

powerful know perfectly well who their victims are . . . and that they have no intention of changing anything. This recognition is momentous, no doubt the spiritual low point of the emergent revolutionary's education. He finds that the enemy is not a few men but a whole system whose agents saturate the society He is diverted by a most realistic despair. But this despair contains within itself the omen of that final reconstitution of the spirit which will prepare [him] . . . for the shift to insurgency, rebellion, revolution At the heart of his despair lies the new certainty that there will be no change which he does not produce by himself."

With this description I do not argue at all. It is a very accurate description of the education those protesting in this country have been receiving. May more and more read the lesson. I argue with the contention that nonviolent action can only be prayerful action—must by its nature remain naive. Too often in the past it has confined itself to petition, but there is no need for it to do so—especially now that so many have learned "change [is] harder to get than they had imagined." There have always been those in the nonviolent movement who called for radical moves. As Kopkind writes, "all that has come until now is prologue." But this does not mean that our alternatives have suddenly been reduced. The pressure that nonviolent moves could put upon those who are opposing change, the power that could be exerted this way, has yet to be tested.

Power and Nonviolence

I have introduced the word "power" deliberately. When the slogan "Black Power" was first taken up, the statements immediately issued, both for and against it, all seemed to imply that "power" was a word inconsistent with a faith in nonviolence. This was of course the position taken by Stokely Carmichael: "We had to work for power because this country does not function

by morality, love and nonviolence, but by power. For too many years, black Americans marched and had their heads broken and got shot. They were saying to the country, 'Look, you guys are supposed to be nice guys and we are only going to do what we are supposed to do. Why . . . don't you give us what we ask?' . . . We demonstrated from a position of weakness. We can not be expected any longer to march and have our heads broken in order to say to whites: come on, you're nice guys. For you are not nice guys. We have found you out."

Carmichael gives us: the humble appeal to conscience on the one hand, the resort to power on the other. If the choice were really this, anyone who wanted change would certainly have to abandon nonviolent action. For as Bradford Lyttle comments in a paper on Black Power, no, most people are not nice guys. "It isn't necessary to be hit over the head to learn this Some Christians call the un-niceness of people 'original sin.' It's Freud's 'ego.' Naturalist Konrad Lorenz studies it as aggressiveness and argues convincingly that it's instinctive with men. Whatever the un-niceness may be, it is part of all of us, and our job is to minimize it."

The trouble is that advocates of nonviolence themselves often write in terms that seem to corroborate the picture Carmichael paints. When they actually engage in direct action, they pay great attention to other-than-moral pressures that can be and have to be placed on those with whom they are struggling. But on paper they tend again and again to stress only the appeal that can be made to conscience. Bradford, in his paper on Black Power, notes: "Carmichael's vision isn't limited to Negroes. Machiavelli had it: . . . 'A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good. Therefore if is necessary . . . to learn how not to be good.'" Then he pleads that to put one's faith in coercive power is tragic, and his argument is: