

# Integration: Needed—Speed And Direct Action

We believe that racial integration in all portions of the United States—including the South—is inevitable, and that it is completely justified, whether one's criteria be morality, religion, constitutionality, social reality, or practicality. We believe that the present speed of integration is unnecessarily slow in Southern school and transportation systems, federal contract employment and public places, and in both Northern and Southern federal housing projects, business communities, and recreation facilities. We advocate increased speed in integration, with particular emphasis on the more reticent South.

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Our opinions are contrary to that of the majority of Southerners. One opposing group accepts integration as morally wrong (individually depending on their definition of morality.) These people accept integration as inevitable, and see that due to federal pressure, it must and even, should, come to the South. But they think the integration process must be slowed down, or at least kept steady, in order for the transition in the South to be as easy as possible on the Southerners. This segment of opposed thought we respect. We will attempt to answer its question of, Why so fast? The task is much too large to be handled in a column of this size, but we will attempt to do at least a superficial job of it.

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## CHANGE: GRADUAL OR ACCELERATED?

Negro agitation for integration has more and more centered in the churches, giving the entire movement a religious slant, and its members a Christlike complex, often exaggerated and sometimes hypocritical, but existent nevertheless. The Gandhian non-violent techniques of Martin Luther King and the sit-iners, and the peaceful legislative processes employed by the NAACP are designed to bring the Negro quickest possible acceptance as a "first-class citizen" by peaceful (accent on the word "peaceful") means.

This movement is supported by the United States Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court; it is supported by a majority of the elected U. S. Congressmen and by each of the last three Presidents. The benefits of "equal protection of the law" are rights . . . rights not to be given to the Negro as a gift, but to be acceded to him by a guilty Nation and a guilty region after years of withholding them.

This is the foreground of the integration picture which must be painted before the background can be filled in.

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The gradualists, on the whole, have sincerity behind their arguments, if not reason. (But there is also the theory of gradualism which, as Eric Goldman said in a recent New York Times Sunday magazine "is the argument or rationalization of those who want no change, gradual or otherwise.")

The positions of the moderate is valid in neither the ideal nor in the instance. His major fault is accepting, without doubt, that what is good for the white Southern segregationist is good for the nation. Whatever the degree of their sincerity, the gradualists have, in recent years, narrowed their arguments down to a number of basic and often convincing appeals.

"No one can expect to change in a few years," says

the gradualist, "what a century and centuries before that have built up. The South has never known conditions other than those under which she lived up until the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Change cannot be expected overnight.

"A great deal of progress has been accomplished since Reconstruction and an even greater amount since the Court decision."

This the gradualist says, as if there had never been another way of life in the South before segregation and there could never be another after. Yet there was no segregation before the Civil War because of the necessity for slave and master to work together. After Reconstruction no segregation laws appeared . . . the Negro was not locked into a ghetto by the Southern politicians, and in fact, his vote was courted to stem the rising power of the white rabble. Not until after the turn of the century were the first wholesale segregation laws passed by Southern states and even these were usually passed with hazy provisions not necessarily referring to the Negro.

Soon after World War II Negro organizations—primarily the NAACP, but also other, smaller groups in the South and elsewhere—began working for an end to segregation everywhere. The Negro had fought in the war effort just as hard as the white. He had been virtually a "first-class citizen" for four years, but when he came home it was to the same old segregated system.

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Change had to come. President Truman issued an executive order in 1948 calling for the immediate elimination of discrimination in federal employment and the end of segregation in the armed forces. The same year he urged passage of a bill making it easier for Negroes to vote, and eliminating segregation in interstate transportation. The South had been warned. The Court decisions of the early and mid-1950's merely justified the warning.

The South apparently convinced itself in a frantic, terror-caused campaign following the implementation decision of the Court in 1955 that it had a "Southern way of life" and that this way of life was based solely upon segregation and that segregation was the natural system for the South.

But now the Talmadges and Eastlands and Barnetts say, with no feeling of contradictory expression, that the South had been trying to work out its segregation problems in the past and is able to do the same in the future, if only it were let alone. It can never be positively proved that the South wouldn't have made its own progress if not pushed, but historian C. Vann Woodward doubted it, as do we, "Ten years ago there was little reason to believe, or to expect that things would change in the South at any more than a glacial pace."

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## TRADITION OF SLOW CHANGE

The gradualist insists, "The historic tradition in the United States favors gradual change. All social change in this country has taken time and the people have always allowed time."

Gradualists point to all the liberal reforms—woman suffrage, labor power, welfare state provisions—which were gradually evolved over the decades, to support their position. The "take-it-

easy" proponents claim integration must take the same slow path.

We answer that America has lost its time-honored prerogative to reform gradually. It can not take a hundred years to integrate (in 1960 only 6 per cent of Southern Negro children were in integrated schools, so at the present rate all schools will be integrated in 2054, not exactly "deliberate speed".)

It cannot take fifty years or even twenty-five to integrate Southern schools. Transportation, public facilities, federally-supported employment and housing projects should be integrated much sooner, starting with the major cities and working into the country . . . starting with the border Southern states and working into the White Man's Land of Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina and Georgia . . . starting with "token" integration and evolving into "complete" . . . the integration to be accomplished by local and state work preferably, but if not, federal enforcement.

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Increased speed of integration is a necessity, not a choice. The colored peoples of the world are on the rise and the United States is increasingly put in the moral position of having to share its wealth with these new poor nations, and in the practical position of having to value their opinions. "It is in the context of the present world struggle between freedom and tyranny," said Truman's attorney general, "that the problem of racial discrimination must be viewed."

We must be able to hold up our heads in world society and to do this our hazy principles must conform to our actions, particularly in the field of race relations. But this point about world opinion is often over-stressed by advocates of integration. The reason for speedy integration is not as a balm for African states—although this would be accomplished, too—but as our means of keeping abreast of the New Deal in international political speed.

Oppressed people around the world demand freedom and if not given it, they take up arms. In the United States the Negro does not take up arms to revenge the injustice, and for this we are fortunate. And for this reason he should be given his "equal protection under the law" sooner, not later. His pacifism should not be taken advantage of.

In this new, faster world of bombs, nationalism, and internationalism, of crying poverty and hasty solutions to the cries, America cannot maintain its mental isolation, it must become a part of the world. And acceleration in the future is one of the prices which must be paid for our laxness of the past.

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## IS AGITATION'S COST PROHIBITIVE?

Agitation and direct action by Negroes in search of their rights come in as the gradualist's greatest "evils" in the integration movement.

"Agitation appeals to no underlying sympathy among white southerners," says the gradualist, "It antagonizes the moderates who are willing to work toward integration gradually. Agitation fails in the long run because it does not appeal to the Southerner through his own institutions and traditions."

The claim that all change must come through existing Southern institutions is  
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# UNC News

The majority  
is always  
wrong.

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