

The People Speak

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Time Is Short

Dear Editor:

An analysis of the racial upheaval across the country today reveals that this is the beginning of the final phase of the battle for human rights in America. This battle is important for two reasons:

1. It probably represents the last time that non-violence will be tried as an instrument for the attainment of civil rights. Negroes cannot indefinitely absorb the blows and brutality of racists without retaliation, no matter what the consequence of such retaliation might be.

2. The present national and international mood is such as to allow great concrete progress to be made this year, rather than symbolic tokenism, if the total Negro community commits itself to active participation in the realization of these goals.

It is our feeling that the vast majority of Negroes are not fully aware of these implications and are waiting safely on the sidelines while the "shock troops" absorb the blows and enlist only tokenism from the slowly retreating whites. These people appear to be satisfied with merely an acceleration of gradualism.

One has only to note that James Meredith still is the only Negro at the University of Mississippi; that the two original Negroes at the University of Georgia who are soon to graduate have not been replaced by other Negroes in large numbers; that even though no violence attended the admission of the lone Negro at Clemson College, South Carolina's educational system is still virtually totally segregated. Seven years after the first Negro airline hostess was employed,

there are still no more than two Negro airline hostesses in the whole country.

A few heroes venture out to blaze trails, and such trails are left unused, rendering any victory only symbolic and of short duration. If, for example, we had had two dozen Negroes to follow Autherine Lucy into the University of Alabama under the original court order which still stands, we would not now be trying to once again engage the Alabama mob to get two other students into the supposedly desegregated University.

The point cannot be made too often. More students will have to brave the loneliness of the formerly all-white universities, more children must apply for admission to formerly all-white schools, and more Negroes must apply in larger numbers for jobs formerly denied them and for service at places which formerly discriminated.

In short we must follow up

the "shock troops" and trail blazers—we must engage the enemy now. Time is short. We should have done this yesterday. If we do it today, we may survive, but tomorrow is too late.

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