yet cheerfully, reality as it really is.

It was he who wrote: "The purpose of the open mind is to close it on something solid."

A LAYMAN'S VIEW

About the End of a Small Culture

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI

The street is about a mile long and it runs in a gully between two hills. The hill on the right is topped by two seedy playgrounds and some infamous lovers' lanes; the one on the left is created by a city dump.

A brickyard, tire recap factory, and several junkyards sprinkle the street's way. The main line of the New York Central Railroad crosses its near end and an unkempt ball diamond is at the other. Sports are a luxury of the poor.

The street was settled long ago; one of its houses is reputed to be among the oldest in the city. The latter-day migrants who settled there are poor but don't regard that as an unbearable affliction.

Most of the houses are wood-frame, some are brick; many have little gardens in back for the production of edibles. There is also room for some tulips and tiger lilies.

"Social life" thrives mainly in the summertime when front stoops come alive. On warm days containers of beer are seen, only half-concealed from drivers' by. Loud arguments are a way of life and physical battles are common. Willie Thomson, in his early 30s and the father of eight children, is so good with his fists that people have pressed him to try fighting professionally.

The street has a reputation for trouble-making and the police, even of

their own-kind, are not at home there.

During the winter, life mostly adjourns indoors. Then the summertime frolic of killing rats with sticks becomes the sadder business of trying to turn them out of houses.

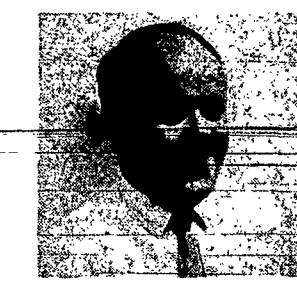
Ethnically, the people are mostly the same but individually they are as varied as quiltwork. For every couple of drunkards there is a teetotaler; for every kid who tries marijuana there is one who wants to become a major leaguer (sometimes they overlap); for every one sent to jail there is another involved in social or church work.

The war had its effect — five men from the Wilson family served at the same time; the two founding Mason brothers gave up their lives far from home; and it is rumored that one young man of the street, nicknamed "Ghost", punctured his car drums with a needle to keep from serving.

Proud of doing its share for the outer world, the street on the other hand is suspicious of "outsiders." Particularly unwelcome are "do-gooders."

The attitude is summed up in a joke of the poor: "They want to tear down our house to build some slums."

Outsiders don't understand why some people on the street scorn Christmas baskets or get drunk on rotten checks.



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