FOREWORD

We fervently hope that our days of deliberation will be successful, so that in the end we can convey our achievements, to those of our brothers and sisters who are unable to participate in the conference. This, I hope, makes the need for a successful conference a necessity. Let us try to disprove the philosophy that black people are incapable of achieving anything. Let us get together at this conference and make it a success. Once again I would like to welcome all the delegates and wish you a pleasant stay with us.

Errol Thomas,
President Caribbean Students' Association
Sir George Williams University 1968
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Our Readers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roots of White Racism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I - by C. S. Bayne</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of Involvement in the Canadian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society - by Dr Howard McCurdy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussants:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Collins, Dr Daniel Hill, Richard Lord,</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Shingler, Barry Myers, Gus Wedderburn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Resolution</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Views of the Conference of Black Writers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd Best</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston Franco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Board</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TO OUR READERS

The Editors of Expression would like to apologize to our subscribers and readers for the delay in publication. As you will notice, the current issue is a special issue dealing with the conferences which took place in Montreal in October of 1968. This has called for a great deal more work and has necessitated an increase in the size of the issue. Moreover, the recent events at Sir George are of such a nature that they could not be ignored by a publication such as ours, and so we printed a Special Bulletin on the affair which met with an immediate positive response. This further delayed this issue. We hope, however, to be able to get back into stride and have the next issue available on time.

We regret that the second part of "Star of the North: Shine Bright" by J.K. Farrell has had to be postponed until the next issue because of the format of the current issue. "Comment" in the last issue was by C.S. Bayne.

As you will no doubt notice, the Editorial Board of Expression has been changed somewhat as a result of elections. The new Editors look forward to the continued support of subscribers and to an increase in the number of them, and intend to maintain the same high quality of the Journal, the only black publication in Canada.

The Editors.
EDITORIAL

CANADIAN LIBERALISM: FACT OR FICTION

There is no doubt that the recent events at Sir George Williams University have had a profound influence on that institution and the entire Montreal community. There has been a great deal of soul-searching and questioning arising from this tragedy, but the questions most often asked are how could it have happened at Sir George? Surely Sir George is one of the most LIBERAL universities in Canada? It is precisely this "liberalism" which we have got to analyse, not only as it relates to Sir George but to Canada as a whole, if we are going to resolve the mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the events and attempt to answer these questions.

Sir George is the microcosm of the macrocosm, Canada. Both enjoy the reputation for fair-play and humanity in their relationships with all groups; both are respected as successful models of a multiracial society within which each subgroup is an integral and functioning part of the whole. Sir George with its origins in the YMCA, and Canada with no institutionalized exploitation of other racial groups, jealously guard these aspects of their history which, it is claimed, make them different. Some of the factors which are cited to substantiate this contention are: Canada's role as the champion of the non-white countries in the international forums of the world as a member of the Commonwealth and in the United Nations, and her dealings with Cuba and China. Secondly, as the "Star of the North", the haven to runaway slaves who used the "underground railroad" to escape the tyranny of slavery south of our borders.

The Canadian Myth

Against such backgrounds and with traditional Canadian selfrighteousness, the myths are fostered and maintained. The shock of the charge of racism against such a liberal university in such a liberal country could therefore only be seen as "not serious". What has resulted has not been pleasant for the university, the black population, nor the country.

A part of the problem is the widespread ignorance on the part of the Canadian population of the nature of racism. The tendency to equate racism with the kinds of overt and institutionalized acts which are perpetrated south of our borders, hides from us the covert and often unconscious acts of racism of which Canadian are guilty. To understand this, we must look at the common roots which Canada shares as a part of western culture and civilization with such avowedly racist countries as South Africa, the U.S.A., Britain, Portugal, and so on.
Racism

Racism, as one American educator put it, is SUPRA-PERSONAL, and is present despite the individual's inclination or disinclination towards racism; he is caught up in a cultural and institutional matrix that is essentially racist.

Racism American-style is generally overt and conscious and for this reason is obvious so that many Canadians are capable of developing some sympathy with the struggle for equality of the black man there; racism, Canadian-style, is more often subtle and unconscious and in the minds of the vast majority of Canadians is seen in the unequal treatment of blacks in the traditional areas of housing and employment. But there are other areas and Canada, with her roots firmly planted in the same cultural, religious, and educational traditions of western civilization, is no different except that she carries out her racist acts in a kind of obsequious innocence which is very frustrating. There is, on the other hand, a great deal of good will.

Contradictions

Canada is, therefore, riddled with paradoxes and contradictions: it is the champion of equality for all races yet it condones in silence the unequal treatment of its non-white peoples: the Indians, the Eskimos, the Japanese, the blacks, especially of Nova Scotia; it is the international haven of those that flee tyranny of any sort, and yet one can notice how much easier it is for white refugees to gain entry to Canada than for the non-white ones. Only very recently (1967) was the outright discriminatory bias of Canada's immigration laws against non-white peoples removed. The Domestic Scheme - a modern variant of the slave-master relationship - which Canada has with various non-white countries is a testimony to the racist policies which are followed in immigration since very few blacks would be able to reach these shores otherwise.

The very concept of a mosaic is inherently racist and ethnocentric since it sees people first as belonging to special groups, then as human beings, and conceive of their social and economic functions within Canadian society on the basis of the stereotype associated with their racial or ethnic group.

Paternalism

Then Canadians will ask, why? How can it happen here? The same factors that moved Sir George steadily towards conflict and the escalation of such conflict are present in the total Canadian society. The black man in Canada is still a marginal man, still an invisible man; and the attitude of the vast majority of white Canadians to him is a mixture of paternalism and mock-seriousness. The Society has failed to
show that there is any significant difference between it and the openly racist countries even by the simple act of legislation which would guarantee equal treatment for all men - like Sir George, it is too busy with other "important" matters to pay serious attention to the complaints of the black community.

Unconscious Racism

Several ministers of the Federal Government, very busy men, did not see any racial overtones in the Sir George Affair - Canadians are never racially conscious! - The hate and hysteria against blacks manifested in Montreal after February 11th was not racial hate, we are told, but "a spontaneous response to the destruction of private property!" These acts give us, black people, a clear appreciation of the Canadian mind and what can be expected if frustration as a result of discrimination in housing and employment coupled with the absence of any serious human rights laws and an effective Human Rights Commission to enforce them should lead to outright militancy - let us recall that there were no rules or regulations governing such cases (the absence of regulations governing certain acts does not signify the absence or non-existence of the acts themselves) and the Committee which heard the complaint in May of 1968 showed little respect for the seriousness of the charge and the dignity of those who made it.

A Human Rights Commission

This Journal has been constantly pointing out to the various governments, especially and constitutionally the Provincial Government, the need for a Human Rights Commission as exists in Ontario and now it seems in British Columbia. So far, four years later, no tangible evidence is available to indicate that we in Quebec shall have one. At the same time, the overt practice of racial discrimination, as Susan Purcell in the Montreal Star of March 10, 1969 has pointed out, is spreading like the cancer it is.

The industrial sector, the bread-and-butter sector, is increasing its acts of racial discrimination, preventing the black man from moving upward into the more profitable and prestigious positions when qualified for them, and maintaining him as far as possible in stereotyped jobs. This is the most dangerous kind of discrimination in both its physical and psychological effects; it can have no other result than that which is universally feared and universally attributed to the blacks: VIOLENCE. It is a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, it seems to us, since the preconditions for such violence, when it does occur, have in fact been carefully cultivated by the white power structure. The acting out of this anger and frustration in the destruction of property, for example, will then be held up as proof of the violent, uncivilized nature of blacks and their disrespect for law and order, and property. Trollope's thesis would seem to be vindicated:
"...the first desire of a man in a state of civilization is for property.... Without a desire for property, man could make no progress. But the negro has no such desire;...

The Way Out

It seems imperative to us, therefore, that Canadians realize the nature of their society, its racism, and from this awareness provide those instruments - legal, educational, and others - by which racism, conscious or unconscious, cultural or institutional, can be controlled and finally rooted out.

In this light, the battle for equality that is being wages today can be considered nothing less than a revolutionary struggle to reformulate the basic and fundamental concepts, value judgments, and ways in which each racial group perceives the existence of all others. Our future demands it.

Finally, and in consequence, each level of government must create the necessary laws and institutions to safeguard the rights of ALL citizens if racial harmony is to be maintained and if Canada is to remain credible among the non-white peoples of the world. No effort should be spared in this regard, for where there is no remedy, there is no right.

There are no inferior races, only inferior individuals and the greatness of any society is still to be measured by its treatment of all its citizens in the protection of their rights.
THE ROOTS OF WHITE RACISM

Part 1

Racism as it is practised by the white man against the black man has its origins in European cultural narcissism and slavery as an institution for the exploitation of the New World resources.

By the turn of the 19th Century, Europe had come to so love herself and her cultural achievements, that she proceeded in a show of arrogant splendour to reshape the world in its own "image and likeness". The American 20th Century version of this is familiar to us - "The Great Society" concept.

These civilizations used their superior war technology to put the "torch of civilization" to many ancient cultures. They justified their conquests and plunder on the doctrine of inequality of races and their messianic mission to civilize the world, i.e. to create Great Societies which were prototypes of European society. Out of the fabric of the theories of race, religion, government and culture as popularized by de Gabeneau, Lord Acton, Lord Macaulay, E. A. Freeman, Thomas Carlyle and Trollope rose Hitler's Germany imbued with the mission of purging the world of its inferior races; Mussollini's Italy and its mission of civilization in Ethiopia; apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia; the concept of Australia for the whites, England for the Whites, New Zealand for the whites, Canada for the whites (witness Canadian immigration laws until 1967). These theories structured the social institutions of black slavery as practised in the New World and established the basis for cultural and institutional racism as we see it operating today in Canada and the U.S.A.

When one examines the arguments and concepts presented by some defenders of European imperialism and racism, one notes the extent to which their ideas and opinions come into operation today even in the most ordinary person-to-person relationships between blacks and whites, and contribute to the persistence of myths held by white people about black people. These ideas shape the entire response-mechanism of whites to blacks at the conscious and the unconscious levels. It was inevitable that the white European should ask himself what am I, and, in particular, what am I relative to peoples of other cultures and races. In what follows, one sees his answers to these questions. Today, when a black man confronts a white man, he must respond - but how? It is in the context of these 19th Century writers and philosophers that one must seek the answer, for European cultures have not seriously attempted to re-define and change this perspective. They have simply surpressed the ugliness of their acts in terms of public disapproval.
Arthur de Gobineau, in his "The Inequality of Human Races", published 1854, in a eulogy to the Aryan race justifies colonialism and racism on the thesis of inequality of races. He says:

"Such is the lesson of history. It shows us that all civilisations derive from the white race, that none can exist without its help, and that a society is great and brilliant only so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it, provided that this group itself belongs to the most illustrious branch of our species...

Of the first seven civilisations, which are those of the Old World, six belong, at least in part, to the Aryan race, and the seventh, that of Assyria, owes to this race the Iranian Renaissance, which is, historically, its best title to fame. Almost the whole of the Continent of Europe is inhabited at the present time by groups of which the basis is white, but in which the non-Aryan elements are the most numerous. There is no true civilisation, among the European peoples, where the Aryan branch is not predominant. In the above list, no Negro race is seen as the initiator of a civilisation. Only when it is mixed with some other can it even be initiated into one. Similarly, no spontaneous civilisation is to be found among the yellow races; and when the Aryan blood is exhausted, stagnation supervenes."

The British historians, Macaulay and Acton, lent their prestige to these theories later. Acton wrote a review in "The Rambler" of March 1862, of Goldwin Smith's history of Ireland. He argued that "The Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Teutons are the only makers of history, the only authors of advancement. Other races possessing a highly developed language, a copious language, a speculative religion, enjoying luxury and art, attain to a certain pitch of cultivation which they are unable either to communicate or to increase. They are a negative element in the world... Subjection (therefore) to a people of a higher capacity for government is of itself, no misfortune; and it is to most countries the condition of their political advancement... A nation can obtain political education only by dependence on another... Theorists who hold it to be wrong that a nation should belong to a foreign state are, therefore, in contradiction with the law of civil progress..."

It is no surprise, therefore, that at the level of the individual, Anthony Trollope could write in 1859, in a mood reminiscent of Carlyle in his "Occasional discourse on the Nigger Question" (1849):

"Physically, he (the Negro) is capable of the hardest bodily work, and that probably with less bodily pain than men of any other race; but he is idle, unambitious as to worldly position, sensual, and content with little."
"Intellectually, he is apparently capable of but little sustained effort; but, singularly enough, here he is ambitious. He burns to be regarded as a scholar, puzzles himself with fine words, addicts himself to religion for the sake of appearance, and delights in aping the little graces of civilisation. He despises himself thoroughly, and would probably be content to starve for a month if he could appear as a white man for a day; but yet he delights in signs of respect paid to him, black as he is, and is always thinking of his own dignity. If you want to win his heart for an hour, call him a gentleman; but if you want to reduce him to a despairing obedience, tell him that he is a filthy nigger, assure him that his father and mother had tails like monkeys, and forbid him to think that he can have a soul like a white man...."

In these excerpts, one sees many elements of present day white attitudes towards black people. There is the intellectual inferiority thesis which, though not flaunted boldly today in Canada, gives rise to doubts about blacks being able to "fit in" in industrial situations of a managerial nature or that require highly skilled personnel; the thesis of inherent laziness and lack of ambition which makes the white man see the black man as being prepared to be satisfied with the menial position in the white power structure and causes much surprise when blacks say that they want their freedom now - not tomorrow; we see too the myth of sex, brute strength, and kinship with the monkey (you all know the cocktail stories about black people growing tails); there is too the massa slave mentality and the dependency role of the inferior race, "These people should be grateful for what Canada has done for them - aid, subsidized education, etc."; we understand too, why the white man calls a black man "Nigger" and now why the black man shouts back "Honkey!"

by C. S. Bayne.
PROBLEMS OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE CANADIAN SOCIETY WITH REFERENCE TO BLACK PEOPLE

by Dr. Howard McCurdy
Chairman, Biology Department, Windsor University

I want to thank the Conference Committee for having extended the invitation to me to come to this meeting. I'm somewhat surprised, and pleased by the fact that I have been appointed the keynote speaker. It is likely that I will disappoint you, but nevertheless, I recognize the honour has been done because I recognize the significance of this meeting. It seems to me that this is probably the first meeting at which an attempt has been made to convene black leadership from all over this country to do what is right to do: namely, to examine the position of the black man in Canadian Society, a society which is contrasted to the society that I can look and see across the Detroit River and is referred to as the Canadian Mosaic. This Canadian Mosaic has been described in a variety of ways – none of them particularly attractive, it seems to me, to black people.

The previous Prime Minister describes it in a way which conjures up the picture of a rather curious, crazy quilt with two large beautifully coloured grand quilts, and others variously appended of which we are perhaps the dullest colour and certainly the smallest. John Porter has described the Canadian Mosaic in a way which makes it as Louis Carrol would have described it, "curiouser and curiouser". Picture, if you will, a Canadian Mosaic with a wasp's nest at the top. I do not know whether this is preferable to the American Melting Pot in spite of the heat that seems to be generated in the attempted mixture, but it seems to me that it is about time we as black people begin to take a close look, on a Canada-wide basis, at our position in this Canadian Mosaic. This is the purpose for our coming here this week-end.

Canadians, in general, black Canadians, no less than white, have tended to compare this country with that country down south, and to look smugly thereon, and to say, in effect, we have no problems. Well, if we have learned nothing else, we have learned that that is, to say the least, a considerable distortion of the facts. It is true that in the United States the problem of racial equality is deeply rooted, historically, in the very fabric of the society. That is a society built on the concept that there must be a superior race. You see, one could not exploit anything but an inferior race. We don't have that tradition embedded in our history, but we make a serious mistake if we think that the border that separates these two countries is the border at which that sort of
expression

racism stops. We would be displaying complete ignorance of our particular circumstances, if, when analysing our position in Canada, we not only take account of the diffuse nature of the border that separates us from the United States, but also of the peculiar nature of the Canadian Mosaic. Only when we face these realities will we be able to shape the kind of equality that we seek to achieve.

On a broad basis, we must, in considering our position in this country, examine the significance of the point of view that suggests that this country historically, and in the future, must be predicated on the notion that there are two pre-eminent peoples which have established it, and that that should be perpetuated. Don't misunderstand me, I am not here arguing against the notion of two official languages, of the equality of the French with the English, I am arguing with the notion that a country can grow and develop on the basis that there are two peoples, above all others, upon which the country must find its fundamental base. There is no growth there. We must keep that in mind. But of course, with the audience that we have, or rather that I have, to ask the question whether we are equal participants in the Canadian Mosaic requires no answer. We already know the answer. If we ask the question: do our children have the same hope for achievement, the same hope to attain any level of prominence or success in this country as any other person in this country, the answer is no. If we were to ask the question, can we, as Canadian Citizens, live anywhere we want, without any fear of being unable to buy a home in a particular community, or being unable to avail ourselves of certain of the facilities this Community has to offer, the answer would have to be no. If we were to pose the question are the institutions in the black community in Canada meeting the needs of black Canadians in the fashion that they ought to, the answer would be no.

There is nowhere in Canada where we have achieved the goals that we must, of necessity, achieve if black people are to assert their humanity on an equal basis with all others in this country. Whenever we can look in this country and see that black people have achieved, we are proud: we are proud that we have a member of parliament; we are proud that we have a black man in the Ontario Legislature; we are proud that a number of other black people occupy positions of importance in this country; but we deny that that tells us or anyone else that we have the kind of equality that we seek to achieve. It merely says that these people who have for so long refused to identify themselves as black, who have used every kind of euphemism to obscure their blackness, need not have been ashamed of their blackness, because we are a people who have gone beyond Slavery to the point where there are those among us who can do the equal of
any man in North America. We can take rightful pride in this.

I feel that in the next two days we are going to examine the kinds of problems which prevent us from participation of the sort that I think that we are seeking. We will do so to the end of informing all of us about what we do not know, and that is about other black people in this Country. Indeed, we probably know more about the black people in the United States, the West Indies, and Africa than we know about black people in Canada, and it is about time that stopped. We find that we have used various tactics with various degrees of success, and hopefully, we will be able to trade not only information but tactics, and by so doing, we will contribute to the success of all. We will say, I am sure, that much of the problem that we have to face is determined by those around us and the sort of society in which we live. Some of the problems we must attack on the basis of an alliance with whites.

I have tried to indicate that to be black, as my daughter says! "to be black is to be beautiful". But to say that black is beautiful is not to originate another kind of racism. We must, because our numbers are few, establish an alliance with those who recognize, as we must recognize, the common humanity of man. But we must, ourselves, be aware of our goals and those who join with us must accept those goals on our terms. And our terms are not to be first as whites. Our terms are to be black people as good as any others. It is inevitable that what I have said will conjure up visions of black power stalking across the North American Continent. And so the inevitable question is, does black power have any relevance to the black people of Canada. Well, black power means to a variety of people, whatever they want it to mean. I sometimes wonder what frightens people more, black or power. You know, we called ourselves coloured for so long. Now we surprise people by referring to ourselves as blacks.

I was working with a friend on a Civil Rights project and he asked me on several occasions, how is it that now we are calling ourselves black? Jules Pfeiffer noticed it first. Have you ever seen the cartoon? It shows a series of pictures. It shows a black man, first picture. We first came as black people. Then we preferred to be called negro, then we preferred to be called coloured; more recently we preferred to be called negro and now again, we are black. Well, there is a significance in this, which is part and parcel of the whole notion of black power. The appellation "coloured" was to apologise for having one drop of black blood in us! It was to assert that the degree to which we were grown was to be measured by the amount of white blood. My friend was a little upset about the notion that we use the term black and never use the term power and
this was deeply suspect. What is this power? Of course, in Windsor, power conjures up visions of the smoke which rose across that river last July, and I here assert that this is not black power. That is black frustration. Black power is quite different.

To analyse whether black power has meaning in Canada, we must look to see what new significance it has to black people. Now, in the U.S., it means, among other things, taking full advantage of our numbers, concentrated, it has been said repeatedly, in strategic places. It is obvious to anyone that this is one respect in which black power has no application in Canada. The fundamental principle of black power does not consist in being physically black, but in recognizing that if we are to participate equally in North American society, we must first regard ourselves with a degree of self-respect that cannot come except by getting to the roots of our blackness. I do not have to explain to you the many ways in which we have eschewed our blackness. We have straightened our hair, we have whitened our faces, we are proud to be more white than the whitest man in Canada. Black power, first and foremost, is the abandonment of that.

Black power involves a second thing of which I hope this meeting is the beginning in Canada, namely black solidarity. We are a people who, in the past, have formed a mosaic all of our own. The black man who is successful is a black man gone. The black Church is divided into so many sects that I doubt outside of North America there are more to match them. No institution regarded as the bulwark of its community has proved so weak as our church has since the 19th century when it was a strength to black people. There was some question whether in the 1960's the black church could ever again be what it used to be. Surely, one of the things that we must examine is whether that institution can be valuable to us.

Of course, there are also other kinds of division in the black community; one such situation was discovered by the census taker: some of us are Negro, some of us are coloured, and some of us are born and bred Canadians, but not black.

There is another type of division that separates the Canadian-born black from the West Indian-born black from the American-born black. At this conference, it is of particular significance that we are not only bringing together Canadian-born blacks with black immigrants but that it is being done by West Indian-born blacks. We are establishing a solidarity in this Country and I think that we ought to give attention also to establishing solidarity with the black man in the United States.
We cannot look at black power as based on numbers in this country. We must recognize that solidarity with black and coloured peoples throughout the world may be important to us for one reason or another.

We have predicated our efforts on the assumption that in Canada, and in Windsor particularly, we can depend in the last analysis upon the law and upon a general sympathy for fairplay for all people regardless of colour. And that still must be the cornerstone of our efforts to achieve equality in Canada. But don't you forget, the climate in this Country will inevitably be affected by what happens elsewhere. Let me tell you about it. In Windsor for many years, (it has been estimated that it has been 100 years) we have celebrated the emancipation of the slaves in the British Empire. It is in connection with that celebration that we came to recognize how fragile indeed were the dimensions of freedom. And we came to recognize that freedom from slavery after all does not mean equality, even 100 years later. For as we attempted to celebrate another emancipation celebration in 1968 we were told by the Commissioners of Police in the City of Windsor, that no such celebration could be held, we could not take the chance, they said, of having ten thousand coloured people crossing the border for the purpose of causing a civil disorder. And do you know that we took that to the Supreme Court of Ontario. Now, you read your newspapers, you know what would have happened if that had taken place in Detroit. The Supreme Court would have laughed in the face of that Police Commissioner and said, "Oh, no baby, they are going to celebrate". But in this Country the Supreme Court upheld that decision. And it comes down to this that in the Black community of Windsor there was a feeling of powerlessness never before matched in our history. So there in one decision by people who were ignorant of the very nature of the insurrection in the United States, stood the chance of our losing all that we thought we had accomplished.

This indicates the necessity for self-sufficiency. So there are just some of the facts that I think we ought to have in our minds. And now I would suspect throughout this Country, no matter where we live it is not very different from what it is in the United States. We have come a long way, we are a big people, we are a strong people, we have earned equality now and we are going to have it.
BLACK BROTHER SPEAKS

You're Black and beautiful, my sisters.

Yes, brother, yes.

Is there another race to truly claim
Such richly-textured skin as garbs your frame?

No, brother, no.

Can ever any kind of limp, straight hair
Compare in beauty with the curls you bear?

Never, brother, never.

What joy can thinly-delineated lips lay bare
To match the offerings of your succulent pair?

None, brother, none.

But yet you sit permissively, And let an alien
world facetiously impose the values you accept
Implicitly.

True, brother, true.

You have no hope for pride in full
Until you realize it's wonderful to be both
Black and beautiful.

Right, brother, right.

There's so much more I could relate, To make
You proud of your estate,
But, my white chick would hardly wait.

Amen, black man, amen.

Keith Barret.
Mr. Frank Collins  
President, N.A.A.C.P. (Vancouver)

I wish to express my gratitude to all those who made it possible for me to be here today. I believe that the theme of the Conference is a good, healthy and aggressive one. I hope that we we proceed in our workshop we will develop a perspective from which to view some of the problems that confront Negroes in Canada today.

The problem of generating interest in the Black Community is as serious in Vancouver as it is here in Montreal. Don't be discourages by the small attendance here today. Most of the social and other problems that you have here we experience there. There are the problems of discrimination in housing, despite the existence of the Fair Accommodation Practices Act. Another area of difficulty is employment. This is very serious - we are either too qualified or not sufficiently educated. Also we are not properly represented at the local administrative and political level.

In Vancouver we are an "extreme group" geographically. We are separated from the rest of the Black Community in Canada. Moreover, we are definitely a minority within a minority group in Canada.

I hope that one of the facts that emerges from the Conference is the need for solidarity among the Black people of Canada so that we can be more effective, so that we can tackle the problems that confront us as a group. I hope that the Conference will give us a greater understanding of the problems that we face. I came to this Conference to gain some of these insights and to take them back to Vancouver.

In conclusion, I would like to say that one of my strongest desires is to have us unite so that we can become a national group right across the Dominion of Canada. Very often in Vancouver we are referred to as the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People; well, we have not reached that stage yet, but I do hope that this is the first step - this Conference that we are having today.
Dr. Daniel Hill,
Director, Ontario Human Rights Commission

First, I would like to congratulate the Montreal Committee for putting on this Conference. Don't be discouraged that we don't have too many here; it's a pattern. I think that it's important that we have this type of National Conference which will be held every year. I, therefore, support Mr. Collins in his suggestion that this sort of national meeting should be held as often as possible. I say this for several basic reasons. The first is that Black immigration is on the increase. I can't measure it and I don't know by how much. I do not have the figures, but I can assure you the picture in Toronto is changing at a rapid rate. You see more black people in the community now than ever before; and I guess the same thing is happening in Montreal. They're visible everywhere and there is no question about it that immigration is on the increase. I think this is of national interest. I have also noticed a shift in location of the population. For instance, there is a shift of the Maritime black community. Many of them are moving from the Maritimes into Ontario; there are problems related to this pattern of internal migration. Housing and employment and discrimination. We have also noticed an increase of American refugees, and I use that term advisedly - American refugees seeking a haven from what is happening in the United States today, and what might happen in the future. It is the same kind of refugee movement that took place over one hundred years ago when fifty thousand black people fled the tyranny and the inhumanity of the American slave system. I think that if things continue to deteriorate in the United States of America, that we are going to see a major upsurge, a major move of American black people to Canada again. We have a legacy, indeed, we have a history in this type of race relationships, at least in Ontario.

I think this is of national interest and national concern. These three things: the fact that there is a new wave of American refugees coming here, internal migration shifts, and general immigration increase, constitute the basis for national meetings of this nature, of people who are genuinely concerned with the problems of black communities across Canada. One further reason why I mention the need for national meetings like this is that the most serious problem facing black communities today is focussed in the Maritimes.

I don't want to take any space or time away from my friends from the Maritimes who are going to be speaking about this, but I have been there and I have seen the most horrible, the most depressed conditions of any black community anywhere in Canada: in Halifax, in and around Nova Scotia, and in other places in the East. It's absolutely imperative that the leaders in the black communities
of Toronto, Montreal and Windsor become interested in this critical situation that is developing in the Maritimes. I can't think of any conditions in Ontario or Quebec that even approximate, in any sense whatsoever, the position of Black communities in the Maritimes. So, some national deliberation around this point, I think, is of absolute interest and an absolute necessity.

The other point that I would like to make relates to my belief that we should develop coalitions of interest. The Black community in Canada, whether we like to face it or not, is numerically insignificant relative to the twenty or so million people in Canada. You can't begin to have the power and the strength to compare or parallel the black situation in the United States. The black community just doesn't exist as a power or force in the Canadian society. So, therefore, I think it's absolutely necessary that morally and pragmatically, a coalition of interests be developed. For example, with the Indians. I can't think of any community facing a more serious problem than our Canadian Indians. As I looked out of my Hotel this morning, I noticed the Mount Royal Hotel was heavily populated with Indians. I looked around, I had always stayed at the Mount Royal, I looked around and I saw dozens of Indians there, and I finally saw one I knew, Chief Delisle. I said, "What's going on?" He said, "The Quebec Federation of Indians is meeting and you ought to be here because we are interested in human rights problems and you are interested in problems of civil liberties and I invite you to come here this afternoon to sit down and listen to what we have to say." Now, he didn't ask me, he didn't say whether I was Indian or not, he was just interested in the human rights problems facing Quebec Indians. The same is happening with the Ontario Indians in Ontario. The most militant ethnic community in my opinion today in Canada is the Canadian Indian. They are developing at a fast rate, there are lots of organizations springing up quickly. They are vibrant, vociferous, militant, and I think that it's in the interest of the black community to start thinking about this development. Because of their numerical insufficiency, it is imperative to start thinking about coalitions. We can't go it alone. And I think that anyone who thinks they can go it alone is daydreaming.

The third point I would like to make is that this idea of the national conference, this idea of coalition of interest, is important for yet another reason: we must begin to make across this national scene human rights commissions. Provincially, and federally, you must make them work. There is only one province in Canada with comprehensive housing legislation and that's Ontario. I am not trying to "toot" our own horn; we have got lots of problems. We haven't got this Indian situation under control; there are problems of discrimination in Southern Ontario, Northern Ontario, everywhere. We have processed and
handled close to 8,000 cases involving people with human rights problems in the last few years. We have got staff, we have regional officers, we have a Board of Inquiry, we get into prosecutions in certain cases. We are as busy as anything. But I don't see this kind of activity as I look across the national scene. There are many imperfections within our Commission and the legislation even now, we are working and we're trying and we're struggling, and people who criticise us have at least something to criticise. They have real issues to focus on.

Also, I think that the fact that we have only one province with adequate housing legislation, is something to look at very carefully. Other than Ontario, there are only two provincial governments and the Federal Government with staff in this field, and this staff is very, very small. In fact, all of the staff of all the other Commissions, Federal and Provincial, could be put in the Ontario Human Rights Commission. We have more staff and more planned expansion and we are still weak; so that there is a strong and urgent need, if there is going to be any involvement of the Black community in the Canadian Society, to make Human Rights legislation work and make commissions work,

Now, there are nine of the ten Provinces with Human Rights legislation, but of the nine provinces that have legislation, there is only one, I feel, that has legislation in depth, and that's our own (Ontario). Even Prince Edward Island has legislation (they have a Human Rights Code) - Newfoundland doesn't have it. But it is sitting on the books and is not being administered in any place properly. It's not being enforced, and it's up to an organization or Conference of this nature, bringing people together across the Canadian scene, to focus on the inadequacy of current Human Rights legislation and current commissions, including Ontario's.

I would make these three points: (1) We should strengthen Human Rights legislation and commission work by petition and by fighting for it, (2) There should be a coalition of interests and I think that's obvious because of the difference in our situation here and that of the United States and (3) National conferences are an absolute necessity.
Richard Lord
English Vice-President, Quebec Liberal Party

I am a realist and activist. I get involved. I am black and a good Canadian. I am a Quebecker. If you really want any action in this world it is economics, cash, dollars, that make the world move. You are either in or you’re out. If you have no dollars you are out. If you have dollars you are in. You can be black until you are like ebony if you have a million dollars and own General Motors you are in. It is not a question of being black or white, it is those who have get, those who don’t, don’t get.

You want to create something in the community then work in a family level. Tell the mothers and fathers to stop giving their kids an inferiority complex. Tell them to get up there and fight. It is a fighting world and those who fight will survive, those who stop fighting will be crushed.

The French Canadians are out there fighting for their civil rights and they want all their rights. And if you want to get your rights you go out there and fight too. Fight in your universities, fight in your homes, fight in your classes, fight in the Liberal Party, Conservative Party or N.D.P., but you got to fight for it. Democracy just means we have equal opportunity to fight and survive, no privileges to anybody. And you want to see what is going on, the French Canadians are over there now in the Queen Elizabeth Hotel fighting for their rights and taking some of yours away, and if you want to protect your rights you fight.

If you want to fight as Negroes, fight as Negroes. If you want to fight as ethnic groups, fight as ethnic groups, if you want to fight as English speaking Canadians, fight as English Canadians. But make up your mind what your goal is and go and fight. That is what I am going back to.
Professor John Shingler,
Department of Political Science, McGill University

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to address myself to two questions. The first one, I guess, rather emerged from the theme of the conference, or at least as most of the speakers have put that theme to us so far. And I think that the best way I can put what I am going to say into some kind of perspective is on a personal basis. My own. If you like, my own ideological odyssey commences in South Africa where I lived until 1961. When I left that country for political reasons, I was very active in opposition to the policy of apartheid. And the model of that opposition was primarily in the liberal Democracy. And I have now lived for six or seven years in the liberal Democracy in North America, and once again, I find that, in fact, there is substantial discrimination. In other words, the Social Democratic or, if you like, the Liberal Democratic model is not one on the basis of which one sees the elimination of racial discrimination. But, more than that, a Liberal Democracy or a Social Democracy in an industrial Society is a structure of human relations which again involves exploitation of man by man which may have, and in fact, often does have nothing whatsoever to do with colour. It has a great deal to do with class. It has a great deal to do with the distribution of power. It has a great deal to do with the way in which relationships of supra-ordination and subordination are built up. And often enough I think that getting into the question of whether, for example a black girl from the Maritimes should have the right to become a counter clerk at Kresge's or to seek the opportunity, the equal opportunity of a lifetime of terminal employment in some kind of a soul-destroying, mind-stultifying job, is avoiding the issue.

In an industrial society, whether we are talking about liberal democracies or social democracies or whether, in fact, we are talking about Democratic Centralism with Democratic Socialism, by and large, industrial societies are societies in which a very large proportion of the population, regardless of race, regardless of colour, regardless of religion, do not, in any sense, define their own lives. To ask and call for integration in the sense that many people call for integration; to call for assimilation in societies, particularly the societies of the North Atlantic world in which peoples' wants and needs are manipulated through overwhelming, overpowering socialization processes, is entirely to miss the point of human liberation. In other words, to define the possibility of man in
terms of equality within a subordinated situation is to, I think underestimate
the possibilities of human beings. To seek the kind of equality in a highly
stratified hierarchy, very structured, basically an unegalitarian society is
to miss the point. And that's the one thing that I wanted to say in terms of an
overall content upon the theme of your Conference.

The second thing is a slight shift in position because, if I may quote a much
maligned man today, very early in his life, Winston Churchill said that
Democracy is probably one of the worst forms of Government. However, all
other forms of Government are even worse and, given that fact, I think that
one might accept the rhetoric to which I have very briefly subjected you on the
one hand with regard to human liberty and human liberation and, on the other
hand, the possibilities within an on-going situation. To that extent, the Civil
Liberties Action Committee in Montreal which has been founded this year
(1968), is something which I would like again to bring to your attention.

The Civil Liberties Action Committee is not associated, except informally,
with the C.L.U. or with the League of Human Rights in Montreal. The Civil
Liberties Action Committee is a small, recently founded and rather aggressive
organization. It, in fact, has been branded by the Director of Police in Montreal
as a group of professional radicals who are opposed to fundamental, everyday
bylaws and other esoteric phenomena of this kind. The Civil Liberties Action
Committee, in addition to concerning itself with the whole process of arrest
and detention in Montreal, is also dealing with such things as colour discrim-
ination. One of the people whose cases we are currently working with is an
immigrant from the West Indies whose application was rejected on the basis
that his score amounted to only forty-two points out of the fifty points required.
This is something we have to challenge and make an appeal.

I think that where an organization like the Civil Liberties Action Committee could
work with the kind of organizations that are represented here, is very specifically
in the area of colour discrimination. Because in the everyday problems of day-
to-day living in a City like Montreal where there is a very substantial degree of
police violation of the rule of law and due process, and where there is, I think,
a very substantial degree of colour discrimination in a whole variety of areas,
if an organization like the Civil Liberties Action Committee were kept well
informed, at least more informed, it could act on a public basis in terms of
this kind of discrimination. I think that this would be something very practical
that could be undertaken.
Based on the remarks of the Human Rights Commissioner of Ontario, I would like to get more information about that organization and the possibility of doing something like that in Quebec because one of the things we have spoken about here in Quebec is the possibility of a Charter of Citizens' Liberties. I guess the people that are most discriminated against today in Montreal are the Hippies, and not black people. The Hippies encounter a very large amount of discrimination. Unlike black people, of course, they can always cut their hair and change their clothing styles, so that in that sense they can always opt out. But there is no question that Hippies are subject to fantastic discrimination in Montreal today. As to the overall question of Human Rights and Civil Liberties, I think that an organization like C.L.A.C. which now has a sister organization in Ottawa that has recently been set up and which is attempting to establish close relationship with the Civil Liberties Association in Toronto, can do a great deal on a day-to-day basis to improve the quality of everyday living.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Barry Myers, Economist

We quite often try to isolate the problem of the Canadian Society as peculiar to the Negro community in that society. But what are some of the problems of the Negro community? I suppose they are infinite, but we can define some of them. There are economic problems. Those of us who have travelled, know of the slums in Nova Scotia and Halifax. There are slums in Ottawa and there are slums in Montreal. But slum living is not a monopoly of the Negro community by any means. The fact of the matter is that approximately 33 1/3 per cent of the Canadian population live in poverty. To the extent that one is going to tackle the problems of poverty in the Negro community, one must, therefore, tackle the problem of poverty in Canada. In this context, the problems of involvement mean precisely that you cannot isolate the Negro community and attempt to deal with the problems within the Negro community without dealing with the problems of poverty in Canada. Moreover, I don't think that we can attempt to tackle the problems of political isolation of the Negro community without tackling the problem of political isolation of twenty million Canadians, if we accept the views of the political scientists, close to 100% of the Canadian population is alienated by various techniques from the political process.

In the final analysis, involvement of the Negro community means the involvement of Negro men and Negro women and Negro children, boys and girls, and the only way we are going to deal with that problem, as I see it, is to recognize that the entire political, economic, and social structure of the country is incompatible with any kind of meaningful involvement of immigrants in the life of this Country. If we are going to deal with the problems of young black people in University, we have got to deal with the problem of all young people in University life and that I hope is what student power is about. If we are going to deal with the problem of the Negro woman in Canadian society, we have to deal with the problem of women in Canada. It is very much part and parcel of the same problem, and that's what the Royal Commission on Women is all about. If we are going to deal with the problem of the Negro ethnic group, we can't deal with it in isolation of the problem of the French ethnic group, or, for that matter, the English ethnic group. We hope that's what the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was about. In other words, what I am trying to say is that the Negro community, to the extent that it wishes to address itself to the problems that are immediate to the members of that Community, must operate within the social, economic, cultural, and the political structure of this Country.
The Negro Community has a responsibility to build a humanity and a social conscience. As a group, we have a responsibility to ensure that those who cry discrimination, whatever may be their reasons or whatever may be their particular identity, do so in a responsible way. That is not with reference to the method whether they march or whether they throw molotov cocktails - but rather to the principle that they have no right to cry discrimination if in turn they practise it. As a practical exercise, as people who live in the Province of Quebec and who are apprised of the discrimination of the French speaking Community, I think that we have a responsibility to remind that group that they too, practise discrimination. Not only discrimination against races but some of the kinds of discrimination of which they accuse the English community. I remember in 1964 as a student of the University of Montreal, my fellow students marched on Dominion Square and burned an effigy of the President of the Canadian National Railways. The problem then was discrimination by C.N.R. against French Canadians, But somebody, somewhere ought to remind these people that there is a similar, though slightly different problem in Hydro Quebec. The problem of discrimination against the French community in the Federal Civil Service is one, I suppose, that every responsible citizen in this country, be he French or non-French, ought to keep reminding the Government of the country about. But we do have a responsibility to remind them as well that Indians are discriminated against, that Eskimos are discriminated against, and that among other things, the Provincial Civil Service in the Province of Quebec is peculiar for its absence of non-French speaking people. The problem of St. Leonard is not a problem which we hear a lot about these days, Rather emotional feelings are expressed in English Language Newspapers, but for those English Canadians who cry about the problems of discrimination by the French speaking community in Quebec, they ought to be reminded of the fact that French speaking people in Metropolitan Ottawa are required to send their children to schools in which the child doesn't even know the first word that is being spoken in the school by the teacher.

Now, you might ask yourself the question, "what has that got to do with the problem of the Negro?" Well, it seems to me that if we can justify discrimination, either by silence or otherwise, of the Indians, of the Eskimos, of the French Canadians, of the English Canadians, then there is no reason why the society can't justify discrimination against Negroes, which is another way of saying that the Negro in the Canadian society must recognize himself first and foremost, it seems to me, as a human being; we will never solve the discrimination against any particular ethnic group or otherwise identifiable
group (political or religious) in this country, unless we change the fabric of Canadian society, unless we change the orientation of its political institutions, unless we change the attitudes of those who claim a monopoly over protest, unless we change the economic structure of the society, unless we change the direction of the mosaic. Professor McCurdy said last night, the Canadian Society is very vertical. There is nothing wrong with a mosaic; I suppose the problem is that it is not horizontal.

Indeed, it is a very vertical one, and one might even add, with considerable tapering off at the top. To the extent that the bulk of the Negro population in this country falls, from an economic point of view, in the lower echelons of the society, then we will never move upward economically unless the whole economic structure of the society moves as well. There is no reason why it should not and I doubt very much if it could ever happen any other way. To the extent that the Canadian population in Canada is isolated from the political process, we will never get any kind of meaningful involvement unless we change the whole social structure of the Canadian Society and so make it possible to remove from isolation not only the Negro but the Indian, the Eskimo and, in a general sense, the entire population.

I would now like to shift my emphasis somewhat. I have been wondering whether or not it wouldn't be in the best interest of all of us, the entire Canadian Society, and the Negro Community in particular, if we declared a moratorium on talk. After approximately eleven years living in Canada, I suspect that I must have attended about twenty to thirty conferences which talked about the problems of the Negro in Canadian Society and racial discrimination. I am getting to the point where I am trying to stop myself from saying, "what's all this about? So we talked about it today, so what? We meet next year and we have the anniversary of this year's talk with another talk!" We really haven't addressed ourselves to very specific programmes and so how are we going to deal with the problems of involvement, the methodology of involvement, the kinds of sacrifices that have to be made, the kinds of programmes that have to be initiated, where, and by whom. So far, we have only touched on these matters in a very superficial manner. We have indulged in a kind of rhetorical exercise which is not unlike what one can get anywhere else. I suspect that to a large extent our political process does provide us with a much more entertaining talk than what we can generate in groups like this; and, from that point of view, if I was thinking in terms of the entertainment value of talk, I think I prefer listening to Mr. Trudeau than listening to even some of my colleagues. At least, he's entertaining - Irrelevant as well, but more often than not, entertaining.
It seems to me that this is a very crucial problem. In a way, we have departed very much from the pattern of direction of the American Negro Community in this respect. Thank God they have moved away from the rhetorical exercise and are now dealing with specific issues and specific ways of approaching these specific problems. I suspect that we won't get anywhere in Canada unless we move in that direction as well. I would hope that probably a future conference (and I hope there are lots more) will address itself to the specifics that face us. In the final analysis, and particularly among the young people, I don't think we are going to excite or attract the new generation with more verbiage. They have rejected the notion of Afro-Saxonism. They have accepted something else which does not require talk, cannot be dealt with by talk, it must be dealt with in very specific terms by programmes and actions.

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polaroid of peace

there flew a pure white bird,
soft-downed and sleek;
she held a helpless bug
in her red beak.

she spread her wings and flew
towards the sun
where, golden-haloed both
became as one.

Michael Harris
Gus Wedderburn,
President of the Nova Scotia N.A.A.C.P.

Up until now, there has been a lot of theorizing and I have no time for academics or for theory. We in Nova Scotia, since 1957, have had the Human Rights Act which incorporates the Fair Employment Practices Act, the Fair Accommodation Act, the Equal Pay Act. On the Statute Books, that’s a good looking act, but when you read the fine print, it’s useless. It is more impotent than a eunuch, it does nothing. The Fair Accommodation Act, for instance, only covers self-contained units of more than four apartments. A recent survey which we conducted shows us that in Halifax less than 20% of the houses come within the terms of reference of this Act. For the Province as a whole, that would be less than 10%. The Minimum Wage Act does not cover domestics or apprentices. The Act is administered by a clerk in the Department of Labour with a minimum staff on a part-time basis. A group of us started pushing over the years and two years ago we got the Government to establish a Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission is as useless as the Act itself. In two years the Human Rights Commission of Nova Scotia has held less than six meetings; I think about four to date. They have not yet succeeded in appointing an Executive Director or a Co-ordinator. There is not even a part-time staff. So nothing has been done – and by nothing, I mean nothing.

Now, this morning, a lot of people mentioned the fact that in Halifax, poverty is rampant. And you all know that in other parts of Canada we have been referred to affectionately as the embarrassing part of the horse’s anatomy. Disparaging as this description may be, in some respects it is appropriate. Our Government is a conservative Government and I was so disgusted and fed up with the whole Conservative regime, that in the last elections, I decided to become totally and completely involved. I, therefore, ran against Robert Stanfield (Laughter). I don’t know whether you are laughing with me or at me (More laughter) but Mr. Stanfield has been a new man ever since tangling with me. I can assure you that his performance in the Liberal House is way, way more brilliant than it ever was in the local Legislature.

In Halifax, we have all sorts of problems. A recent survey conducted over the summer by Jules Oliver with regard to Negro employment specifies the attitude of white employers towards Negroes. Surveys conducted in housing and interviews with landlords reinforce the things that Mr. Oliver found.
Where do we go from here? What do we do? I am a member of the Human Rights Commission. It has been a very awkward situation because as President of the Nova Scotia NAACP we are supposed to provide leadership as a pressure group, but I was placed on the Human Rights Commission to do something without government or to respond to the pressures I should have created from outside. The Human Rights Commission has done nothing and many of the black people in the N.S. NAACP, and many black "cats" are becoming restless. As a consequence, I went to speak to our Premier before coming here. I explained how disgusted and frustrated the Black people were with the failure of the Human Rights Commission, and Government implementation of Civil Rights policies. He agreed to meet a delegation of my co-workers.

One of the areas that will be covered in that meeting is the education system. In our schools the Negro is just about not mentioned in the text books. The curriculum in the schools in the ghetto is not geared or structured for ghetto milieu. Our children are still reading about Tom and Betty - white Anglo-Saxon middle-class protestant kids who live in a middle-class suburb where dad comes home every evening from work with a briefcase, there are two bicycles on the side of the house and a car in the driveway. Our children live in the slums. In Nova Scotia, the pavement ends where the Black community begins, and with the pavement, there also terminates such things as running water and sewage. We have to dig septic tanks in many of the areas.

A new practice has been for many cities to locate their dumps in the Negro community. This was the case in Africville; this was the case also in the Crayton Avenue area of Dartmouth.

Where do we go from here? What do we do? These are some of the questions I have come here to ask your advice, your help and your support this morning.

If you want to help me, let's stop being theoretical and let's get down to some of the brass tacks of the problem that cats like me have to fight every day. Thank you.
DISCUSSION:

Question: What is the nature of community interaction between blacks and whites in the Maritimes?

Answer: Gus Wedderburn:

During slavery and up until its abolition, Negroes were settled in small pockets all around to prevent coalitions which could ultimately result in insurrections. After the abolition of slavery when lands were granted to Negroes, these were little parcels of land spread out over the Maritimes. In many cases these were marginal lands that just could not be farmed. The white communities grew up around these lands on better agricultural lands. There are, therefore, separate communities. Many black people have been working as labourers in the white communities.

There is some mixing of the races at the school level, but socially there is little or no mixing. I am the Principal of a school in Preston which is one of the larger negro communities outside Halifax. Out of a school population of about 400, I had about 20 white youngsters who lived within the district. Everything was fun in school. When you go to functions in the Negro community, there are no white residents there. In the P.T.A. there were not white parents; when I go to a function in the white community, there are no other negroes there. The school system, while not segregated de jure, is segregated in fact.

It is very difficult to break down these barriers, even in the sense of getting blacks to move against it. The Nova Scotia Negro is in large measure, much more conservative than his white counterpart and shys away from conflict situations.

With respect to involvement in the political structure, there is very little of that. I would say there is none. I suspect, however, that the political machines in the area may be after some young intellectuals since the successful seating of Lincoln Alexander in the House of Commons. This may very well be an attempt to placate the rising militancy among the younger generation of Black Nova Scotians.
TWO VIEWS OF
THE CONFERENCE OF BLACK WRITERS

I

One imagines that the poet was speaking for all men when he wrote that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever. There was nothing at the 'Black Writers Conference' to suggest that even the most militant blacks would dissent. Whatever the colour of its preoccupations, it is certain that the conference will long be remembered for the elegant expositions offered by C.L.R. James and the oratory of another well known Trinidadian overseas Stokeley Carmichael.

James was his usual self: magisterial, incisive and lucid without ever being systematic. He spread his wings here, there, and everywhere, resting at whatever time or place in history suited his purpose. Unbound by discipline and uncommitted to action in any specific arena, he ranged from Aeschylus to Fanon, from Toussaint to Castro, from Robespierre to Lenin.

But always the fluency of exposition and the command of the world endowed the presentation with a poetic logic that transcended all mundane inaccuracies of fact, inconsistencies of reasoning, and innocence of practical constraints. Such is the power of the beautiful.

After a weekend of frustrations and an engaging overture on the Monday morning by the poet, Ted Jones, the athlete, Harry Edwards of the Panthers and James Foreman of SNCC, Stokeley was the last speaker to come on stage.

He occupied it as if it were indeed a stage. He used the set of act out role of leader-man come to the royal city with tidings: black is beautiful. Employing gestic and voice and timing to enchant us, he turned our tension on and off at will. It was sheer theatre and larger than life.

Those whom he failed to hypnotise might have felt that he recounted the facts with a little too much of the poet's licence, that he contradicted himself too often to be persuasive, that he was too unmindful of the moral ambiguities of revolutionary change to be trusted.

DISTORTION

Yet one doubts that there was any whom he left so detached and indifferent to his cause. Not even the distortion of fact and over simplicity of formulation could impair the moral cogency and force of the statement - a coherence and power derived from the harsh facts of black degradation in North America and
the imperatives of revival and rehabilitation among an entire people.

We laughed with Stokeley, and sighed with him. Some no doubt, even wept. In empathy, we accepted that for the black minority fighting a rearguard action in North America, it is wholly reasonable to divide the world into two simple categories of black and white. We agreed to forget Nigeria and Biafra, to ignore Tshombe and Lumumba.

As a first pledge against the "System", we took it that American capitalism had to be replaced by socialism. For in the context of the struggle for human rights in the United States, we knew very well that these raw formulations were hardly more than an initial re-definition of perspective.

On that continent the blacks have never had power and it is going to be some time before they get it. Oversimplifications which would be unspeakably irresponsible if they had had power are, in these circumstances, just the opposite. They provide the clearest possible guidelines for a people to prepare themselves for full responsibility.

For a beginning it is important that they should define the world as it suits them, that they should be bold enough to contemplate ultimate solutions against the odds, and that they should be totally unconfused about where to draw the lines of solidarity.

As we left, elated, with Stokeley's exhortations ringing in our ears we knew that we had witnessed a performance which had been witty and graceful, elegant in its directness, simplicity, and force; one which had been beautiful in its authenticity, a genuine reflection of both the psychological and philosophical confusion and the moral resurgence which are apparent among the blacks of North America today.

Yet some of us had to reflect beyond the immediate needs and the narrow concerns of the blacks in the United States. One of the gravest risks of movement for radical change is that they tend to take too short a view.

A related problem is that the needs of blacks in the rest of the world may be subordinated to those of blacks in the American metropole. Paris tends always to dominate the provinces as it were, it will be a very fine irony if the imperial pattern re-asserts itself in the form of a domination of blacks in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa by the interests of Negro North America. The symbols and preoccupations of the civil rights movement in the U.S.A. may well take on a spurious universalism of the kind which led Marxism outside of Western Europe to ride rough-shod over local sentiment,
to ignore local possibilities and local limitations, and in the end to inhibit rather than to promote radical reform.

In the Caribbean, for example, there is already much loose talk about black power when clearly there can be no simple division between black and white, where it makes little sense to advocate organised violence or even to provoke confrontation with the police.

The blacks already are in control of the political system in the Caribbean. If anything prevents them from creating an economy appropriate to their own needs, it is the state of their own consciousness. In particular, they overestimate the ability of the Americans to thwart popularly-supported programmes of radical reform.

The African problem is something else again. To be sure, societies on that continent have all been dislocated by colonialism and their elites are as mesmerised by the technological achievements of the West as are elites anywhere else. But among Africans black power is no rallying call. Blacks already control the polity and most of the economy; it is they who define what is legitimate in their culture. In so far as they appear to be dominated by Europe and North America, it is not a problem which can be solved by any transfer of power. It is a problem of the mind, a reflection of a complex psychological relationship between the colonised and colonising cultures.

DIFFERENCES

To identify a solid basis of international solidarity between blacks then, what is needed is a more precise marking out of the common ground which underlines the concept of black power. Here, we have first to acknowledge that there are many differences in situations even after much shared experience in relation to the coloniser. We may then find the lowest common denominator in the self-view and the world-view that we all have. Have we not accepted interpretations of the world which regard the European as the subject of history and us as object?

It is on this point that one expected a real contribution from the non-North American participants at the Conference. Presumably they were sufficiently outside the swell of the American movement to be able to afford the detachment required to cope with the larger issues in a longer and more reflective perspective.
In his paper on "African History in the Service of Black Revolution", Dr. Walter Rodney identified the problem posed by "the use of historical knowledge as a weapon in our struggle". But when he suggested that the re-interpretation of history "must be directed solely towards freeing and mobilising black minds" he seemed to be adopting the very attitude he intended to deplore. Is it not a capitulation to the false standards set by some of European thought to place human history in the service of a single group in the quest for power? May not this approach blind us to the whole picture and to the virtues of other men by encouraging the use of phony two-sector models of Cowboys and Indians, of developed guys and underdeveloped guys? But by what stretch of imagination is it valid to lump the many varied cultures of Africa into a single class? Unless it be to provide a rationalisation for rapine and plunder throughout the continent. Why, moreover, is a man whose mother is from Europe and father from Africa, a black man? Except that the simple definition is convenient for one fascist oligarchy just as the simple definition of him as a white man could become a convenient designation for another.

WE AND THEY

An authentic decolonisation of the mind points first to a disavowal of these crude formulations and of any notion that minds are something to be mobilised. The constructive attack we are to make on the European philosophical hegemony is by proceeding to differentiations which acknowledge the individuality of particular men and particular cultures.

Simple groups such as the "Third World" and the "Developing Countries" and all those other categories which are scarcely more than divisions of the world into we and they, have to be abandoned from the start.

C.R.R. James had a feel for this important point, as for so many others. He put it to the Conference that what we require is a philosophical revolution. He noted that the limitations of the Cartesian statement had been systematically removed by the later work of Newton and Leibniz in particular. But that it remained for Hegel and Marx to add the dimension of conflict within society to the traditional emphasis on the antagonisms between man and society on the one hand, and God and nature, on the other.

James then intimated that somehow the existentialist philosophers and the anthropologists of our own age seem to be once again broadening the scope and the relevance of philosophical enquiry. But then he lost the direction of his argument. He went off on a tangent to show that, quite incidentally to his probings of the European mind, Levi-Strauss had challenged the still prevalent conception of Africa as a dark continent with little or no history of high civilisation. The
point to which James seemed to be leading, however, is that existentialist philosophy, whatever its aberrations, has placed the focus squarely on individuality, while modern anthropology has been insisting on the comparative study of societies and cultures each in its own terms. In both areas the trend has been against subordination of the individual to the group and towards a view of people as subjects of history and not as objects.

These are the premises from which the re-interpretation of history is to be undertaken. It is therefore a pity that at the Conference itself this approach was almost totally rejected. Speakers such as the Jamaicans, Robert Hill and Richard Small, confined themselves to the kind of propaganda which we have come to expect from that breed of West Indian who substitutes rhetoric on the metropolitan stage for concrete commitment to some place for which he ought to assume responsibility. Even James in his analysis of the economics of Negro slavery and of black revolt in the New World failed to avoid certain propagandist confusions. For example, he conducted discussion of slavery in ancient Greece without ever pointing out that it was altogether a different phenomenon from slavery in the New World. What is more, he seemed unduly anxious to prove that the blacks "brought something with them" into American Slavery. This defensive approach may be excusable when adopted by that inter-war generation which was so militantly represented at the Conference by Richard Moore. But it is warranted only if one yields to the ludicrous notion that the Europeans alone brought significant cultural assets to the New World.

**ASSETS**

It is a truism that the blacks brought their philosophical heritage and their social and technical skills with them. The question, as Freyre has long since posed it in *Master and Slaves*, is what blacks actually came? With what particular cultural traits? To which particular place? And in the clash of cultures, what were the adaptations which have led us to the present situation?

Much work towards the answer to these questions has already been done and is being carried on by an expanded number of younger scholars. In spite of his glorification of "action" Dr. Rodney's paper showed the value of specific research. He offered a quick overview of the little-known attributes of the highly organised and exceedingly humane cultures of traditional society in different regions of Africa. Once this re-interpretation of the past is pursued
in terms of people as subjects of history, it will readily be seen why the construct of "Africa" must be refined out of existence; and why, by the same token, the construct of "Europe" must be modified.

The distinctions within these groupings are so important and the relationships between the two so utterly entangled that the dichotomy is misleading. We have, one fears, to take our stand on a large patch of mixed greys. Moreover, the shift in consciousness has to take place both among those who have profited from the old formulations and those who have suffered from them. Certainly the Europeans need to appreciate how fanatical they have been in their depreciation of other cultures and in their comparatively uncritical adulation of ancient Greece and Rome. But the other cultures need also to put themselves in the existential position of Europe and to concede that even if such an interpretation of history is not excusable, it is at least comprehensible in the context of the medieval experience and the subsequent crusade against Islam. One suspects that there are lessons here for both the metropolitan countries and the Third World. And if we have here reverted to the simple two-sector division of the world, it is a way of recognizing that important though it may be to deny the usefulness of this classification for some purposes, for others it is more beautiful than valid.

Lloyd Best.
ABOVE THE WILD DISORDER

Our hands are deft enough
creative enough
to take the waters of the sea
turn them to silken threads
and knit a baptismal shawl
bleached milk-white and pure
to wrap about the Child of Peace:
can we turn the sea to silk
and knit a path around the earth
where black and white and brown and yellow
can walk with dignity together?
Who cries yes,
who cries no?

Who cries, Is two million dollars the worth
of my brother's soul
or yours
or mine?
Who asks, can we drop bombs on Hiroshima
toss death and our own dead
on Viet Nam
and walk across our bordered gardens
where slum faces die
beneath lawn mowers
driven by men crying
Let ME live in peace:
my world is circled
ninety feet by eighty
a mortgage and my fears.
Can we, and live?

Who answers above the wild disorder
of our crowded days,
Strip off his black skin, my white
his white skin, my black,
my brother's flesh is red
and God himself cannot tell the difference.
Put the whirlwind in a chemist's bottle
filled with children's dissolving laughter
string hatred on a broken violin
put the denying words wasp and nigger yid and mic
in a dime-store kaleidoscope
and turn the top to make infinite variety
infinitely the same:
do this and you CAN take the waters of the sea
turn them to silken threads
and knit a milk-white shawl
to wrap about the Child of Peace
and then a pathway
where black and white and brown and yellow
can walk and call his brother, man
and man, his brother.

Who hears, my brothers, who responds?

Bluebell Stewart Phillips
II

The Black Writers Conference held at McGill from October 11 to 14 was a nightmare for some; those black people hopelessly lost in the wake of the Black Revolution that has left them floundering and drowning, those liberal whites who still believed that they were automatically honored guests at any meeting of black people. Some of them are still walking around glass-eyed, insecure, confused. For most Blacks, however, the conference was a tremendously gratifying experience. It helped many Blacks to get a clearer understanding of their identity, and it gave them a feeling of pride and solidarity - pride in their blackness, and the solidarity that comes from the knowledge that black people everywhere can be united as part of a world-wide struggle against racism and oppression.

The conference gathered together some of the outstanding black revolutionaries from all over the world, some of them are among the best orators of our time. C.L.R. James, Harry Edwards, and James Forman educated and enlightened; Ted Jones had the audience screaming for more of his poems; Stokeley Carmichael energized the more than fifteen hundred people on the last day of the conference. Rocky Jones, Walter Rodney, Richard Small, and Richard Moore all made significant contributions. There was also a sense of mystery thrown in for good measure, when Michael X, a revolutionary who lives in England, announced in a rather concise speech that the London police force was made up of 'weak, scrawny white men', and that black people had won. He didn't bother to illuminate the audience as to what exactly black people had won. Although he specifically stated that there was a need to demystify things, he merely announced that the world was groovy, and that there were too many pigs present for him to speak out. He promptly sat down after these abbreviated and demystifying remarks, leaving the audience tense and bewildered. In general, though, the talks did clear up things for many, and most of the audience couldn't hear the brothers run it down enough.

The conference had its hangups, the most bothersome and the one that threatened to tear the conference apart up to Sunday 13, was the presence of a large number of white people in the audience. When the delegates were introduced on Friday night, a white delegate from Chicago was well received, and one felt that an amicable relationship between Blacks and whites existed. However, Rocky Jones, in the opening address, made it clear that he was talking primarily to black people, since he had previously spent most of his time talking to white people. The situation deteriorated rapidly; indifference turned to contempt; and by Sunday several black delegates were calling for the exclusion of all whites, not only from the caucuses but from all the
proceedings of the conference, causing many whites to get very uptight and accuse Blacks of inverse racism. While it is ridiculous to accept white people's money and then try to eject them from the conference, it is not a sign of racism to ask white people to keep out of black people's business. Those who call this racism are peevish and unreasonable. Many of the speakers took pains to point out that multi-racial groups engaged in the struggle to free black people break down sooner or later. Experience has taught us that it does not work. In any revolutionary movement, there is always a large group of so-called liberals who help to initiate the movement, but they always bring the movement to a grinding halt as soon as it becomes apparent that the freedom of those they are trying to secure poses a threat to their self-interest. Where are all those white liberals who marched with King, CORE, SNCC? They copped out as soon as they understood that the liberation of Blacks meant true competition, and that no sanctuary was inviolate.

All this is not to say that black people have nothing in common with white people. We have a common humanity and a basic desire for freedom. However, black people cannot talk to white people until we have found our identity, until we have discovered where we want to go. These are problems that white people cannot help us to solve, these are the problems to which the conference addressed itself. We can be allies of all those whites who wish to break the system of exploitation and oppression, but black people first have to learn to work and fight as a unit. The solidarity of black people is vital, since up to this point only a microscopic number of whites have shown any interest in the liberation of the black man. Most white people are still busily trying to protect their ill-gotten loot, their privileged positions; therefore, our interests for the present, at any rate, are diametrically opposed. We will talk to them when we feel certain that they want to travel the same route, when we feel that they regard us as their equal.

If nothing else, the conference produced a deluge of articles, editorial comments, and letters from frightened and irate citizens. They were, for the most part, hysterical, distorted, trite; and, in general, they chose Stokely Carmichael as their target. For the life of me, I cannot figure out why all the fuss about Stokely. Why didn't we hear more about Edwards and Forman, who both advocated the overthrow of the present oppressive capitalist system? Is it a conspiracy on the part of the press to distort, to activate the forces of reaction as if they needed to be activated? Don't all those letters from irate citizens bear the stamp of the vindictiveness of the guilty? So they feel threatened; let them feel threatened. To feel threatened is a luxury that Blacks have not yet enjoyed, since we're still too busy defending ourselves from the very real and massive blows that are meted out to us every day.
Stokeley merely voiced what many already know; that violence is the only weapon left for black people in the U.S. We must remind those irate citizens that ten years ago Stokeley was just another non-violent kid, full of love and idealism, talking, marching, pleading, and getting his ass kicked and his head busted. Where were all those irate, non-violent mothers---------then? Indeed, where were they for the last four hundred years? Sure enough they interrupted their murderous snoring long enough to make a few grunts when Bull Connor brought out his cattle prods, but they soon fell back into their hypnotic sleep. Black leaders, in the full realization of all the brutality of the past, have no intention of asking their followers to re-enact such humiliating and gory scenes. The white audience, every bit as inhuman and bloodthirsty as a good old Roman crowd at the arena, views the massacre of black people with even less detachment than it views the Green Bay–Dallas Sunday afternoon football game, since they do get emotionally involved in the game. For them it is just another spectacle, and they quickly race to the dinner table, completely oblivious of the crap they had just witnessed on their television set. If there is now a call for violence, it is because we have exhausted all other means of redress. We had King, Resurrection City, the works. It was a bad scene, man. It was a humiliating scene, an obscene scene, a scene that we're already ashamed of, a scene in which too much black blood has already been gratuitously shed. It is a bullshit scene that we cannot recommend to anyone that we love. If there is now a call for violence, it is because, as an editorial in the Montreal Star pointed out, 'the record speaks'. Black people are not afraid of violence. We've had four hundred years of it.

What Stokeley did say was: "We will meet violence with violence." This is a perfectly just and fair statement. As a matter of fact, the only ones who can possibly be alarmed at such a statement are the very ones who are hell-bent on perpetrating violence on black people. Why the hell the uproar? A few black organisations in Montreal, while not condemning Stokeley's solution to the problem in the U.S., felt it necessary to tell the press that they did not feel that Stokeley's solution was applicable in the Montreal scene. It was irrelevant, laughably exiguous. I, for one, never felt that Stokeley incited me to have a shoot-out on St. Catherine Street. Guns are not needed here, since they haven't begun to shoot us down yet. However, there is no denying that black people in Canada live in violent circumstances. All the black people that have had landlords slam doors in their faces, have been refused entrance into certain nightclubs, have been refused jobs or got stuck in dead-end jobs, know that we live under violent conditions. Of course, there are some black people who cannot see the institutionalized racism of our society. This is not a strange phenomenon, since people who lose their
balls in their infancy find it impossible to remember what it felt like to have had them.

Some of the after effects of the conference were comical. We had the sad spectacle of a so-called Indian leader writing the Gazette to make certain that she in no way wanted to be associated with Stokely's views. She went on to make the proverbial ass of herself by stating that Indians and Blacks have nothing in common. I was appalled. Every schoolboy knows that Indians have red asses and Blacks have black asses, but I felt that a leader should have advanced beyond such a puerile and disorganized state of thinking. Sitting Bull must have winced in his grave.

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The conference was not without certain undesirable aspects. There was a tendency to opt for action now and talk of justice later. We've heard that before, and certain so-called communist countries are still waiting for justice to make her long-promised appearance. While we concede that there must be some progressive restrictions in a newly created revolutionary society, we must never lose sight of what the revolution set out to do in the first place - to create a just society for all. There was a lack of tolerance. We have to make room for all the brothers and sisters. Some of them have not yet seen the light of day, but we must still try to bring them into the movement. We must talk to them, politicize them, reason with them, and hope that one day they, too, will come home. We saw the birth of instant revolutionaries, young men versed in the works of Fanon, Guevara, Lenin, playing games with the hot words of revolution. Instant revolutionaries also show an amazing propensity to turn cold instantly. Of all the hundreds of young revolutionaries at the conference, only about fifty managed to make it to Ottawa to protest the banning of Rodney, a speaker at the conference, from Jamaica. To be a revolutionary means to make a total commitment; playing war with words fools nobody; adopting cocky but safe gestures is a waste of time. As in most conferences, where delegates feel that they must come up with solutions immediately, there was a tendency to oversimplify problems and make bold generalizations. Finally, many people felt that the conference had not really broken new ground, that much of what was heard was already dated.
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With the sights, sounds,
And fears of this life.
But without love
Around me
One fleeting glance
An expressionless face -
A child's eyes.

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CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

At one stage of the proceedings of the Conference to examine the Problems of Involvement in the Canadian Community with reference to the Black Peoples of Canada, it was moved that Doctor Howard McCurdy, with Mrs. Wills, acting as Secretary, along with other members of the panel representing various areas in Canada, form a committee to study the feasibility of instant communication across Canada to publicize events which require a united effort, and to keep informed, members of the Black Community across Canada on matters of interest taking place in their respective local communities. This motion was passed unanimously.

Following this decision, a meeting was convened under the Chairmanship of Dr. McCurdy, with representatives of the various areas represented and the President of the Negro Citizenship Association. The following conclusions were arrived at by the Community.

1. There are a number of organisations across Canada that could be effective in disseminating literature that was passed on to them from a central location, without affecting their individual constitution and at the same time provide a channel for communication. In keeping with this line of thought, where no organisation presently exists, individuals would act in a similar capacity by acquiring the services of a number of people who would assist them with this service. Operation would be at three levels:--

a. A geographically centrally located place which would act as the centre for co-ordinating material and channelling it out to the various organisations. The address and telephone number of this place would be made available to all participating groups. This central registry as it were would operate as follows:-- Information distributed by phone if necessary to all participating groups.

b. There are a number of incidents which go on which cannot be dealt with on a national level, but must be handled locally. Nevertheless, it is necessary that black people everywhere be kept apprised of what is happening in the various communities. In this instance, this would be relayed either to the Observer with a circulation of 35,000 or Expression or both in certain cases,
c. It was felt that Expression served one purpose and the Newspaper another. Their circulation and treatment of the item to be covered would be different, hence they would both be useful in the dissemination of literature.

2. All black organisations that are willing could consider themselves part of a national conference of black organisations and affiliate with this body.

3. That for purposes of communication, centres be located in Montreal and Toronto.