

HARLEM KIDS VIEW FUTURE THROUGH EYES OF FUTILITY

EXPRESSIONS OF FUTILITY, born of despair and contempt, were vividly recorded by a New York Times reporter in an interview with six Negro schoolboys in the heart of Harlem recently.

Junius Griffin was assigned to find out what went on in the troubled minds of youngsters living on 129th St. between Lenox and Seventh Avenues, a tough block where three teenaged "brothers" recently were arrested and charged with murdering a white woman shopkeeper—fourth such fatality since March 23.

The VOICE feels that Griffin caught the true temper and underlying causes of young Harlem's discontent and herewith offers his report for sober study and reflection by local educational and law enforcement authorities together with the general public:

"WHITEY AIN'T GOING to give me a break nohow, so, man, why should I go to school?" said the 15-year-old Negro.

"Whitey" has become a term of contempt used by many Negroes for the white man. The youth was one of six youngsters who agreed in a street interview that it was futile for young Negroes to have ambitions.

The six youths expressed random thoughts in the interview under the street lights between parked cars across from the New Era Democratic Club, 160 West 129th Street.

Farrell's bar, across the street on Seventh Avenue, was crowded and music from the jukebox could be heard.

Laughter came from up the block as a toddler broke away from her father and ignored his stern plea: "Come back here, honey."

AN ELDERLY WOMAN danced an impromptu twist on the sidewalk to music from a transistor radio.

As it was a warm night, most windows were up. The stoops were crowded with people in spirited conversation. Some were drinking wine in silence.

One building had a sign on the door saying: "Fallout Shelter."

The six youths were students at J. Fenimore Cooper Junior High School, 18 East 120th Street. Do you like school, they were asked.

"It's O.K., but I ain't learning nothing. Why should I learn about Columbus discovering America? They ain't going to ask me that when I try to get a job downtown. They don't teach me nothing about my people and Africa."

What do you want to do when you grow up?

"I want to be an electrician," said one. Another said: "I want to be a doctor." "Me, too," said the youngster at his side. "A plumber," said another. Two said "I don't know what I want to do now. . . I did want to be a cop."

A policeman?

"Yeah, man, a detective, but I hate them cats now."

Why?

"Man, they took our pigeons."

Pigeons?

"Yeah, we train homing pigeons on the roofs, but the cops made us stop because they said we were hiding bricks up there."

Were you?

"Some guys might do that but we didn't. Man, it's fun to train them things."

Where do you usually play after school? A youngster throwing a rubber ball against the side of a tenement, stopped, pondered and pointed to the street. "This is our playground."

What do you intend to do this summer?

"The same thing we're doing now," said one. "Ride my bicycle," said another. "I don't know," said others. "But, man," said one, "we don't want to hang around this corner."

ONE OF THE YOUTHS SAID: "Man, if the cops see you running on the block they think you stole something. And he might go up beside your head before you have a chance to say anything."

"Go up beside" means to hit.

You mean, a policeman would hit you for nothing?

"Yeah, man, they're scared."

Scared of what?

"I don't know."

"See, there goes two of them now," a youngster said, pointing to two white patrolmen walking their beat on the other side of the street.

The policemen strolled along the sidewalk, careful to avoid colliding with small children and obviously aware of the hostile stares from Negroes sitting on their stoops.

When the pair had passed, the youths were asked whether they would rather have Negro patrolmen on the beat.

"Hell no, them member cops will go up beside your head in a minute." ("Member" is slang for Negro.)

"Yeah, man," said Walter Jones, who was built like an athlete. Young Jones explained his position: "Look, I tell this member cat my name is Walter Jones. He replies: Walter Jones, that's too easy to spell, don't turn me on—and blam—he slaps me on the head. At least, whitey will talk to you."

Do you cats know anything about a gang around here—you know, an antiwhite gang?

"I don't know, man. I got nothing to say about that."

Do you dig Malcom X?

Silence.

"Let's go up to the house and listen to some African records," said one.

The six teenagers disappeared into the dim hallway of a tenement building.

NEGRO EDUCATORS, TOP FIRMS CONFER

WASHINGTON—Representatives of Negro colleges and a number of major American corporations are being brought together for the first time in an attempt to widen employment for Negro college graduates.

"Some Negro colleges have never been in contact with business and industry," a spokesman for the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity said last week.

The committee is sponsoring a two-day conference this week to which Negro college officials have been invited to talk over the employment-liability problem with representatives of such companies as the General Motors Corporation, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, the J.C. Penney Company, American Airlines, Inc., the Radio Corporation of America.

In a statement in advance of the conference yesterday and today, Dr. E.W. Engstrom, president of R.C.A., said:

"The interests of America require that every available talent in the nation be used to the maximum and that the development of all our human resources be actively engaged.

"By assuring our minority college students of equal opportunity for employment and advancement, we are achieving at the same time a far broader purpose; we are giving to the present generation of school children a dramatic lesson in how they will be able to prepare for a useful and constructive role in our society."

A spokesman for the President's employment panel said that one primary aim of the conference was to establish regular contact between industry and the Negro colleges, many of which do not now provide placement services for their graduates.

PLACEMENT PLANS STRESSED

Many employment recruiters consider schools without their own placement bureau a waste of time and bypass them, he said.

The conference will emphasize the benefits of an organized college placement program and "acquaint Negro school officials with present and future job market trends," the spokesman said.

The meeting is being sponsored by the Presidential committee in conjunction with the College Placement Council, Inc., a nonprofit organization representing college placement officers of more than 1,000 schools.

Federal representatives at the conference include Hobart Taylor Jr., executive vice chairman of the Equal Employment Committee; Francis Keppel, United States Commissioner of Education, and Dr. Samuel Proctor, associate director of the Peace Corps.

Other companies to take part include the Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation, the Aluminum Company of America, the International Business Machines Corporation and the Ford Motor Company.



HARLEM PLAYGROUND—Negro youngsters play informal game of football on car-lined Harlem street located in disturbed section that has recently been scene of inter-racial violence. It is their only "playground." (See story this page.)

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