

mingham, Tuskegee and other cities. Eventually, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was formed to coordinate and give direction to the common struggle. But it was not only organized efforts which resulted in great struggles; it was also the courage displayed by Negro individuals. The case of Autherine Lucy is a good example. Upon admission to the University of Alabama she was the object of jeering, hysterical, shameless mobs; in the face of such terror, she maintained her poise and dignity. In so doing she won the admiration of a watching world.

To implement the Supreme Court's decision and to hasten their own freedom, Negro children together with their parents, waged fierce struggles all over the South. The outstanding example was Little Rock, where nine Negro children withstood a jeering mob that included the police force of the city and state. They marched courageously into a school which had been decreed by the court as desegregated. The world stood up and applauded.

Sit-ins Sweep South

Between 1954 and 1960 numerous struggles were waged. In 1960, a new point was reached when a sit-in movement swept the Southern states like wildfire. The advent of the sit-ins witnessed the emergence of a new force — the Negro students. They began to play an outstanding role in challenging America's whole jim crow system. The nature of this movement was described by Louis E. Lomax in the June, 1960 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, he wrote:

"Negro leaders spent 75 years remodeling that structure, trying to make it more livable by removing such horrible reminders of the past of lynchings, denial of the ballot, restrictive covenants in housing, and inequalities of public facilities. Only after the intractable Deep South emasculated every move toward equalization did the Negro leadership class sue for school integration. Even then it was a segmented, room-by-room assault. But these student demonstrators have in effect put dynamite at the cornerstone of segregation and lit the fuse."

The sit-in movement forced many concessions. It was so potent

that the platform writers of both the Republican and Democratic parties in 1960 had to give it more than a passing nod. It was the most dynamic and compelling force to emerge on the American scene since the organization of the CIO in the mid-thirties. The entire Negro movement during this period organized actions and activities which made it the greatest social protest force in American life. On several occasions, segments of the Negro organizations as well as white supporters, joined together to mount some of the biggest actions of the last decade. The Prayer Pilgrimage of 1956 attracted some 27,000 people to the nation's capital; two youth marches to Washington likewise attracted tens of thousands of young people; and two demonstrations before the major party conventions in Chicago and Los Angeles, which also involved thousands, are indicative of the tremendous power displayed by the Negro liberation forces.

The Power of Negro Action

Conscious of its own role in world affairs, inspired by the world-wide sweep of freedom in Asia, Africa and other colonial areas of the world, the Negro movement placed on its banner the concept of "Freedom Now." Compromises and concessions which, in former years, would have been greeted with enthusiasm and with almost no criticism, are now appraised in the light of the vast changes that are taking place all over the world, and are found unsatisfactory.

In 1957, when the Senate passed, for the first time since the Reconstruction era, a watered-down civil rights bill, the Negro press was exceedingly critical of Negro leaders who had given their reluctant endorsement to the bill.

Another feature of historic importance to emerge in this period was the power of Negro action. The capacity of Negroes, independently of their actual and potential allies, to wage successful struggles, was demonstrated for the first time in the history of the Negro people in the United States. For, while the Negro movement broke with gradualism and increased the tempo of the struggle all along the line, its closest friends and allies, labor and liberals, have not yet grasped the revolutionary nature of the Negro people's