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I'm scared about the racial picture." This is the refrain I hear everywhere from my Jewish friends. I'm scared, too, but frankly I am not as worried about Negroes as I am about Jews. The Negro community is going to be right, whether or not we are. We are going to suffer painfully and with necessary violence may be necessary. The very struggle is giving the Negro a sense of purpose, something to live for — and even die for, if necessary. My concern here is something else. It is the white man in America, looking at the Negro hypocrisy as the black man has to claim his humanity on the streets? And, to be more specific, are we American Jews, comprising a tiny fraction of the white community, losing our integrity in our support of the Negro revolution?

At the risk of being invidious in comparing Jews to Catholics and Protestants, I think that American Jewry had a head start in the civil rights race. In the post World War II America, Jewish civic protective agencies were the most powerful and influential leaders of the Jewish community in the United States. In those days, civil rights meant Jewish rights, too — in employment, housing, education. Jews needed protection through law against discrimination. Besides, the memory of the Holocaust was a powerful incentive to racism against Jews. In the wake of Jewish fresh blood, long after most people returned to normalcy, the civil rights struggle, centering on FEPC measures, was basically legislative. It put a premium on strong public statements and ringing resolu-

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lic opinion. Jewish organizations excelled in these techniques. The best lawyers and the best publicists in the field were, in large measure, attached to Jewish agencies. State campaigns for FEPC and other anti-discrimination measures were, usually, launched out of the office of a Jewish Community Relations Council in the state. With few exceptions, Jews were fully behind the efforts of their agencies, even though the Jewish agencies had broadened their attack beyond anti-Semitism to the fight against racial discrimination itself.

White groups — Jews included — are no longer the leaders of the civil rights fight. Negroes are. Those Negro organizations despised in 1944, such as the NAACP, Jewish labor and white liberal leadership, today find these old allies an embarrassment in many instances. Negroes are taking over the cases. Negroes have seized control of their own destiny. New Negro organizations, attacking direct action and non-violence, are shaking and the Negro establishment is pushed aside the traditional white leadership. The timetable for Negro rights is no longer set by white agencies. The Negroes are the ones to act by and for Negroes. Increasingly, Negroes are writing of white liberal civil rights devotees. In a New York article of 1963, the scene of an annual battle for a fair housing law. Negro leaders in 1963 — while Negro rank-and-fileers picked up the torch of social justice

terrupted the state legislature with shouting and singing from a packed gallery, spurned the counsel of the Jewish community and the governor, sacrificed, had led the legislative battle for several years running. This is the story of community after community. "Googie, while liberal," says the author, "was not the Negro's article in *The Nation* recently. It is the fact of life in community after community. And it is the Jewish civil rights leaders who, undoubtedly, have been doubted, and perhaps even condemned by aroused Negro leaders committed to a "do-it-yourself" civil rights program.

It is a breathtaking pace of events there has been too fast for the Jewish community. History is sweeping past, with new Negro leaders at its vortex. Legislation is no longer the only means of change. Elaborate and ritualistic change played out in the United States Senate. Civil rights is no longer a remote, abstract social goal. It is connected to the lives of the Jews in the United States, demonstrating at the church, sitting in, kneeling in, boy-cotting and picketing. What Jewish agencies are prepared to sponsor these? The implications of such direct action

themselves to CORE and the NAACP, not to the Jewish defense agencies or the synagogue. Jewish organizations are in the line of evolution-passing and screen-making. But these things are now too little and too late. As a Jewish community, we are entrapped in the old ways. We are too static, too dynamic and creative, and which are rapidly becoming irrelevant. If not hypocritical, the changing scene.

Jews started ahead, but we have stayed where we were. The question is that others are now rushing past us. And it is not only the Negroes who surge forward but burst recently seems to climb over our backs, flattening us in the process. The pariahs are, of course, Catholics and Protestants, most of whom were the starters and many of whom weren't even in the race until recently, are moving ahead of us. The Jews are disintegrated, the Roman

Catholic in America. That process continues under Paul. It was a Catholic secretariat which organized the promising National Conference on the Negro, and it is the same ambitious interreligious approach to America's racial predicament. It is Roman Catholic, however, in a capacity like Detroit, which has organized an Archbishop's Committee on Integration, not to pass resolutions, but to go into the Catholic church and make it do the simple task of moving Negroes into white neighborhoods. On paper, most Jews are still more liberal on race than most Catholics. But this battle is no longer on paper. The Church is probing its soul on the subject of race. The Jewish community is in a position to steal a phrase, on past laudica.

Recently, the United Presbyterian Church held its constitutional convention. The racial challenge preoccupied the delegates. They voted to set up a \$500,000 fund for an action program for racial equality, in addition to the many other forms of direct action. The National Council of the Churches of Christ of the Protestant denominations in the U.S., is generally more liberal than the U.P.C. on this issue. Its new structure, it is not given to boldness. At its Triennial Assembly, in 1968, for example, it set up a crash program of direct action on race and social issues. A small group of five Negro ministers, including James Baldwin, were asked to help to shape which surmounts the race issue. In scope and concreteness, the U.P.C. is far ahead of this religious body in this country. In fact, the U.P.C. is the only denomination in New Jersey, a young Episcopal priest excommunicated for his views on race, because he objected to attending church with Negro members. The U.P.C. believes that this means the millennium has come to Christianity. In fact, the U.P.C. believes that all this is a belated recognition of their own sins. The U.P.C. believes that if churches are themselves self-depreciated. But the obvious fact is that churches and church bodies are opening themselves to the world and the world's shaking. No one can doubt that the

Christian churches have been scarred by the flame. They will not be the same again. To Christianity, race is not just a problem; it is an opportunity (perhaps a final one) for renewal.

Can this be said of Jews? An illustration might help to answer the question. In the United States, there are many organizations, true to their organizations for rhetorical reasons, which are in fact anti-semitic. One of the first groups in calling upon President Kennedy to issue his executive order to desegregate housing in housing. Finally, the President redeemed his campaign promise. What happened? The first two complaints brought against the anti-semitic order were directed against Jewish builders who advertised in the New York Times. Jews helped to secure their housing laws in New York and New Jersey in the North. But a high proportion of the slum landlords of New York City are Jews, whose profits are fattened by the most reprehensible rent-increase practices. In the United States, untroubled members of synagogues and lodges. In the United States, there are many synagogues members who have associated themselves in un-American groups. In the United States, Jews to "guard" their fellow Jews from the stigmatism of the United States. A few years ago, one of the United States group published a pamphlet, "The Jewish Question," to reassure the southern racist anti-Semitism. Jewish fully approves of the United States. Many of these persons have been exempted. No, we do not have to be Jewish. In the United States, there are many who are much too freedom-loving and sophisticated for the United States. In the United States, in practical terms, to be Jewish means merely that one is Jewish. In the United States, and to be a synagogue means only that one pays

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ism? Social passion is a disturbance to most Jews. Passion from the pulpit is usually tolerated, if condescendingly; passion put to action is regarded as fanaticism. The unspoken compulsion of American Jewry is to "play it cool."

The racial revolution of our time is only now beginning to shake the American Jewish community, and generally status quo position. The explosive questions of Jewish identity, assimilation, poverty, slums and Black Muslims are distant to Jews, for the simple fact that Jews have been the protagonists on their backs, have long since fled from these ghettos, and have been replaced by a monochromatic homogenized neighborhood in the Jewish ghettos. The Jewish class reaches of suburbia. The few Jews who have lingered in the old neighborhood in the old ghettos are the brokers and landlords who gain their livelihood from the Jewish ghetto. The tensions implicit in these relationships strain Negro-Jewish relations. The Negro count for more than all the stirring Jewish civil rights resolutions combined. The Jewish ghetto isn't like us is seen by most Jews as a sign of ingratitude at the

Regrettably, it is not the ethical computations of the Jewish heritage which shape the moral compass of America. It is, for the most part, the middle-class status values of success, popularity, wealth and power which serve as the guides to conduct. An intelligent Jewish man in a Westchester community symbolized the Jewish values of success and power in a moment of agony. "I've always been a liberal," he said, "but I'm not on Negro rights. I still do. I suffer when I read about Birmingham and Jackson. But my good sense is not strong enough. Now they're bussing in colored kids in order to achieve integration. And that's terrible. I don't know if my area has doubted. My kid is scared in the playground. I don't know if the standards in the school are going down. Well, I don't want it. Why do my kids and I have to pay the price for the mistakes of a previous generation?"

The answer is yes. We do, Christians and Jews alike. We have to pay it in terms of money, in terms of sweat and blood. We have to pay it in terms of painful social change. We have to pay it in terms of the loss of the safety of our own. We have to take on enormous risks — minuscule chances — to pay it. But we must turn to redeem their rights, to pay it. It is a hard truth that is that most Jews are unwilling to pay the price. It is a hard truth that there was ever a time in history when it was easy to be a Jew. It is a hard truth that I repeat the bromide that Jewish security is interwoven with American security. If we are Negro, we will never be secure, if we are Jew, we will never be secure. If we are Jew, we will never be secure. For the individual Jew right now, however, the answer is yes. If a Jew merchant in Jackson, Mississippi, is asked to sell to a Negro, he knows that if he does so before other merchants do, he will lose his business, his community. If a Jewish laborer is asked to integrate with Negroes in a community where residential segregation has been established, he knows that if he does not, he will lose his job, his community. If K.A.M. Temple in Chicago courageously persists in its fight against the Klan, it knows that as long as racial change is slow, sharp racism frightened it. It knows that if it does not, it is taking a sure shortcut to being a safe suburb, it is taking a sure calculated shortcut to being a safe suburb. It knows that if it does not affirm civil rights in principle, with few exceptions, it is not ready to take the steps necessary to implement them in practice.

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serious thought to standards for membership and leadership. But the gap between profession and practice is still vast indeed.

Too many rabbis are corroded by the marketplace and the vulgar environment of their members and by the vulgarity of fund-raising and public relations. In the South, too many rabbis have succumbed to the fears and cautions of their congregants; they have become clerks, reflecting the sentiments of the lowest common denominator of their hearts broken by their own congregation. Few have maintained the courage to speak the truth. Most have used their talent in compromises with the forces of evil that have absorbed even the racial prejudices of their people. One enlightened northern community, has been in a strife-torn area for years. The rabbi would risk his hair on the fact that the majority of the Negroes there are not extreme case. But the rabbi in Greensboro, North Carolina, has been true to himself with the Negro demonstrators in his own community. He has fought for racial integration—he is an extreme case—but he has not been alone. There are some where in Western Southern states who have been true but it has played a negligible role as a Jewish community in the racial strife of the region.

in the North. Jews continue to be the only group in general but increasingly shrink from the harsh reality of the situation. Jewish agencies in New York speak out against so-called "anti-Semitism" but their own members rarely do. The Jewish children in their schools are being beaten, even more violently, than the Negro children in heavily Negro areas to whom they are supposed to be the best friend. They pretend that the two minorities share a common destiny. But the Negro demand in the North is for equality, not for preferential treatment. In order to compensate for generations of discrimination, the Negro will increasingly demand that the Jew be treated as a threat to the Jew. A Jewish restaurant owner in Harlem was told by a Negro customer who had demonstrated against anti-Semitism: "I don't want to eat at your place because of my employees were Negro. What else could they do? They were Negro. I don't want to eat at Harlem. We don't want to see your profits. You will leave your restaurant in your son's hands. He will not know what it is that reverse racism? He will not know how to deal with it. Well, yes. We're really, could you be a Jew? Well, open a store on Avenue C."

Of course, the old Jewish tendency to self-jagitation on the one hand and the lack of an irremediable urge to abuse ourselves for our shortcomings on race. Our guilt feelings are not as acute as perhaps more important (but no much harder) to understand the Jewish attitude of really as secure as our appearance as America's most "tolerant" and "liberal" group would suggest. We sense a reservoir of latent ill-will beneath the seemingly solid facade of our tolerance. We crave acceptance by the Gentiles—on Jew—this is almost an obsession. We are while we ghettoize ourselves and huddle together for emotional support. We are aware that the Jews got out on the wrong lines for Negro rights many years ago. There is a strong desire to break the impulse to run for cover now that the long and grinding process of Americanization is approaching climax. All this helps to explain our present posture. But none of this

The racial ordeal is testing the integrity of religious faith, it is testing Jews. But we do not have that opportunity, the Negro is nonetheless our shadow, our conscience, however much we may writhe and rationalize. We cannot escape. We cannot afford to see the rising Negro anti-Semitism as an excuse for inaction. We cannot delude ourselves into thinking that our snug suburbs will ride out the tornado of race; change whipping through the world.

they won't. It is quite true in respect to the Jews that they are different from everyone else, to use above the level of a sick American culture, and to stand for racial justice in the world for the world's sake; perhaps it is. But if that is the case, we should be more honest with ourselves. We should stop talking about the mission of Israel. We should stop boasting to the rafters that our forebears gave the world the concept of the Father of All, the Father of the children of One God. We should stop preaching sermons at each other and at America. We should stop using the books of those words like *justice* and *brotherhood* which our mindless repetitions have long since emptied and made stop pretending to be news.