

The 'temper of the Negro community' everywhere is to fight back

It does no good that the NAACP has suspended Robert F. Williams, the honest spokesman of Negroes of Union county, N.C., for his statements advocating that Negroes "meet violence with violence" in the South where they "have no 14th Amendment," where there is no justice for them, and even little of physical safety.

The "cat is out of the bag," as the saying goes; and it will not be long before the Negro will start suiting the deed to the word; and, we might add, like Mr. Williams, we believe that then, and only then, will terrorism against Negroes in the South end.

Williams only spoke the "temper of his community," as was testified to in New York at the NAACP hearing last week.

He only spoke the temper of the Negro anywhere, who is ready to fight, if it comes to that, who has seen the futility of giving ground, of looking to the courts, of depending on the "good white people," of turning the other cheek.

TO COME IN A "NEW NEGRO ATTITUDE"

It will not come, this violence, as a matter of organized technique or strategy.

We don't anticipate any guerilla combat teams being organized to take hapless Negroes out of jails or to raid white communities for a little reciprocal bloodletting.

But you are going to encounter it in a new Negro attitude, which is going to say 'yes, and what of it?' . . . and 'do you want to make something of it?' . . . and in a new Negro who is going to act to 'take some of 'em with me' . . . and is going to mass to fight off lynchers, and to repulse the Ku Klux Klan, and is not going to turn the other cheek.

And this is not going to be strictly a defensive 'war'. For the violence which the white man has made the order of the day where the southern Negro is concerned, is unnerving. And nerves reach the breaking point. And men run amuck like the Negro man did in Louisiana the other day who killed three whites without provocation and held three others as hostages before he was finally put out of his misery by troopers' bullets.

The National Board of the NAACP need not worry. The frontrunners of this stage of the Negro's 'war' for freedom from oppression will rarely be presidents of NAACP branches, or "leading citizens," or people who know anything at all about NAACP policy.

For, these kind of people are perhaps too often conservative, and conciliatory, and have 'too much to lose'.

It is seldom that you find a president of an NAACP branch with the courage, the bluntness, the plain-spokenness, the intuitiveness, the sympathy, the righteous wrath of a Robert F. Williams.

The NAACP's hands will be clean, and the Urban League's, and the 'Negro Leadership's' . . . and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. can go on preaching his fanciful philosophy of "loving those who bomb my home and assault me."

The frontrunners of the Negro's 'crusade', and it is a crusade, will be the poor, the ignorant, the nervous, the unstable . . . those with what psychiatrists call a "low threshold of fear." These will provide the whirlwind which the white man's injustice, his callousness, his violence, his obscenity, his power-drunkness, have planted and which he deserves to reap.

These, huddled in their huts in the South, resolved "not to be no Mack Charles Parker" . . . These startled at a footstep and shooting first and asking questions later. . . . These, the miasma of their fear, borne on sultry, southern winds to crowd their nostrils and to cause them to run amuck, cutting down all the faceless whites in their path, will free us at last, where the courts, and the conservative men, and the speeches, and the appeals to morality have failed.

THE NAACP SHOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD

Of course, we think the NAACP should have been understanding of Robert Williams' provocation and should not have fed him to the wolves as it did.

The judge, who would have tried Mack Charles Parker had he lived, told newspaper reporters the other day in Mississippi that as Parker sat in his court at the arraignment, and he thought of what he had "done"

—(not of the crime of which he was "accused") . . . he had to restrain himself, there and then, on the bench, from killing him.

No Mississippi State Bar Association jumped, that we have heard of, or are likely to hear of, to rebuke, reprimand, or suspend that judge.

NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins, who sat in judgment of Williams and suspended him in spite of the man's despairing statement of his provocation, in spite of his humbly stated love of his people and of justice, occupied himself in a speech denouncing a Mississippi county prosecutor who said after the lynching of Parker that it was really much ado about nothing and made no difference whether Parker was lynched before or after the trial.

For, no Negroes would have sat on the jury which would have convicted Parker.

Therefore, his conviction would have been reversed.

Therefore, a mob would have taken Parker out of his jail cell and lynched him and sent his body to the federal judge which reversed his conviction and said, "this is what you have done"; and Mississippi 'justice' would have been vindicated in its own eyes and in the eyes of the white South.

Why all this haste to suspend a president of a branch of the NAACP who, in the teeth of such provocation, advocates that the Negro "meet violence with violence," and "stop lynching with lynching?"

The first is damn good advice, and the second—well, one could have counseled with the 'brother' and pointed out that lynching is cannibalism, and now that the white man has civilized us, the Negro doesn't go in for cannibalism anymore, and that, anyway, from a tactical point of view, white people have made Negroes allergic to lynching, and it is doubtful that you could raise a quorum in a Negro community for a 'necktie party'.

But there is absolutely nothing wrong with firing when you see the whites of quickest way to cut out all this Poplarville their eyes, and being 'ready' is about the and Money, Miss., and Belzoni, nonsense known to mankind!

Self defense is only self respect and any philosophy of leadership which preaches anything less, is playing the Negro cheap as a man, and we don't care if the philosophy is Ghandi's or Jesus Christ's.

It is all right to use non-violent techniques as long as they are met in kind; but a man who will not defend himself and his own deserves to remain a slave, and this consignment of the Negro's defense to the Lord is undoubtedly the reason why almost 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation we are virtually slaves in parts of the country where we all but have the numerical advantage.

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One of the most shameful acts in history, we think, was the surrender to the mob of 14-year-old Emmett Till by his grandfather and other kin.

Does anyone wonder that lynchings continue of a people who will hand over children and women, to be murdered and raped?

There have to be terms on which life is not to be lived, and in cowardice is one of them. The principle of defense of human life, of the weak and the helpless, should be inbred in people so that it is a reflex action. Otherwise, man is not civilized, and there is no such thing as mutual security.

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The Negro is victim of the most successful brainwashing in mankind's history.

He is not only divided as a group. He is divided against himself until he does not know his own interest.

And this has been cleverly done by a white man who fears him, fears his wrath, fears his righteous indignation, fears his numbers, fears the very sympathy in himself for the justice of the Negro's cause, and fears world opinion, and the Negro's cohorts in other parts of the world.

It is time we rejected the brainwashing and realized our own strength.

It is time that we decided that there are some terms on which life is not worth living.

It is time we resolved to be men and women. Then, and only then will we have interracial peace . . . peace born of equity. There is no other kind.