

*Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community.* By Gary T. Marx. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. 228 pp. \$8.95.

This book reports on a study of Negro attitudes toward the civil rights movement, toward persons and organizations leading the movement, toward the white population generally and toward Jews in particular. The interviews were conducted in October, 1964. Findings are based on a metropolitan sample "representative of Negroes living in metropolitan areas . . . outside the South" and on samples chosen from New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and Birmingham.

In great measure the work addresses itself to the claims put forward by anxious liberals who view with alarm the radicalization of the movement, the coming of Black Power, and the signs of anti-Semitism. The study showed that the moderate leadership was viewed with greatest favor by the metropolitan Negro population. Seventy-nine per cent, for example, thought the NAACP was "doing the most at the present time to help Negroes." Another eleven per cent put CORE in that position and "only" three per cent chose the Muslims. Similarly, asked which person "has done most to help Negroes," respondents had Martin Luther King far out in front with 88 per cent, followed at a great distance by Roy Wilkins

(6 per cent). Then came James Farmer tied with Malcolm X, each with one per cent.

The levels of hostility directed toward the white population and toward Jews also proved to be reassuringly low. Jews tended to be viewed more favorably than other whites generally since there was a widespread recognition of civil rights work undertaken by Jewish persons.

There are detailed discussions of the sources of militancy (both of the "conventional" and Muslim varieties) and of the factors inhibiting that development. The most deprived tend to be the least militant. The somewhat better off populations who are more militant are also more socially involved and have more favorable attitudes towards whites. Church-going, for example, contrary to widespread expectation based on the role of some clergy, proves to be a strong inhibiting factor.

On the whole, the book is to be commended for providing a detailed picture of how Negroes viewed the struggle at that time. As such it provides a valuable corrective to the alarmism which more or less spontaneously develops in liberal circles.

One of the problems connected with doing such a study is that on the "day after" one's "snapshot" is outmoded. The hypotheses of alarm obviously can never be disproved by such studies inasmuch as the subsequent events can always be said to have "dramatically" transformed the situation. Marx, however, does a very good job piecing together the information from subsequent studies so as to show the continuity with the picture he has drawn.

There are, however, some problems connected with this effort at reassurance. The picture is "majoritarian" in its orientation, aiming at a portrayal of model cases and setting them in opposition to various minorities. As a portrayal of the entire urban Negro population a procedure is not to be faulted. It must, however, be remembered that the major events of this revolution are made by the minorities. The fact that only three per cent of metropolitan adults say the Muslims are doing the "most" at the present time (1964) hides the fact that in New York it is eight per cent, in Chicago three, in Birmingham one and Atlanta, it is none. A movement begins small and spreads out from the initial centers. The procedure understates considerably the likely impact of the Muslims. At that time 88 per cent had heard of them (vs. 73 per cent having heard of CORE). There is a followup question which asks if there are any groups which are disliked or disapproved.

To be sure 57 per cent disapprove of the Muslims but in translation what the text says is that three per cent think they are doing the most for the Negro and that there is another 28 per cent who know about the organization and do not disapprove.

There is also the question about the character of the approvers and disapproval. If those approving were all young males and those disapproving were older populations and female, the character of the struggle within the community and the struggle between Blacks and Whites would have a markedly different character than that suggested by the overall percentages.

Something of this sort does happen to be the case. The results based on an index of militancy show a clear pattern of youthful militance and aged deference. Militance is also more likely among men as one would suspect. A fact to be borne in mind when reading the book is that the combined sample contains 495 men and 600 women. Those raised in big cities, those raised outside the South, are also more militant. These findings, for the most part, are presented separately, one item at a time, and, for my money, the implications are largely neglected.

A reference is made to the view of the man in the Harlem street, this in connection with an attempt at putting down Claude Brown. While it is true that 68 per cent of the New Yorkers in the study agree with the statement that "Violence will never help Negroes get equal rights," there is an unanswered question as to whether that is the view of the man in the street. Given the widespread deference among the women and the aged, it seems likely that the agreement comes from the older population and the women who are *not* on the streets. If we were to take the views of the young males who do happen to be in the streets, it is quite possible that Brown may be completely justified.

Much of the discussion is given over to hypotheses which come out of the Golden Treasury of American Pluralism. We have an exploration of the impact on militancy of organizational memberships, socialization with friends, of voting in 1960, of magazine reading, etc. The expected results appear in all cases. There is, however, the question to be raised as to whether or not this is due to the pluralist "inputs" or whether it means no more than that non-joiners and non-readers etc. are disproportionately those reared in the South, trained in deference, and now too old to undo a lifetime of training. The aged and infirm domestic who leaves the house only for work, shopping, and church is a non-joiner, a non-reader, has few friends, and is, also, a non-militant.

While upper middle classes talk about Pluralism, about the impact of group membership, about being integrated into "the society," most accounts of ghetto life stress the concern with the police. There are the beginnings of a discussion of police treatment but curiously enough this is dropped without exploring the impact of this contact on militancy.

These comments, however, should not detract from the basic contributions of the book. The work fills in a major gap in our knowledge and undercuts the free and easy claims generated by television commentators. The book is also very good in that there is a continuous effort made to let the individuals speak. On the subject of the police, for example, one person comments: "White police don't do the whites like they do the Negroes."

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