"THE BLACK EMPOWERMENT CONTROVERSY" WITHIN THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, 1967-1970: ONE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION'S CRISIS BETWEEN INTENT AND ROUTINE EFFICACY.

Lisa Ward

Master's Thesis, Spring 1991

First Reader: Professor Larry Rasmussen
Second Reader: Professor James Washington

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I found this project particularly challenging in heart and mind and spirit. The scope of complexities involved in this short period of history continues to effect the denomination and is an important reference point for further engagement with and enhancement of the necessary work toward an equitable multi-cultural society. I experienced mixed feelings in examining my religious heritage in this regard, yet remain hopeful that the essential principles and purposes of our tradition can contribute to authentic diversity with increased awareness, and emphasis on interdependence.

This thesis focuses on the lessons of the critical period of the "Black Empowerment Controversy" when it engaged the institutional structure. This is because a unified commitment within structures of power and influence is needed to effectively activate the call for racial justice. The example of the struggle within this denomination interrelates with that of other liberal religious institutions, and a comparison of such would provide further insight. Further study of the aftermath of the controversy within the constituency is another step toward dismantling the barriers between intent and efficacy. This project is a starting point of my engagement with the topic of racial justice within Unitarian Universalism.

I was blessed with the opportunity to discuss the controversy with several Unitarian Universalists who were active during this critical period. They shared both their involvement in the controversy and views on the nature and potentials of Unitarian Universalism. These interviews provided valuable insights, varied as they were, toward the complexities of

institutional reform. I thank James Luther Adams, Bill Gardner, Cornelius McDougald, Donald McKinney, Donald Harrington, Winnifred Norman, Jack Mendelsohn, Marcia McBroom Landess, Richard Leonard and David Parke for their time and input. I am indebted to Donald McKinney and Susan Archer for contributing origin materials from their personal collections for my perusal.

I would like to also mention people who helped me work through this process. I thank Larry Rasmussen and James Washington, for their guidance. I thank my Intern Supervisor, John Buehrens, for many conversations concerning the topic. I thank my Internship Committee at All Souls Unitarian Church for their support. And I could not have finished the project without the generous support and encouragement from Jennifer Johnson and Nicholas Waldron.

INTRODUCTION

On October 6, 1967 an ad hoc caucus of Black Unitarian Universalists (BUUC) presented demands at an "Emergency Conference of the Unitarian Universalist Response to the Black Rebellion" toward substantive institutional reform in response to racism. The emphasis on black leadership and black self-determination to equalize the power structures responding to racism penetrated the ideal of democracy coveted by this predominately white "middle strata" denomination. This bold irruption was galvanized and a movement to fund a Black Affairs Council (BAC), an affiliate interracial council with Black majority elected by BUUC, came to fruition at the General Assembly in Cleveland on May, 26, 1968. A proposal for the Unitarian Universalist Association to implement funds of $1,000,000 over the course of four years was passed. Two essential camps formed, African Americans and Euro-Americans in both, that of proponents of the emergent philosophy of Black Empowerment and of Integrationists, upholders of the UU tradition. Although both groups set forth agenda to dispel racism, they became diametrically opposed. Fourteen months of substantive institutional resistance to this emerging movement motivated BAC to disaffiliate from the central denominational structure. Within a short time, the cause of active institutional response to racism dissipated.

This story dramatizes a crisis of the ethos of Unitarian Universalist religious liberalism. The universal moral principles of mutual dignity, autonomy, and freedom of conscience that served a tradition, historically founded by the customs, institutions and rites of a class-bound, culture-bound religious community was at risk. The crisis was brought about when

the institution was summoned by constituents to respond to change, challenged to embody the ideal embraced by the community in the context of the larger historical reality of society. Pressures from societal dysfunction engaged a critical awareness of the discrepancies between original intention and routine efficacy. This was a traumatic experience for many within the denomination, one that has not yet been healed.

Unitarian Universalism, in its call for religious pluralism as a challenge to orthodoxy and its emphasis on ethical action toward redemption of the human community is often considered on the "cutting edge" of religious liberalism. Individuals and communities within both the Unitarian and Universalist movements (the denominations merged in 1961) have forcefully contributed, sometimes at great risk, to movements of social change. And yet, when the denomination was confronted, forcefully, with institutional racism, the cause of Unitarian Universalism fell short of its mark.

The drama of the "Black Empowerment Controversy" reveals the failure of an institution to break through the ideological boundaries of a community to authenticate its ethos by interactive engagement with contradictory elements, in a passage of crisis toward transformation. The forces of classism and racism, mystified by the heralding of tradition and choice of historical justification, dismantled the irruption before it had a chance to form.

I come to this project as a Euro-American woman, born and bred in a predominately white upper-middle class Unitarian Universalist congregation, in training for the Unitarian Universalist ministry. I do not know if the emergent movement would have worked an authentic transformation, I only know that our traditional methodology and coveted ethos has virtually kept us the same. Our denomination remains as a

a predominately white "middle-strata" liberal religious institution with limited ethnic membership or leadership.

This conflict, as in any conflict, embodies a clash of values and assumptions, revealing the bases of beliefs and priorities inherent in chosen behavior. It is my hope that lessons from this controversy can enhance the vitality of a growing religious heritage, and increase our relevance, toward substantive advocacy of an equitable, multi-cultural society.

My focus will remain primarily within the confines of the community as it is a study of Unitarian Universalist institutional efficacy in regards to social reform. Being a relatively homogeneous community (socio-culturally) my findings may speak generally to responses within white "middle strata" religious liberalism.

One note on the language used. In describing the controversy, I use the adjectives "Black" and "White", as they were used during the time. At other times, responding to present forms of identification, I interchange "Afro-American" for "Black" and correlate "Euro-American" (primarily Anglo-Saxon) for "White".

The format of this study will be to first establish the Unitarian Universalist historical context in regard to institutional construction and race relations. Chapter Two addresses the confrontation of UU methodology which engaged the controversy. Chapter Three follows the dynamics of the controversy when it entered the institutional structure. I conclude with examination of some of the limitations of the established UU ethos which were exposed by the controversy.

CHAPTER I: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is an institution comprised of member Churches and Fellowships who covenant to promote and affirm prescribed liberal religious principles and purposes. The denomination is congregational in form, modeled as a democratic, voluntary organization of "autonomous, self-governing local churches and fellowships which are located primarily in the United States and Canada, and which have freely chosen to pursue common goals together" (Bylaws, III, C-3.1) .(1) "Fellowships" are generally "lay-led" societies, either by preference or because of limited size and resources to support a minister. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of member societies and strengthen UU institutions.

Juggling the strong emphasis on voluntary consensus in effecting denominational response creates a difficult balancing act. The method devised for institutional response is threefold. Overall policy is made by the General Assembly, an annual meeting of delegates sent by member societies, which directs and controls the affairs of the UUA. The UUA is operated by a Board of Trustees, which accepts member societies upon written application and acts for the Association in support of the Bylaws between General Assemblies. One half of the trustees are elected at the General Assembly and one-half are elected by two District groups prior to those General Assemblies. No trustee can serve more than two successive four-year terms. A third factor involved in institutional decision making comes from the Administration. The Board of Trustees directs and controls the affairs of the Administration, although the three salaried officers, the President, Moderator and Financial Advisor are elected by the

Assembly. Additional non-salaried officers are appointed by the Board. Although officially responsible to the Board, the president exercises substantive power of influence in the direction of the Association. The Association's annual budget is adopted and amended by the Board of Trustees. The budget is presented to the General Assembly for consideration and recommendation of financial priorities.

Unitarian Universalism promotes a living tradition, drawing from the continuous collective wisdom of a variety of religious resources and from personal experience within community. It enlivens an interactive blend of a wide range of theological diversity, primarily that of Judaism, Christianity, Theism, Transcendentalism and Humanism. As a non-creedal religious discipline, Unitarian Universalism emphasizes individual freedom of belief, contributing to the goal of a world community that enlivens justice, equity and compassion in human relations.(2) "As such" states the UUA Commission on Appraisal report to the 1983 General Assembly, "it (Unitarian Universalism) promotes a social gospel or religious context within which social justice is of central concern."(3)

With social justice as a faith praxis, moral and ethical concerns enter the political arena. Although personal ethics are inherently political by way of interdependence, the emphasis on autonomy and resentment toward centralized power is in direct tension with institutional response. Paradoxically, institutional religious response can be both hampered and vitalized by individual contributions. "The unique challenge for the UUA," states the 1983 Commission on Appraisal, "is the achievement of a balanced perspective between the poles of voluntary consensus and political persuasion in its institutional life."(4)

Unitarian Universalism is a relatively newly formed denomination. In May of 1961, the American Unitarian Association (AUA) and the Universalist Church of America (UCA) merged to form a liberal religious doctrine under the auspices of the UUA.

American Unitarians and Universalists, according to David Robinson in his book The Unitarians and the Universalists, "shared a common theological enemy: Calvinism." (5) With varying interpretations, Universalists honed in on the theory of "election", positing "universal salvation", arguing the punishment of sin as consequences of sin in this life. Humans, through biblical authority and the example of Jesus through his atonement could create a peaceable Kingdom on earth by way of good works. Universalism spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries primarily among rural and small-town populations. The Unitarian slant against Calvinism came primarily from the "Standing Order" of Puritan New England. Responding to the revivalist trend of The Great Awakening in the 1740's, Unitarians opposed orthodoxy and argued God's benevolence, free will and dignity as religious precepts for the individual. Rallied at Harvard Divinity School in the early nineteenth century, Unitarians spread primarily among intellectual liberals, maintaining the "Standing Order" by way of education, a by-product of social distinction. Universalists were more prone to denominational construction than Unitarians. In fact the AUA was first formed in 1825 merely as a center to distribute Unitarian publications. Radical individualism over and against orthodoxy made Unitarians ever wary of denominational structures. Additionally, Unitarians developed an arrogance against missionary work, discouraging the practice of proselytizing, consequently undermining growth and generating an elitist tendency within the community.

The merger had been discussed within both denominations for over a century. Henry Whitney Bellows, a leading Unitarian minister of the nineteenth century, touted as an effective builder of organizations, identified social class as the greatest barrier to the possible union.(6) In his words, class tensions of "social distinction...have undoubtedly done more to keep us apart than all other things. Unitarians have looked down upon Universalists, and Universalists have felt a social jealousy of Unitarians."(7)

The clash of social distinction centered primarily on educational emphasis, but was intensified by economic and political status. Universalists consisted more of "blue collar" middle class whites, while Unitarians consisted more of "white collar" middle to upper class whites. Thomas Starr King, son of a Universalist minister, who became a Unitarian minister and forged the Unitarian mission on the West Coast, provided a distinction that has now become folklore. "Universalists" he is purported to have said, "believe God is too good to damn them, while Unitarians believe they are too good to be damned." A Universalist woman characterized the difference after a tedious discussion for a local merger in 1960. "Those Unitarians will talk your ear off," she told a Unitarian student, " but they can't do a Church supper the way we Universalists can!" (8)

By the time of the merger in 1961, however, most Unitarians and Universalists shared educational, ethical and intellectual emphases on liberal religious pursuits toward the goal of a common humanity. Also, Universalism had experienced a decline as various liberal Protestant sects attracted many of its members. The first advantage offered by the 1958 "Joint Commission on Merger" was that "A new liberal religious

denomination....would be in a better competitive position regarding the social, economic and ideological manifestations of surrounding orthodox religions."(9) The outcome of the merger, however, reflects the Unitarian power base, as the AUA headquarters in Boston became the UUA headquarters and the AUA president, Dana Greeley, was elected the first president of the UUA.

The dynamics of theological diversity inherent in both denominations remained strong, whereas a "style" of liberalism, that is, the action guides inherent in the religious communities, carried a common thread. Four general categories undergirding the UU ethos were summarized in The Free Church in a Changing World, an assessment of member societies by six commissions of the AUA, published by the UUA in 1963. The action guides within this living tradition were identified as: 1) "this worldly concerns", 2) "strong ethical responsibility", 3) "deep commitment to democracy" and 4) a belief that "true community is religiously based". (10)

When turning to the ethical responsibility of racial equality, neither the UCA nor AUA had made significant strides. The UUA had also inherited and continued in the Euro-American liberal "style" of institutional racism. Individual Unitarians and Universalists had contributed to opposition of the slave trade, helped galvanize the abolitionist movement, participated in the Underground Railroad, and acted courageously in the civil rights movement. Some favored examples are forebears such as Theodore Parker, Lydia Marie Child, William Ellery Channing, Mary A. Livermore, Olympia Brown, Dr. Benjamin Rush, John Haynes Holmes and James Reeb.

Groups of Universalists worked actively in the abolitionist movement

and worked diligently toward the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, with extensive participation in the Freedmen's Bureau of 1865.(11) Yet the peculiarities of individualism barred institutional action against slavery. Russel Miller articulates this dynamic in his book The Larger Hope.

> A strong central authority to enforce obedience was lacking in Universalist organization; any attempt to impose a uniform discipline of thought would, even if attempted, have been anathema to most Universalists...Hence the effectiveness of their (individuals) efforts was blunted at the start, and they were forced to organize their own vehicles for arguing their case and disseminating their views. (12)

The same dynamic was clear in Unitarianism as well. In 1845, 170 Unitarian ministers published an antislavery declaration in, The Liberator, William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist journal, and yet the AUA did not take corporate action toward the dissolution of slavery. (13) Samuel J. May characterized the institutional response of Unitarians to slavery:

> The Unitarians as a body dealt with the question of slavery in any but an impartial, courageous...way. Continually in their public meetings the question was staved off and driven out, because of technical, formal and verbal difficulties which were of no real importance...We had the right to expect from Unitarians a steadfast and unqualified protest against...American slavery. And considering their position as a body not entangled with any proslavery alliances, not hampered by any ecclesiastical organization....They, of all other sects, ought to have spoken boldly. But they did not. (14)

It was not only the aversion to unified dictums that prevented institutional response. Members of each denomination also favored and defended slavery on Biblical and economic grounds. As was common in liberal circles, the fear of disunion and divisive controversy called many to seek gradualism. The favored Unitarian image, for example, of

Theodore Parker, writing sermons with a gun and sword at his desk to defend runaway slaves, must be tempered by the heritage of his contemporary, Ezra Style Gannet, claiming obedience to the Slave Fugitive Act in order to avoid possible disunion.

Additionally, and most insidious, was deep-seated paternalism. Dr. Thandeka, an African American UU, uses references revealed by UU president William Schulz in her 1989 article "How Black Are We?", to point out the paternalistic undertone even of stalwarts like Channing and Parker:

> "I should expect from the African race," William Ellery Channing had written, "less energy, less courage, less intellectual originality, than in our race..." And even Parker (Schulz tells us) entertained "no doubt that the African race is greatly inferior to the Caucasian in general intellectual power, and also in that instinct for liberty which is so strong in the Teutonic family." (15)

Samuel A. Eliot, president of the AUA from 1900-1927, claimed in his 1933 sermon entitled "The Blight of Prejudice", that intelligence and character "are the fundamental things for the (Negro) race to secure." (16) The benchmark for measuring "intelligence and character" clearly stemmed from the politically dominant Western European academic and cultural standards.

Mark Morrison Reed, in his book Black Pioneers in a White Denomination, reveals the impasses of paternalism, racism and classism in his rendering of two Black Unitarian ministers who attempted to realize their vision of ministry within the Unitarian dream. Through his rendering of Egbert Ethelred Brown, a Black minister who never received sustained denominational support in his attempt to form a Church of Harlem in the early twentieth century, he demonstrated "the remarkably strange antagonism of the AUA to religious work among Negroes." (17)

Reed demonstrates that progress has been made through the career of Lewis McGee, a black Methodist minister who converted to Unitarianism and in 1961 became the first black minister to serve a white community at the Chico Fellowship in Bayside, California. Though the progress was slow. He then offers this observation,

> The Unitarian church was not integrated because it chose not to be....Often their understanding was limited and their vision too weak to see beyond the status quo or beyond the narrow appeal of the Unitarian Church. They were captives of the American caste system. Paternalistic in their racism, our leaders at the beginning of the twentieth century did not respect black men. Slowly, over a period of decades, some Unitarians began to see their way out of this, but it was still difficult to break the patterns of segregation that were demographically and socially perpetuated. (18)

One word on the "American caste system" and UU heritage. Reed points out that "the Unitarian's religious forebears were instrumental in the founding of the United States". (Thomas Jefferson, author of the "Declaration of Independence", was Unitarian, and many were later instrumental in the drafting of the Constitution.) "Thus," Reed continues, "the Unitarian's connection with the ideal and images of American democracy is deep." (19) Unitarians, then, in their call for the ideal of religious and intellectual freedom, also carry with them a heritage of the real establishment of power that was exclusive of native Americans, inclusive of slavery and of the "caste" mentality of manifest destiny. As of 1963, less than two dozen black ministers had been fellowshipped in either denomination since 1887. (20)

With the emergence of the civil rights movement in the 1940's Unitarian Universalists, again, became involved individually and through vehicles such as the NAACP, CORE, SCLC and the ACLU. The Unitarian Service Committee, founded in 1940 to combat fascism abroad helped to

sensitize more UU's toward forms of political oppression.

During the merger, issues of race were brought forth. The UUA began to address institutional action toward the cause of civil rights. Within the General Resolutions drafted by the 1961 Assembly was a call for action and advocacy toward desegregation of public schools. In 1963 a Commission on Religion and Race was formed to investigate and implement further action toward integration. In 1964, $50,000 was allotted to a Freedom Fund devised to help the Commission with research projects and to lend support of societies and denominational agencies toward the cause of integration. The Association publicly resolved "that it be our deep responsibility to promote full participation in the life of our country of all persons without regard to race, color, sex, or national origin".(21)

Unitarian Universalists increased advocacy of civil rights movements in the North and the South, participating in marches, boycotts and sit-ins. In 1965, the UUA galvanized a corporate response in Selma, Alabama. On March 9, James Reeb, a Unitarian Universalist minister from Boston died from a clubbing he had received following the nationally televised March 7 "Bloody Sunday" in Selma. Dana Greeley, called UU ministers and members of the Board to join him on a crusade to Selma, both in response to James Reeb's death and the SCLC call of "people of good will" for assistance in the fight for voting rights.

Over a hundred UU ministers and most of the Board of Trustees answered the call. A march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge recurred with substantive UU constituency in coalition with other denominations. Dana Greeley and SCLC's C.T. Vivien were locked arm in arm in the front of the line. The March was again confronted by State Troopers. Negotiations by the SCLC for the march were to ensue, inclusive of Dana Greeley and Dr.

Homer Jack of the UUA national staff. On March 15, a memorial service was held for James Reeb at Brown Chapel in Selma. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a short sermon, reminding the attendants of the deaths of hundreds of Blacks, such as the recent murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson, yet sent an encouraging word of hope with the familiar "we shall overcome". (22)

The symbolism of UU solidarity in Selma coupled with a martyr now attached to the cause, strengthened the UU resolve to act corporately to dispel racism. The 1966 General Assembly affirmed that "segregation and discrimination, wherever practiced, continue to be a matter of major concern and reflect attitudes contrary to moral, religious and ethical commitments." The thrust of the UUA became "work for integration in all phases of life in the community".(23)

One note on the demographics of the UUA as of 1967. A Committee on Goals was created by the Board of Trustees in 1965 "to examine long range theological and sociological goals of the liberal religious movement." (24) Population count compared to society at large showed 1.2% representation, with the largest faction in New England. There was evidence that societies were moving out of the cities and into the suburbs. The survey, more representative than comprehensive, recorded that 48.4 % (less than half) expressed social action as the number one priority.(25) This is an important factor to keep in mind during the struggles within the controversy. In 1967, there were 1129 member societies, consisting of approximately 180,000. In 1968, Afro-American members were estimated at 1,500.(26)

Chapter II: DEFIANCE OF RITUAL

> This country is in the throes of a historical national crisis. Its ramifications are so vast and frightening that even now, shocked in numbness and disbelief, the American people have not yet fully grasped what is happening to them.(1)

Bayard Rustin's powerful quote from the August 13, 1967 edition of the New York Times Magazine grounded Homer A. Jack's personal observations of the "Black Rebellion" in his "Special Report" to the UUA dated August 21, 1967. Harsh "official" statistics reported in the August 11, 1967 edition of Time Magazine, as in other national periodicals, of 86 persons dead, 2,056 injured and 11,094 arrested, mostly Afro-Americans, accentuated the necessity to take the outbursts of violence seriously.(2) This was not an isolated year, as deaths, injuries and arrests were common fare throughout the previous civil rights years. Yet since the Los Angeles Watts riot of 1965, the violence had been increasing by a disturbing rate. Intensified by the outbreak of riots in Detroit and Newark during the summer of 1967, internal disruptions came to the forefront of national priorities. An irresistible chaos was occurring, a chaos that was summoning creation of new systems, new perspectives, and new responses to the power of being and behaving with one another. The terror of the riots forced a nation, already in deep crisis, to take a long hard look at the forces of change. Within the threat of disruption, varied attempts at reconstruction were in play, but one unavoidable fact was true, society was moving too slowly and radical response had become too powerful to ignore. Something was fundamentally wrong with the present "law and order" of this "democratic" society.

The perennial call to take action by a variety of religious leaders and social reformers was gaining voice. Seasoned organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Society (MFDM), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Black Muslims were activating systemic responses, had generated such leaders as Martin Luther King, Jr., Stokely Carmichael, Floyd McKissick, John Lewis, Fanny Lou Hammer, Roy Wilkins and Malcolm X, to name a few. It was clear to many that the influence of religious institutions had potential for motivating response to the blatant urgency for change, and further, they had an obligation to attend to that need.

Emergency Conference, October 1967

In August of 1967, Homer Jack, one of the white founders in 1942 of CORE, urged the convening of an "Emergency Conference on the Unitarian Universalist Response to the Black Rebellion". As director of the Commission on Religion and Race and the Department of Social Responsibility for the UUA, his intent was to provide recommendations for denominational response to the Board of Trustees of the UUA. In accordance, the Commission on Religion and Race planned and sponsored the Conference, with financial assistance from the Freedom Fund, to "bring together, by invitation approximately 125 Unitarian Universalist laymen (sic) and ministers to analyze the summer, 1967, riots and....help to give a new level of commitment to black Americans and to the cities by setting new local and denominational priorities."(3) The invitational format was set-up to assure broad-base geographical participation with explicit

emphasis on encouraging Afro-American representation. Representation of affiliated agencies was also a priority. Attorney Cornelius McDougald, an Afro-American chairperson of the Commission and chairperson of the Board of Trustees at the Community Church of New York (UU), was instrumental in the organization of the conference.

The final roster included 135 Unitarian Universalists, representing 19 of the 21 districts. Approximately 37 Black Unitarian Universalists were present.(4) Additionally, 34 conference leaders attended, nine of which were non-Unitarian Universalists. The choice of the additional 34 leaders was intentionally inclusive of Black and White females and males active in the struggle for civil rights.

Before the conference, three members of the Black Unitarians for Radical Response (BURR), a group that had formed in August of 1967 in Los Angeles, informed the Commission that three of their members, Lou Gothard, Jules Ramey and Carrie Thomas, were invited to attend. They expressed the need for a separate meeting room to convene a Black Caucus, chaired by Lou Gothard. The Caucus also requested their own separate registration table.

The three-day Emergency Conference convened on October 6, 1967 at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City. The format of the conference included three commissions charged to devise specific recommendations toward national, local and denominational priorities for UU action, respectively. Five simultaneous discussion panels and four plenary sessions to address dimensions of the "Black Rebellion" were also on the agenda. By the first plenary session, a student caucus had also been established, registered by both Black and White youths. In order to attend to the varying needs of the caucuses and the possibility of a change in

the agenda, a Steering Committee chaired by Cornelius McDougald, was established. Lou Gothard, though elected, chose not to attend the meetings. As there were no moves at the plenary session to change the format of the Conference, the agenda was carried out as planned. (5)

From the start of the conference the members of BURR, joined by Hayward Henry of Boston, withdrew to their reserved room and invited other Black UU's to hold a concurrent meeting, exclusive of Whites. By the end of the conference the Black Caucus had acquired 30 members. The Caucus formed to address their own concerns, as Black Unitarian Universalists, to evaluate their sense of identity and increase their sense of power in solidarity. Echoing the charges and methods toward response already illustrated in other settings, especially the newly formed Episcopal Black Caucus with their "take-them-or-leave-them" demands during the September 1967 Chicago National Conference on New Politics (NCNP), members of BURR challenged the caucus to recognize that "finally the time has come for us to tell our liberal friends what we want, and stop listening to what they want to do for us."(6)

Henry Hampton, the only Black UUA senior staff member at the time, attended the Caucus meetings, at first, with reservations:

> I was raised in a good, black, middle-class family in St. Louis, and we were all raised to believe in the equality of the races...the idea of being in an all-black meeting was just incomprehensible to me...it was simply not part of my experience to walk into a room where the only reason you could be there is because you were black. And it upset me. I had to really think about whether I was going to stay or not. (7)

This tactic of separation was antithetical to UU ritual of free inquiry within integrationist precepts. It was an act of anti-structure to break the assumed liberal model for coexistence and call for radical

change. The inversion of relationships and processes, exposed the power dynamics within the status quo, and was a move to develop a sense of power to influence change in the status quo.

However, the Black Caucus was not immune to UU group dynamics. In his article "An Insider's View of the Black Caucus" Hampton recorded a threat within the Caucus meetings "when the issue of individual freedom versus group responsibility reared its complicated head".(8)

At one point, Cornelius McDougald began to leave the room to attend to his responsibilities as chairperson of the Conference. Members of BURR demanded he make a choice between commitments to the Caucus or to the Conference. This tactic did not endear McDougald. He left the caucus for good, proclaiming "his unwillingness to submit to intimidation by blacks or whites". Later on, approximately half of the caucus members expressed interest in attending certain "regularly scheduled sessions" of the Conference which was again opposed by the more militant members. Hayward Henry was able to persuade the group to compromise and allow for intermittent attendance in the Conference without revealing any of the Caucus recommendations.(9)

Meanwhile, the substantive removal of Black participation began to work its influence within the Conference. Reactions ranged from curiosity to confusion to disgust. The report of one discussion group questioned the efficacy of their deliberations because of the depletion of Black participation.(10) One White participant, Jeannette Hopkins, decided to step down as chairperson of Commission III, which was designated to discuss denominational response. Her strong objection to what she deemed a "charade" compelled her to make this painful, difficult decision. She recorded her reasons by letter to the Conference:

> ...that the Black Caucus...was intended to disrupt all action other than its own, and to reinforce rather than to break down racial barriers. Its methods of imposed discipline, secrecy, exclusivity, are the opposite of the methods I have cherished in Unitarianism...I have no wish to participate in a ritual dance of black demand and white obsequiousness, a dance in which neither take the other seriously. (11) (See Appendix B for the complete text)

A "minority report" from commission III was printed adjacent to Hopkins' letter, written by Gregory M. Boni. It begins:

> This Conference has made us, or should have made us, aware that a strong social force exists that is growing out of the use as a rallying cry of the words, Black Power. For many or most of us at the Conference actual contact with this force was an experience for the first time. The existence of the Black Caucus provided for us in a microcosm a display of the separation that may come about, and of the impact upon possible choice of actions when such separation exists.(12) (See Appendix C for the complete text)

At the final plenary session, the Black Caucus emerged and presented their proposals, demanding unqualified endorsement, without discussion, amendments or change. As the recommendations of this conference had no direct power to act on a denominational level, the proposals were targeted for the November meeting of the UUA Board of Trustees and were to be presented exclusively by the Black Caucus Steering Committee.

An emotional debate ensued as this, again, was antithetical to UU "democratic procedures". Henry Hampton quoted a "white liberal friend" in his "Insider's View" article. "I've been putting myself on the line for you for twenty years, and now you want me to support a crazy kind of separatism that goes against everything I joined this church for." (13) In the heat of the debate to be able to debate, Barbara Jackson, a Black UU, embodied the defiance by dancing in the aisles. "Unitarianese, Anglo-Saxonese," she spat, "I told them this is what you people get into....Can't you understand what we're trying to do? Can't you for once

in your lives look past your own selves and see that what these people are trying to do is right and say 'I will support them, uncritically'?" (14)

Finally a vote came to the floor and the proposals were passed by an estimated two-thirds majority (no vote count is recorded).(15) The summary of the Black Caucus proposals was as follows:

> 1. The creation of a Black Affairs Council, which would speak for the black community, to be funded for a quarter of a million dollars annually for four years.
> 2. A continuing role for a Black Caucus within the denomination and our right to organize as blacks amongst ourselves.
> 3. Increasing the number of blacks on every decision-making board within the denomination.
> 4. Such radical alteration in the ministry program that the severe racism in this area would be wiped out.(16)

The Black Caucus then walked out of the plenary session without hearing reports by the three conference commissions. This second corporate move to reject procedures indicated an inconsistency in the stated Caucus directive, that is to work within the institution to implement change. This indicated the possibility of a consummate rejection which gave rise to the opinion that the Caucus' interest in deconstruction was not inclusive of reconstruction. After the conference had affirmed their right and power to confront the authoritative structures on their own terms, a hearing of the findings of other UU constituents would have informed the Caucus of attitudes, both conflicting and in accordance with coalition work.

For example, they did not hear the advocacy of discontent with "Unitarianese" presented by the Student Caucus report:

> If someone says, "We need help," don't call a meeting on Wednesday night to discuss it, and form a committee to meet Friday night to report to the Wednesday committee the following Tuesday to discuss whether we can help or not. Because by that time the crisis is over--either there has been a riot or somebody got screwed.(17)

The events of the "Emergency Caucus" generated a myriad of responses. The force of the separation had influenced the beginnings of transitional phases. As would be expected, a conflict was brewing. I offer a series of quotes recorded within the following two months:

Henry Hampton (Black UU Staff):

> It was as if I had never been black. It was as if the reality of my Black and Unitarian beings had never existed. It was as if I had come alive. To have been black and a member of the Black Caucus at the Unitarian Universalist Emergency Conference on the Black Rebellion was to undergo a basic and passionate change. For the first time I was a Unitarian Universalist and at one with my fellow liberals.(18)

Robert E. Jones (Black UU Minister):

> The Black Caucus, with its accompanying secrecy and discipline, distrust and hostility, was completely unnecessary in the context of a Unitarian Universalist gathering. Assembled in New York were white and Negroes who shared a common religious allegiance, and had long been workers in the civil rights and anti-poverty causes....And yet they were to be humiliated, in effect, kicked in the face by their black brothers. (19)

Jack Mendelsohn (White UU Minister):

> I must reluctantly confess that, had the Black Caucus not convened, created its mystique and traumatized the rest of us, we would inevitably have composed a bravely militant set of proposals which would have changed not one iota our familiar denominational racial routines." (20)

Joseph N. Ulman (White UU Editorial Staff Register Leader):

> Other white conferees (than the "outraged") approved the actions of the Black Caucus....basis of this reaction seemed to be "We've beaten on them for all these years; now let them beat on us for awhile." I am not sure that all white Unitarian Universalists need to feel that guilty. (21)

Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Nov. 10-12, 1967

In preparation for the Board meeting, Homer Jack sent a memorandum with recommendations that the Black Affairs Council proposal be endorsed and that adequate funding for the Council be instigated to facilitate preparation for presentation at the General Assembly scheduled in May.(22)

The Board of Trustees set aside the afternoon of the third day to conduct the special hearing of the Black Caucus Steering Committee. The two previous days were grueling sessions for the Board as they faced serious financial deficit due to insufficient contributions toward the Annual Fund and problems in organization. It was decided to reduce the following year's budget by over $300,000. This included difficult decisions in reorganization of the continental program, including the painful elimination of long-time staff members. (23)

The Black Caucus, strong with the October incentive, called again for unorthodox procedures, demanding that a commitment to give a concrete response be stated before the proposals were presented. This would bypass the familiar delays of further meetings, deliberations and extended studies. The Caucus wanted an answer that day. The Board firmly refused to take a position until the substance of the proposals were understood. Two hours later the Caucus coalesced and presented the report when the Board "agreed to consider to decide". The establishment of a Black Affairs Council, which would mobilize the talents of UU's white and black, for service and action under black leadership was stressed, along with the corollary proposals that had emerged from the conference (see above).

The Caucus left the room assuming a vote on their proposals. The response of the Board was to "direct the reorganization of the Commission on Religion and Race with a substantial participation in this reorganization of the Steering Committee of the Black Caucus to assist our churches and fellowships and the society of which we are a part." (24) In short, the Black Caucus was to be assimilated into existing structures, remaining in the power and beholden to procedural directives of a predominately white organization.

Swift confrontative action, which was to be the hallmark of the emergent Caucus, was taken. The next day Hayward Henry, elected chairperson of the Black Caucus Steering Committee, called a press conference to denounce the actions of the Board and to call UU churches and fellowships to withdraw their financial support from the UUA and contribute to the Black Caucus fund until the next General Assembly. This challenge was based on the belief that the Board's action did not reflect the feeling of most of the denomination.

> If this is their response, it's too little too late. it represents a traumatic blow to Black people both inside and outside of this denomination, not to mention its white liberal faction. The non-Black President of the Association, former civil rights advocate Dana Greeley, spearheaded this humiliating rejection of the proposal. We are the only organized Black group within this church, and we were hopeful that we could stop the traditional racist and paternalistic approach to Black problems in this denomination." (25) (For full document see Appendix C)

Dana Greeley, beloved galvanizer of the Selma crusade, and spokesperson of the <u>tradition</u> which supported his views and leadership, immediately responded to Hayward's action in a press release:

> We have long advocated an integrated society. We have demonstrated this by insisting upon integration in our churches and fellowships and in our homes. It is the temper of our Board that we would not today honor or give funds to any group which organized on purely racial lines. The Board has not abridged this principle for either blacks or whites.(26) (see Appendix D)

Around this time, the UUA Board of Trustees had sought consultation with Black psychologist Dr. Kenneth B. Clark. Dr. Clark's findings of the "emerging schism and the denomination's response to it" provided a nexus for the philosophy of UU traditionalists:

> My study of...the Emergency Conference on the Unitarian Response to the Black Rebellion leads me to the conclusion that the demands made by the Black Caucus are specific manifestations of a new racist thrust...they are implicitly and explicitly now asking

> for a racially separatist system. To deal with the Black Caucus with standards and criteria... that are different from those which would be used...in dealing with any other petitioning group would be the most insidious form of racial condescension. (27)

The issue of separatism was to be one of the cruxes, if not a red herring, of the controversy. The unrelenting claim by dissenters of BAC of separatism became weapons to diffuse evaluation of the concept of solidarity to enhance a new form of coalition work. The break in the ritual of "free inquiry" exposed the political inequities inherent in the UU assumption of an inclusive "common humanity". BAC advocates were prepared to work within the predominately white denomination to gain equal ground for black participation to further the cause of a pluralistic democracy presently dysfunctional by the forces of institutional racism.

The method of effrontery displayed by the Caucus, however, did reveal the danger of self-righteousness which would complicate the shared cause of mutual dignity. Response to the "too little too late" had an element of "too fast and too furious" tactics, which was evidence enough for dissenters of a disregard toward the integrationist vision of a common humanity and was seen as an act to dismantle the institution rather than reengage its principles. Some dissenters of BAC latched on to the fury, which infected both sides in a spiral of distrust and self-righteousness, crippling effects of transition toward newly formed coalitions.

Robert E. Jones sent a letter of protest when two members of the Black Caucus Steering Committee were invited to meet with the Commission on Religion and Race.

> ...The Black Caucus Steering Committee, by its shameful and shabby treatment of Dana Greeley and the denomination in its press conference....was evidence enough, if further evidence is needed, that the individuals who manipulated the Black Caucus

> do not have the best interest of this denomination in mind; but, rather, wish to disrupt and to wreck this liberal religious movement...I for one am not going to aid and abet them in their plans to subvert this denomination which has consistently been on the line for racial justice and brotherhood. (28)

The Commission on Region and Race met on November 29, 1967 inclusive of participation of two members of the Black Caucus Steering Committee. "A Message To Our Fellow Unitarian Universalists" was sent out as a result of the meeting. The newly formed Commission was to remain the modus operandus instead of instigating BAC. Deference was given, however, to the emergent Caucus with the caveat that pluralism would dictate institutional response:

> The Commission recognizes the right of Black Unitarian Universalists to form Black Caucuses in the denomination and in local societies on the assumption that they are not separatist in ultimate intent....The Commission recognizes, within the same pluralism, the prerogative of those Black Unitarian Universalists among us who want to pursue methods other than the Black Caucus to attain an inclusive society.(29)

The Commission authorized financing from the Freedom Fund to convene a National Conference of Black Unitarian Universalists "to determine the relevancy of a predominately white institution to its black constituency".(30) Members of the Black Caucus Steering Committee requested that the reformulation of the Commission be delayed until after this convention.

National Conference of Black Unitarian Universalists, Feb. 23-25, 1968

The conference was held in Chicago, in which 207 Black Universalists attended, constituting 203 official delegates, representing 600 Black UU's from every geographical section of the country. (31) The opening speech

by Hayward Henry, elected chairperson of the newly formed Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus (BUUC), set the tone which rang through the conference:

> There is nothing more tragic than an institution or nation which sleeps through a revolution. Let there be no mistake about it. There is going on in this country a revolution, a black revolution...Our presence here tonight is witness to that fact. Who would have thought but one year ago that black Unitarian Universalists would have dared to form into a caucus from which whites are excluded. But the peculiarity about the revolution we are experiencing is that great institutions, including our own church, find themselves "hung up".(32)

Henry urged a new tactic for this "hung up" church:

> Some of us talk about a new kind of relationship. Let us talk about a new kind of social strategy. Let us talk about defining a new issue for ourselves within the church for black people in the larger society....We are saying that our denomination must make a commitment to us as black people. They must exert a faith in us, but they must not tell us what to do. It is our resolute conviction that the problem of race relations in this country is a white problem. It is not a black problem. Therefore, we feel that we blacks who have the greatest expertise in blackness -- you see -- should be organizing and working in the black communities with blacks. (33)

The important emphasis is on "strategy", although the tenor in defining racism became a volatile area within the controversy. A differentiation between racism and institutional racism was needed to counter the danger of dysfunctional separatism. Hayward Henry's thrust was to confront the issue of power, freedom and leadership to attain a multi-racial society, claiming that Blacks and Whites must confront the racist society with differing agendas, according to their status of power, freedom and leadership within the larger community.

The Caucus drafted three decisions with an added vote of confidence "to join with sympathetic white radicals in an 'honest and candid'

examination of the problem of white racism". The decisions were to replace the Commission on Religion and Race with the Black Affairs Council (BAC), now defined as an integrated Black majority program agency elected by BUUC. BUUC would become permanent, made up of regional black caucuses to meet regularly in local churches gathering annually on a national basis. A general outline would be presented to the General Assembly in May with the request for funding of $250,000 a year to BAC for four years.(34)

In April, nine UU's, nominated by regional caucuses, were selected by the BUUC Steering Committee as members of The Black Affairs Council. Throughout its existence Council membership varied from nine to twelve. Three seats were reserved for non-Blacks, one for the national chairperson of BUUC and two for Black women.(35) In the May, 1968 edition of Caucus, the BUUC publication, the purpose of BAC was stated:

> BAC's primary function will be to seek out, receive, and judge proposals submitted by Black Caucuses, white Unitarian Universalists, indigenous community organizers for funding and organizational support. All programs will be those which are aimed at creating a sense of black unity, black consciousness, and black self-determination.(36)

Response of UUA Board and Staff, March 1968

Though the Commission on Religion and Race endorsed the National Conference, response to its edicts fell short of assumed advocacy. In accordance with business as usual, reorganization of the institutional structure took place under the new name of the Unitarian Universalist Commission for Action on Race. To answer the claim of BUUC that the Commission had not been relevant to Black needs, the Board claimed that inadequate funding had stunted its efficacy. The Freedom Fund was terminated with a call for a "Fund for Racial Justice Now" to be

established and administered by the new Commission. Homer Jack explained the actions of the Board in a fact paper, dated March 17, 1968:

> The rationale of the Administration and the Board for the establishment of this new Commission was chiefly that the Association could not forfeit its responsibility for organization and action in this field if it is indeed the highest denominational programmatic emphasis and the number one problem in the nation.(37)

"Forfeiting responsibility" clearly denotes fear of losing control. The Board was unwilling to relinquish leadership in race relations and proceeded to work its agenda, counter to the proposals brought forth by BUUC. W.H. Herbert of Alberta, Canada anticipated such a response in an article written in February of 1968. "...the established authorities," he wrote, "appear to have declared that there is a liberal dogma that is contravened by discussion between black people without white people being present."(38)

The action of the Board exposes an element of the inefficacy of espoused liberal principles locked in a prescriptive vision. The gestures of "respect", by allowing others to voice their opinion, does not guarantee authentic hearing. Liberals can affirm themselves by giving room for dissent and then go on, in token response to the invited opinion, with the coveted "business as usual". This points to class mystification, that is, the assumption that there is room enough for everyone to live within the experienced "success" of a way of life without reform. The assumption is that if it works for us it is what is best for you. Coming from a denomination that was 98% non-black, racism is inherent in this limited vision. Hayward Henry voiced the BUUC response in concluding that "White Power again wishes to co-opt the Black Movement, which is a traditional form of Liberal Racism."(39)

Division occurred within the Board and would continue to add to the tensions of the controversy. Rev. Mason McGinness wrote of a conspiracy to undermine the Board's efforts toward the new Commission, while Carleton Fisher acknowledged the racism inherent in the action. "What this says, of course" he wrote, "is that we of the 98% white majority insist on 'calling the shots', and we will not, in fact, give any decision-making powers to the black leadership." (40)

Formation of FULLBAC

A group of "sympathetic white radicals", referred to at the BUUC Conference, had already formed at the First Church in Los Angeles, home of the origin of BURR. This group, the Supporters of Black Unitarian Universalists for Radical Reform (SOBURR), took action directly after the Emergency Conference to organize white solidarity with the efforts of BURR. Their resolve to organize intensified after the actions of the UUA Board in November. In December, 1967, a Statement of purpose was issued to the UUA Board:

> Since racism is a disease of White Americans, we believe it is our responsibility as White Americans to do everything in our power to rid ourselves and our community of this malignant growth. (41)

In February, Ann Raynolds of Springfield Vermont wrote to Rev. Roy Ockert, an organizer of SOBURR, for guidance in forming a national white support network for BUUC and its agenda:

> I believe the formation of a White Radical Caucus in support of Black interests within the denomination should be organized as soon as possible. As I see it, the "issue", is being brought to focus in a microcosm of the total society. How or if whites respond will blaze a trail for white response in the society as a whole.(42)

This sentiment expressed the UU passion for being on the "cutting edge". The organizing initiative of the BUUC/BAC formula with white solidarity was seen as a tool for systemic deliverance from the paralyzing cancer of racism. The vision developing was that this new strategy could not only transform the denomination but that the denomination could provide a blazing trail for white society at large.

SOBURR contacted all societies and ministers to enlist support. On March 22, 1968, Rev. David B. Parke and Rev. Rudolph C. Gelsey, both from Philadelphia, proposed a continental group, "For Full Recognition and Funding of the Black Affairs Council" (FULLBAC), to assist in securing funding and support for BAC at the upcoming General Assembly. SOBURR advocated the group.

On the weekend of April 4, 1968, an ad hoc steering committee for FULLBAC met in Philadelphia. Temporary co-chairpersons were Jack Mendelsohn, a white member of BAC and minister of the Boston Arlington Street Church, Ann Raynolds, David Parke, and Leona Light (Beverly Hills). The meeting was in session when the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was announced. "As if by prearrangement," wrote Victor Carpenter, "black and white Unitarian Universalists separated. They would not come together until the pain of their grief had eased and they could return to the common cause of black empowerment." (43) A telling metaphor for the strategic aim envisioned toward healing a racially divided society.

FULLBAC members proceeded to mobilize endorsement through publications and letters, in preparation for the General Assembly. FULLBAC envisioned a cooperative relationship with BAC, BUUC, the UUA and sympathetic groups and individuals, for the "empowerment of black people

as embodying the basic Unitarian Universalist principles of individual responsibility and participatory democracy" (44)." FULLBAC became increasingly critical of the Board throughout the controversy. In some ways this hampered its efficacy in activating institutional reform.

Formation of BAWA

There were others, Black and White alike, who had a different view on how to embody the basic UU principles of individual responsibility and participatory democracy. Rev. Donald Harrington, White minister of The Community Church of New York and Cornelius McDougald met in conference sometime in March of 1968, alarmed by the emerging BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC movement. Their main concern was that the agenda that had been determined during the BUUC Conference would be the only proposal submitted for approval at the upcoming General Assembly. Aware of other UU's who had expressed their dissent of the emerging movement in letters and publications, they agreed to form a group advocating an alternative approach to BUUC/BAC.(45)

It is important to note that The Community Church of New York had been considered a UU model for integration, with substantial Black membership, many in leadership roles. Because of the work and ministry at Community Church of Rev. John Haynes Holmes (1919-1949), one of the white co-founders of the NAACP in 1909, integrationist efforts and gradualist tactics were deemed successful within a majority of this community. Rev. Harrington, Holmes' predecessor, having served as assistant minister with Holmes since 1944, became the leading force in the BAWA movement. The models of Frederick Douglass and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. bolstered the proclaimed imperative for blacks and whites to work together within the

established system to implement the dream of democratic justice for the human community.

Rev. Harrington sent a letter, dated April 26, 1968, to Homer Jack of the Department of Social Responsibility. He posited that encouraging "a black-white confrontation which may very well end in a polarization of blacks and whites in the Denomination and make further integration far more difficult." Rallying scientific justification (to piggy-back Dr. Clark's findings), he cited Margaret Mead's call for "gradual integration of the educated Negro into all realms of the majority society". Harrington advocated a program in which "Blacks and Whites Together" work for radical reform. It is important to note the inherent contradiction between the advocacy for gradualism and radical reform. Homer Jack responded that the combination of BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC could be a closely knit radical reform of "Blacks and Whites Together" (46).

Nevertheless, Rev. Harrington was convinced that the emerging BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC formula threatened the "most fundamental liberal and democratic principles". He viewed BAC, elected by BUUC, as "a tokenist front" to a separatist movement.(47) Among proponents of BAWA were Jeanette Hopkins and Robert E. Jones, outspoken dissenters at the Biltmore Conference. Robert E. Jones articulated a sentiment held by followers of BAWA. "Are we going to give up on integration so soon and with so short a trial?" (48) Jones had found integration to work for him, but it is striking that he would consider over a century of integrationist efforts as 'so short a trial'. The Honorable Wade H. McCree, Jr., a Black member of the Board of Trustees, became a strong advocate of BAWA:

> I refuse to permit anyone to infect me with the virus of racial pride because I know it would turn out to be a cancer which would destroy my spirit, my physical self, and the world in which I live. (49)

For stalwart supporters of the ideals of liberalism, Black and White, who had entered the mainstream within the democratic system, the 'world in which they lived' was indeed being challenged. BAWA, in its advocacy of UU tradition, became increasingly supportive and influential with the Board throughout the controversy, thereby increasing its efficacy in promoting the status quo.

A letter soliciting membership and donations, signed by Cornelius McDougald and Rev. Harrington was distributed nationwide. At first, the name BAWA was an acronym for "Black and White Alternative". As the General Assembly approached, however, "alternative" became problematic, not only because uninformed readers would not know what it was an alternative to, but also because, to informed readers, it could be deemed simply as a "spoiler" to BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC, which would give it the quality of a reactive organization rather than an active organization. Thus, the acronym became known as "Black and White Action". Eight "program possibilities" were offered, with the following statement of purpose:

> To provide an independent denominational agency in which those Black and White Unitarian Universalists who desire to pursue a radical program of action for equality within the Unitarian Universalist Church and our American Society at large can work together as equals. (50)

By May the Board of Trustees urged applications for affiliate status of both BAWA and BAC in preparation for the General Assembly, where overall policy would be determined. No official action on affiliation occurred before the Assembly.

The defiance of the UU ritual displayed at the "Emergency Conference" generated critical awareness of UU principles. The conflict to unfold would engage the critique, revealing disparate agenda and divergences in response to context and communities of accountability.

CHAPTER III: CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES

Cleveland General Assembly, May 24-26, 1968

The time had come to determine the quality of institutional commitment toward the type of leadership that would be most effective in combatting systemic racism, the proclaimed number one priority of the UUA. The BUUC/BAC proposal provided the point of contention. Victor Carpenter, in his MINNS Lectures, characterized the debate that was unfurling. The BAWA Prospectus, distributed two weeks before the Assembly, claimed "We don't have to 'be black'. We don't have to 'be white'. We are free to be individual human beings united in a common human struggle to create a life of dignity and peace."(1) The thrust of the argument was that race should not be a factor in promoting the ideals of individuality, with the supposition of equal choice in the 'common human struggle' of society. Rev. Parke of FULLBAC, on the other hand, took issue with the established idealism. "Racism in America," he writes, "perpetuates injustice in the name of equality, exploitation in the name of impartiality, and segregation in the name of selectivity."(2)

Hours of discussion were devoted to this issue in the first plenary session. John Hines spoke for the Board of Trustees, Hayward Henry for BAC, David Parke for FULLBAC and Cornelius McDougald for BAWA. In the following two days, tensions increased as supporters of BAC and supporters of BAWA competed to rally delegates. The UUA Board met the morning before the plenary session in which a vote would be cast on the BUUC/BAC proposal. They rescinded their action to establish a Commission for Action on Race, and devised a proposal to fund both BAC and BAWA after each established affiliate status. The Annual Fund goal would be set for

$300,000, $250,000 of which would be designated to BAC and $30,000 to BAWA. The minutes do not specify how BAWA became part of the agenda.(3)

At the critical plenary session, a "Committee of the Whole" was instigated as a forum for the Trustees and BAC to present the two proposals. Members of BAC and FULLBAC adamantly opposed the inclusion of BAWA in the Trustees' proposal. It appeared as a direct affront on Black leadership; a dispersal, in the name of pluralism, of a needed unified commitment. After four hours of debate, the moderator moved to end the Committee of the Whole and reconvene into a regular session. Immediately, a motion to vote on the BAC proposal was made. A swift second motion was made to close the debate, precluding amendments. The vote was cast in favor of BAC, 836-327, inclusive of the mandate for funding of $250,000 over a four year period.(4) The remaining funds of this ambitious annual fund drive for $300,0000 would be allocated to development of Theological Schools and Educational Curricula. BAWA was not included in the funding.

After the vote, Cornelius McDougald addressed the Assembly, saying, "We had a good fight that resulted in an overwhelming expression of the denomination, and I wish Hayward Henry and the Black Affairs Council good luck."(5) This comment has the flavor of a "good loser" and implies the relinquishment of participation, a relinquishment that this emerging methodology could ill afford.

Hayward Henry responded, tempering the "good fight" reference:

> Let us not leave here divided; and let us not leave here with hate, because it is hard sometimes to decide what is a victory and what is a defeat...the beginning is yet to be made, for this is an experiment. You must understand that - and we must be flexible in this experimental approach.(6)

Dana Greeley made a statement to the press regarding the decision:

> It is now up to us to respect the initiative for the leadership of the Black Caucus for its own values and its own purposes and

simultaneously to work black and white together in every enterprise that we can launch for our common concern.(7)

And yet the "good fight" was to continue. Don Harrington, in response to the defeat of BAWA, threatened to withdraw the Community Church of New York's financial support of the UUA, with an implication that the Church may even withdraw its membership altogether. Financial coercion exercised by both sides remained a disarming element throughout the controversy, as monies both express and embody power struggles. Joseph Fischer, Moderator of the UUA urged Harrington to temper his reaction, both in response to the democratic principle of majority rule and in his appeal to "allow the dust to settle for awhile".(8) No removal of support or membership took place.

As delegates returned to their own societies, understanding of the new directive varied. Substantive communication and advocacy was necessary to accentuate the urgency of contributing to the cause for denominational response. Added to a confusion of issues in the heat of emotional response, many delegates lacked clarity in articulating the vision laid forth at the Assembly.

Board Meeting, June 1968

Affiliate status of BAC was necessary to implement the policy mandated by the Cleveland Assembly. BAWA also applied at this time. Affiliate status is accepted by the Board upon application, inclusive of an attested copy of its charter, purposes, objectives, and bylaws, proof of tax exempt status, and a minimal annual contribution.

At the time of affiliation for BAC, there was a non-segregation clause that would cause legal problems in accepting the organization. BAC, though an integrated Black majority group, was controlled by BUUC, an

unaffiliated exclusively Black organization. Article III, section 7.4 read that "each affiliate member shall in respect of its work refrain from the practice of segregation based on race and color." Counsel Frank Fredericks brought up the legal discrepancy, and after considerable discussion, an amending clause was installed:

> This rule is not intended to preclude those affiliates designed to benefit special interest groups whose past exclusion from the larger society warrants organizing around a "special interest" of race or color, in order to insure their full participation in the total society.(9)

This amendment was a hopeful sign that serious efforts were being made to incorporate the new directive by expanding the perimeters of the established order. And yet there was clear evidence of resistance. BAC attained affiliate status with five dissenting votes and one abstention. BAWA's application for affiliate membership was unanimously approved with two abstentions.(10) BAC was instructed not to seek denominational funding outside of the Annual Fund. BAWA was also instructed not to compete with the Annual Fund. BAC was awarded an initial $150,000. The additional funding would be raised throughout the year, with the promise that any deficit would be covered by the endowment should the fund drive fail. There was no guarantee, however, that this procedure would continue after June 30, 1969.(11) The Board would not instigate the four year program mandated by the General Assembly, but rather imposed a yearly review of the experiment for future funding.

It must be remembered that the UUA was in serious financial difficulties to begin with. The idealistic charge to raise $300,000, $250,000 of which would go to BAC was an enormous task, countering historical inability to raise sufficient funds for the Annual Drive. For years the endowment fund had been dipped into to answer enthusiastic

budget proposals and so there was little leeway for compensation if contributions to the Annual Fund did not substantially increase. Funding toward a centralized power had been a perennial problem in light of voluntary consensus. Infighting on the local level, see-sawing of the Board of Trustees and inconsistent communication would also prove detrimental to the raising of funds.

Additionally, as BAWA was not granted funding from the Annual Fund, funding was sought through a membership drive within the denomination. It was realistic to assume that this would cut into the Annual Fund priority. Dayton T. Yoder, Vice President for Development, saw this conflict of interest and reported the difficulties to the Board, but nothing was changed at this time.

The BUUC/BAC Experiment Begins

Richard Traylor and Henry Hampton provided a definition for BUUC in a press release dated September 10, 1968. As a field staff for BAC, the responsibilities of BUUC were to submit proposals to BAC that would reflect the black communities in their areas, participate in implementing funded programs and act as a liaison between BAC and the black communities to evaluate and determine priorities(12).

The go-ahead given by the Cleveland General Assembly indicated that the BUUC/BAC priority was to its "own people". BAC defined "black community" as "an inclusive term which extends to both black persons and persons of other ethnic origins...and contemplates the elevations of all persons...in areas both in the United States and Canada whose needs require the attention of our programs."(13) The innovative denominational fiscal response mandated by the General Assembly attracted

many proposals. By the press release, BAC had already received 60 proposals for funding.(14) The urgency of instigating a prophetic mission for the Black community and attending to internal organization, mixed with tendencies of resentment toward the institution in which they had chosen to use as a vehicle, promised a rocky road toward coalition work. This conflict of interest was paralleled by resentment of traditionalists who ironically rebelled against unorthodox procedures.

BAC and the Administration had communication difficulties from the start. Dayton Yoder had requested a brochure from BAC to use as part of the Annual fund drive which did not arrive by the August 15 mailing deadline. Yoder delayed the mailing until September 6 with no word from BAC. He then proceeded to work out funding initiatives, including a grant proposal to the Ford Foundation. Henry Hampton wrote a letter in response, protesting the acquisition of outside funds without consultation with BUUC. Hampton also expressed alarm at the BAWA national membership fund drive within the denomination which violated the order against separate fund raising. Yoder acknowledged the competitive drive but "had no power to stop it".(15) Difficulties of communication and of definition internally and interactively continued to prove detrimental to the experiment, necessarily dependent on mutuality of purpose. Though Yoder did acknowledge that these initial problems of communication reflected the natural difficulty involved in incorporating a new directive.

At BUUC's second annual meeting in Detroit in February, 1969, BAC presented its first annual report with preliminary funding guidelines. Four local funding programs described were the Superior Area Community Action Program in Cleveland, Soul Generation in Syracuse, Ghetto Training Center in Philadelphia, and Black "P" Stone Nation in Chicago. The

National Campaign for Political Education and the Welfare Rights Organization were among the national programs funded.(16) Organizational difficulties on the local and national level were an issue voiced at the meeting. Formal action to address these problems would not be taken until the following year.

FULLBAC'S INPUT

As BUUC/BAC focused its energies towards the Black community, FULLBAC was to focus its energies in implementing action programs within the White community to rally support for BAC.

Harry Hohler, member of FULLBAC and director of the UU Laymen's League, and Homer Jack circulated among UU societies the July 1968 paper on "White Racism" compiled by the World Council of Churches in Uppsala. One of the tasks taken on by FULLBAC was to define White racism in an effort to conscientize Whites of the implicit, historical systemization of racism within a predominately White denomination.

Racism was defined in this paper as "ethnocentric pride in one's own racial group... (that generates) strong negative feelings towards other groups... (with a) thrust to discriminate against and exclude the outgroup from full participation in the life of the community."(17)

White racism was then given a specific definition:

> "the conscious or unconscious belief in the inherent superiority of persons of (primary Northern) European ancestry, which entitles all white peoples to a position of dominance and privilege, coupled with the belief in the innate inferiority of all darker peoples...(having) special historical significance because its roots lie in powerful, highly developed countries...."(18)

FULLBAC consequently circulated a letter "Toward a Definition of Racism" which differentiated prejudice (or individual racism) from

institutional racism. Because of the strong emphasis on individualism, this differentiation was an attempt to alert well-meaning white liberals, incensed by the accusations of racism, to the systemic injustice inherent in a predominately white power base.

> Part of the problem of liberals is that our individualistic background makes us more comfortable in talking about love than about power, but the question of power and its redistribution comes to the heart of the matter...The most painful and unfortunate part of the process of power and its redistribution is that we are implicated in the system and profit from it... even as persons of good will and good intent, at every point in which we are caught up in present patterns of institutional structure and behavior which must be challenged and changed.(19)

At the First Continental Conference of FULLBAC in March, 1969, Robert Hohler called for a commitment to "the revolutionary church" with help from youth and women's organizations within the denomination. Though warnings were voiced at the Cleveland General Assembly toward the uneasy workings of an experiment, action toward reconciliation was overridden by the seduction of battle mentality. Substantive attention was given to criticism of the denominational leadership, increasing alienation from the Board. It was decided that FULLBAC would not endorse presidential candidates in the upcoming elections, hindering FULLBAC advocates Aaron Gilmartin and Carleton Fischer, who were running for election. Furthermore, a proposal made by Fred McConkey to negotiate with BAWA was defeated. David Parke protested that FULLBAC should make "no covenant with the enemies of the Black revolution".(20) Creating offensive postures in dialogue with sources within the denomination that hindered the "revolutionary church" was a political error and inconsistent with the call for conscientization toward experimental coalition work. Focusing outward toward "enemies", in passion for the Black Caucus, hindered the necessary work of focusing inward toward white identity for dynamic

interdependence. At the April 19, 1969 FULLBAC Steering Committee meeting, Richard Nash contributed to a focus on self identity to alleviate the confusion he observed in the proposed relationship with black organizations.

> It is often assumed that white people have a positive self-image. If this were true, they would not have had to deprive the black man his identity. It is because white people have not had a positive identity that they have not been able to let black people have it either. With the rise of black pride and the independent assertion of his worth, the black man threatens the symbiotic relationship white men have had with him. That is why we resist black power.(21)

There was indication, however, that given time to work out rough edges, the BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC coalition could work. A model example occurred in Boston, the sight arranged for the upcoming General Assembly of July 1969. The Boston Statler Hilton was booked to house the Assembly. In November of 1969 BUUC chapter members approached FULLBAC chapter members to examine the discriminatory hiring practices of the Statler Hilton. FULLBAC joined forces with the Episcopal Diocese of Boston, The Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Massachusetts Committee Against Discrimination and the UUA Administration to effect a change in the hiring practices. Over a period of seven months, an acceptable situation was achieved by consensus and the General Assembly could meet as planned.(22) The BUUC directive, in concerns for the black community, was effectively responded to by the efforts of FULLBAC in coalition with institutions, to take action against white racism. Each worked with their own constituency to cooperatively effect a desired change.

Another example of coalition, dispelling the "separatist" and "racist" charges made by integrationists, was attested to in a letter to the General Assembly written by Jack A. Kent, White Minister of the First

Unitarian Church of Chicago.

> In the Church which I serve...we have had a Black Caucus meeting regularly since November, 1967 and their intent is not separatist...The Black Caucus has been an invaluable asset to us in every aspect of our church life. In fact, it has led an already integrated church to a new level of openness and honesty in all matters of religion and race. This has led us to a vital responsive and responsible integration. This cannot be racist.(23)

BAWA'S INPUT

BAWA met at the Cleveland General Assembly, to elect co-chairpersons and define its mission, in the belief that the BUUC/BAC experiment would lead to a separatist format that could not be reconciled. Max Gaebler, a white co-chairperson, emphasized that the focus should be on BAWA priorities so as not to form simply as a counter to BAC. "Yet," he added, "we cannot forget our uneasiness as to future intentions of those who effectively gained control of the Cleveland General Assembly".(24) Additionally, he stressed active participation by non-listed officers to influence the upcoming elections for the UU Trustees and President. The "control" was seen by BAWA members to have been gained through coercion and intimidation, "disrespectful" tactics that would undermine the institution.

To emphasize the "separatist" accusations, BAWA accented family divisions. Marcia McBroom Landess of BAWA, a born and bred Black UU and teenager at the time, poignantly experienced this dimension by observing her father "on the other side".(25) References to interracial marriages were used to argue Caucus tactics. BAWA also emphasized the "outsider" dynamic of BUUC/BAC, pointing out that a number of BUUC constituents were new to the UU movement. According to BAWA, UU's had to work together as one big happy family in order to survive.

Yet, it would appear that the "family" by a 70% majority rule had opted for BUUC/BAC. As family members, the responsibility toward democratic procedures would be to give credence to the experiment. The intricacies of democratic procedures, however, also allows for the right of dissent and for each member to be afforded their own contribution. BAWA chose to galvanize their dissent and obstruct the experiment.

The priorities of BAWA developed over the next year were to oppose racial separation, encourage local action within the denomination and summon the UUA Board and Administration to provide leadership and re-direction. (26)

The process of assimilation into the established "family" was the operative. This was officially articulated in "Project Papers" published over a year later. The fourth project paper entitled "How To Integrate Racially a Unitarian Universalist Church or Fellowship" clearly illustrates the strategy. The purpose of the paper was to "achieve a model of inter-group living that would command emulation and genuine respect throughout our society".(27) Immediately one should ask who should emulate who and what constitutes "our society". Secondly there was the assumption the "white people could get inside the psyches of black people...identifying with them in their situations of trial".(28) Although this is marginally possible in identifying with suffering, it is dangerously evident of the paternalistic assumption that one can know what is best for others. Thirdly, traditional UU paternalism is starkly revealed by a caption written in bold print: ARE NEGROES READY FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM?. The following statement is offered:

> Negroes are not necessarily more emotional or less rational in their theology than members of any other race or ethnic group. In every community there are many Negroes who could become interested in Unitarian Universalists...they (Negroes) are eager

> to participate when they are made welcome and their friendship is desired....Let your eyes say to the black visitor, "We see you; we want you to feel welcome here; let us know you better". (29)

BAWA also rallied the Board's hesitancy to relinquish control on the issue of allocating funds to BAC. Constituents claimed that this was a "white guilt" gesture of "giving at the office" and absolve the denomination of a sense of responsibility.(30) And yet the experiment was challenging the response-ability of the denomination to give power over to Black constituents prepared to take action in disinherited communities, with correlating advocacy programs.

A BAWA Newsletter, with the byline "BAWA believes in Beauty And Worth In All" was first published out of Oakland California in May of 1969. Betty Seiden, a Black UU who was executive secretary and editor of the Newsletter, replied to an enquiry letter from Richard Gilbert, member of FULLBAC, who had read about strategies in the May 1969 Newsletter, that may coincide with FULLBAC efforts. "As for strategy," she replied, "I don't think we're planning any! We're just keeping the faith."(31) This reflects the image continually generated by BAWA of the "keepers of the faith" at odds with the disruptive strategies of BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC.

Donald Harrington wrote a letter dated April 3, 1969 to the BAWA leadership suggesting the strategy of endorsing Robert N. West for the presidency and urged that equal funding be proposed for BAC and BAWA in the spirit of endorsing diversity of opinion.(32) Increased advocacy of "business as usual" proved a formidable obstruction to BAC initiators.

Board Straddling the Fence

What was more disruptive, however, to the experiment was the conciliatory actions of the Board of Trustees. "UUA Officialdom", states

the 1983 Committee on Appraisal, "was perceived by both BAWA and BUUC as attempting the contortionist's trick of straddling the fence while keeping both ears to the ground"(33) The conservative response of the Board, giving more credence to diversity of opinion than to the majority-rule imperative for unified action, fed both the claims of racism by BUUC/BAC supporters in their hesitancy and the claims of BAWA supporters that the hesitancy was due to intimidation.

At the May Board meeting, the Finance Committee reported a $385,000 deficit. It was imperative to reduce funding in programs. A motion to reduce BAC funding $200,000, met opposition by the Administration and was overruled by a 7-5 vote. Cuts in Theological Schools and Educational Curriculum were discussed. Then the Board, without Administration sanction voted that in addition to the BAC funding, $50,000 should be awarded to BAWA. The vote recorded was 13-5, although there were only 16 members present. There is no explanation of the discrepancy in numbers.(34) BAWA became part of the Business Agenda to be presented at the Boston General Assembly. With a looming deficit it is hard to reconcile how the Board moved for additional funds for an affiliate that had not been sanctioned by the Assembly. Clearly the Board refused to honor the Cleveland directive, a gesture to dispel institutional advocacy of the BAC initiative.

Black Power was gaining voice in society at large. On May 4, 1969, James Forman recited the "Black Manifesto" at Riverside Church calling for $500,000,000 of reparations to the Black communities from Christian Churches. The term reparations was adopted in UU discussions of BUUC/BAC. Homer Jack commented that BUUC had pre-empted Forman's call. "Through pressures of BUUC and FULLBAC we Unitarian Universalists in 1968 pioneered

in the area (if not quite the magnitude) of reparations grants"(35). However, the enthusiasm of Black Power increased the strategy of confrontation which caused alarm among those of the establishment. Dana Greeley deemed the militant tactics "unfortunate" and hoped that "in some orderly fashion a more effective result might be produced." Greeley had expanded his rhetoric, however, to include some of the language of the emergent movement. "It is absolutely necessary, "he continued,"we raise money and change the social psychology for black empowerment."(36) It is important to wonder whose social psychology Greeley was referring to, especially in light of the President's Report he was to make at the Boston General Assembly.

Boston General Assembly, A House Divided, July 1969

It must be remembered that a majority of UU societies were in suburban areas, not directly involved with the urgent cry known and activated in urban centers. The BUUC/BAC/FULLBAC and BAWA voices were being disseminated erratically, and by the time of the Boston General Assembly, delegates still had varying understandings of the issues involved.

Dana Greeley gave his farewell president's report on July 14. He alluded directly and indirectly to the divisions deepening in the denomination. He spoke directly to the financial issues. With his habitual optimism he summoned applause as he spoke of a new high in the Annual Fund drive. He then added that the dream goal had not been met and though the outcome was 17% higher than the year before, a substantive deficit remained. He then pointed to the unwillingness of 7 of the societies with the largest budgets to give, labelling the serious cut

backs as a result of "anti-BAC and pro-BAC churches", with a connecting statement, implicating the BAC issue by association, that 9 other large churches gave less than the previous year.(37) The omission of BAWA is telling. BAC was singled out as the despoiler of the Annual Fund, whereas BAWA, the force within the "anti-BAC churches", was afforded invisible status, thereby implying a victim's role in the disruption. Integrationist concerns were not named as a problem, and yet BAWA continually appeared as part of the Board's agenda, even without sanction by the Administration or the General Assembly. Its unnamed disruptive influence gave BAWA the image of respectable dissent, a dissent to be tolerated and encouraged in the context of democracy.

Greeley revealed the major stumbling block toward effective involvement in the experiment near the end of his speech:

> I am an institutionalist. I know that in spite of re-actionary radicals and re-actionary conservatives all over the years, the denomination (our institution) has managed to preserve a fairly consistent liberal, and boldly liberal stance. I believe in liberals working together. (38)

The phrase "liberals working together" gave implicit credence to BAWA rhetoric.

The issue of funding BAC and BAWA was not to be addressed until the third day of business. BUUC/BAC and FULLBAC members saw this as diverting attention from the number one priority of race relations. After the first Official Business Session, BAC forced the issue of the proposed agenda, calling for alternative rules of procedure to confront the funding issues of BAC and BAWA. The vote to change tallied at 710 for and 536 against, short of the two-thirds majority needed to alter procedures. By prearrangement, members of BUUC, FULLBAC and the Continental Liberal Religious Youth took possession of the pro and con microphones.

Overtaking these stations of power in the Assembly was again a symbolic move toward anti-structure embodying the deep frustration of BAC advocates at not being heard, nor taken seriously as a vital part of denominational affairs. The "take-over" proved counter-productive, as delegates were outraged by the effrontery to democratic procedures. Additionally, as radical individualists, many delegates were appalled by this collective coercion and, feeling personally affronted, refused to respond. Hayward Henry spoke at this time, challenging the denomination to "fund BAC or BAWA but not both! If funding of BAWA is voted," he continued, "BAC will accept nothing. We have been telling the Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees this for nine months and nothing has been done to correct the situation." (39). No resolve occurred during that session.

The following day a motion to change the agenda was again brought forth and voted down. Immediately, BUUC members walked out of the Assembly. Next on the agenda was a forum for presidential candidates. Members of FULLBAC and BAC left to meet with BUUC members in a hotel suite. FULLBAC members returned by the end of the candidate's forum. Jack Mendelsohn came to the speaker's platform and addressed the Assembly:

> The spirit of Cleveland has been diminished...Our Black delegates of BAC have now left the room. They have left this Assembly, and they have left our movement, because life and time are short and running out very swiftly, and because the Assembly is returning to business as usual and to the position of Black people at the back of the bus. (40)

At this accusation an outburst of rage and protest ensued. Mendelsohn declared he would join BUUC/BAC a block away at the Arlington Street Church and invited others to join him. Approximately four hundred delegates and visitors walked out to gather at the Arlington Church. This

show of white solidarity helped to keep BUUC members within the denomination. The "walk-out" enraged remaining delegates, intensifying the image of a dissident, splinter group unraveling the association.

The group at the Arlington Street Church named themselves the "Moral Caucus". There was no plan of action at this time. People came forth to testify and discuss the possible future of this newly formed caucus.

Meanwhile, the constituency who stayed at the Biltmore were alarmed by the substantive removal of members of the delegation. The threat of division intensified the confusion and consternation. Max Gaebler, then co-chairperson of BAWA recalled the Boston General Assembly as "the absolute nadir of the whole controversy." He was particularly incensed by the nomenclature "Moral Caucus". This name brought up the image, he said of "people who feel that they have morality on their side, they have the pipeline to God and the the rest of us are somehow cast in the darkness."(41) The pitch of self-righteousness and spiral of fury and jealousy had indeed entered the arena to such a degree that the denomination was on the brink of a crippling division.

A small delegation from the Assembly went to Arlington Church to request a return to continue the proceedings. Upon return, Kelton Sams, vice-chairperson of BUUC brought the issue once again to the floor. The motion to fund either BAC or BAWA was adopted by a vote of 798 to 737. The following motion to fund BAC alone was also adopted. No voting tally was included in the minutes.(42) The closeness of the vote was evidence that the Cleveland directive was losing ground.

Robert Nelson West, endorsed by BAWA leadership, was elected by a substantial vote as second president of the UUA. Part of his campaign speech did include the promise to obtain the remaining $750,000 for BAC

over the next three years. A motion was passed that affiliate agencies had to be audited. BUUC/BAC argued that this was further proof of distrust in their operations and claimed the new directive was racist. It was unreasonable to assume, however, that asking for accountability was racist. If BUUC/BAC was to work within the denomination, the denomination would need such information to continue its advocacy. The resistance to accountability strengthened BAWA's position that BUUC/BAC wanted to "take the money and run". Eventually BAC did find an acceptable auditing firm, Milton B Creamer & Company of Philadelphia and financial statements for 1969 and 1970 were made available for the UUA.(43)

During the week of the Assembly, FULLBAC and other members of the "Moral Caucus" met to discuss the redistribution of power within the denomination. A new group, "Fellowship For Renewal" was organized. FULLBAC merged with FFR.

At this Assembly, BAWA elected an Executive Committee. Glover W. Barnes and Max D. Gaebler were elected co-chairpersons with Donald Harrington and Cornelius McDougald as honorary co-chairpersons. The Executive Committee consisted of two whites, two blacks, and one Native American. Robert West attended the BAWA dinner and praised the group for determination toward inclusiveness, advocating the drive to obtain funds for its program. Judging from the close vote of the assembly and the election of Robert West, the view was that the form of racial relations was heading back to the established method and that discontentment was growing toward the confrontation tactics used by BAC and its advocates. Continued efforts would be made to gain funding from the Administration, knowing in part, that if BAWA got funding, BAC would disaffiliate.

BUUC took action at the General Assembly to form an Ad Hoc Directions

Committee that would assess the dysfunctional properties within the organization. While they contributed some of the fall-out of delegate support to the obstructive nature of the Board, Administration and BAWA, they also recognized that organizational difficulties had weakened their abilities to powerfully instigate their programs.

Problems in communication between elected personnel, constituency and the larger Black Liberation movement were identified. A lack of understanding about the interrelationship between BUUC and BAC was found, as advocacy for movement outside UU societies increased. Lack of programs in local caucuses was due to insufficient funds, an insufficient volunteer pool, and the inability to agree, as individualists, on a single course of action. It was determined, also, that the staff was overextended.(44) Leadership training was recommended and a change in operations implemented. Press releases became more frequent, a newsletter called BUUCvine began to circulate. Louis Gothard was appointed administrative consultant to BAC and Jules Ramey was elected field director to coordinate program development.

Measures were taken to implement an economic development program, not to be confused with the operating budget, for Black Humanist programs. In December 1969 BAC Bonds were announced. The Bonds would mature in ten years with 5% interest, to assure continuation of programs after the 1 million dollar allotment from the UUA. The Bond program was promoted by a "road show" entitled "Unitarianism in Black Affairs". Richard Traylor, Benjamin Scott and Hayward Henry began visiting UU societies to promote the plan and increase education toward BAC affairs.(45)

BAC DISENGAGES FROM CENTRAL POWER STRUCTURES

The Board was faced with the Boston directive to continue full funding for BAC. At the November 19,1969 meeting, facing a crippling deficit, the decision was made to reduce the funding to $200,000 with the promise that the first $50,000 received exceeding the additional responsibilities of the Annual Fund Drive would be allocated to BAC. The theory given was that the allocation of 1 million dollars, passed by two General Assemblies, would occur in five years instead of four. Members of FFR tried to have the Board reinstate the $50,000 in the January Board meeting, however the November decision held. BAC again saw the Board as attempting to disperse energies from the directive of Black leadership. Additionally, as grants had been allocated and further attention to organization called for staff members, the cut would cause problems in furthering the cause.

At the Third Annual BUUC meeting in February 1970, the decision was made for BAC to disaffiliate from the UUA. Extensive explanation for the disaffiliation was recorded in BAC's Annual Report, dated February 20, 1970. Disaffiliation was an act not to leave the denomination, but to "send a message loud and clear" that BAC was disengaging the control exercised by the Board of Trustees.

> At no point has the UUA Board of Directors acted as a partner...From November, 1967 through to the present time, they have contrived to either not recognize us, to co-opt us, or have simply provided constant impediments to our efforts...in the reduction of BAC's budget...the UUA Board of Directors is once again involved in a typical racist, institutional action, letting us know that "the man" still has the upper hand. (46)

On March 30, 1970, BAC sent official word of disaffiliation to the Board which was accepted at the April Board meeting. Disaffiliation with the Board gave BAC the opportunity to seek independent funding. This

could allow for promotion of voluntary consensus among member societies, which they believed was present, to further the cause. BAC announced a "May 26th Empowerment Fund" drive, commemorating the Cleveland Directive, to appropriate the remaining $50,000 needed to continue operations.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOLVE DISSIPATES

BUUC/BAC boycotted the June, 1970 Seattle General Assembly, however their absence was influence enough for advocates to raise $13,000 for the "May 26th Empowerment Fund", which had a goal of $550,000.(47)

BAWA did not make any significant strides at the Assembly. What was most striking was that Andrew Young, originally scheduled to speak at a BAWA dinner, cancelled his engagement in early June. He expressed in a letter that he felt he would be "embroiled in intradenominational tensions" and that his appearance would be "potentially divisive and counter productive to the struggle my sisters and brothers are waging". He added that "it is not my desire to be used in this fashion". (48).

The Board's balanced budget was adopted at the Seattle General Assembly, exclusive of funding for BAC and BAWA.

In the proceeding years, BUUC/BAC, with the help of the FFR, and BAWA, with implicit help from traditionalist advocacy, vied for advocacy and funds within the denomination. BUUC/BAC and BAWA each justified their positions in response to national Black Empowerment and Integrationist movements, respectively.

The Board and Administration, and, at times, advocates of BAC and of BAWA sought reconciliation, which was consistently cut short or found incompatible to one of the sides. Funding initiatives were occasionally implemented through denominational channels, though never enough for any

emergent movement to be significantly revitalized. Eventually, the BAC bonds program acquired $701,000, short of the million dollar goal.(49) Financial pressures constantly hindered organizational initiatives for both BUUC/BAC and BAWA. By Spring of 1982, the final bond payments were made and BAC was out of the picture. BAWA, after years of funding problems to the point of falling short of the yearly affiliation fee, disaffiliated in 1981.(50)

Attention in the denomination increased focus on peace initiatives in response to the Vietnam War, feminism and gay/lesbian rights, issues that intimately affected a large enough number of constituents. No institutional action toward a unified commitment for racial justice was to be realized. The denomination remains predominately a white "middle strata" association. Current estimates denote approximately 2-5% of any other ethnic contribution than Anglo-Saxon in terms of membership and leadership.

The conditions of poverty, discrimination and racism in the world community are atleast the same, if not worse, than at the time of this controversy. The Unitarian Universalist institutional contribution to the ideal of a diversified world community founded on equity, justice and compassion is far from being realized.

> We were the first denomination to act on behalf of black empowerment; we were the first denomination to turn our backs on black empowerment. - Henry Hampton (51)

CONCLUSION

But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than to fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their current turn awry
And lose the name of action.

---- William Shakespeare (Hamlet, III,i)

Hamlet's soliloquy addressing the fear of death also renders fear of taking action that will effect change. If authentic change occurs, people, visions and social situations change in ways that cannot possibly, if all are equal contributors, be known. The "Black Empowerment Controversy" challenged the institution to enter into that "undiscovered country". The primary changes, the deaths, that threatened this institution were redistribution of power and transformation of a coveted ethos. Traditionalists opted for preservation, diffusing the issues to dispel the confrontation of the status quo, and lost the name of action.

James Luther Adams, in his book <u>On Being Human Religiously</u>, states that "all social action is...explicitly and implicitly grounded in a theology, and all theology implies a fundamental conception of social action".(1) Unitarian Universalism, however, in promoting religious pluralism, grounds individual theological pursuits in experience and social action. The covenant which bonds UU communities is comprised of principles and purposes, correlating an ethical system toward creation of an equitable world community. The essential bond is therefore a UU ethos. Informed by the belief that true community is religiously based, this ethos contains the theological characteristics of remembrance, contextual justification and vision. This ethos also reflects the UU culture,

inextricably tied to the ideology of white "middle strata" liberalism. Ideology is co-conspirator of an ethos, for it mandates, directly and indirectly, one's social interactions, sense of choice, understanding of power and relationship to redemption.

"The Black Empowerment Controversy" exposed incongruities within the UU ethos. And yet, this tension between the ideal and the real came about within the constituency. This reveals potential within the UU ethos to bring about transformation, yet the influence of fear of change and conflict also present in the constituency and enforced by the power structures dismantled that potential. Each side advocated mutual dignity, freedom of the individual, and pluralistic democracy, yet fundamental divergences were revealed in regards to accountability (remembrance and contextual justification) and style of vision.

UU traditionalists held themselves accountable to the "discovered country", a way of life achieved by a small percentage of the population. They held fast to the ideal principles of freedom of the individual and democracy espoused in UU tradition and the forming of the nation, implicitly generated through the American caste system. The dynamics of the "discovered country" called for assimilation into a prescribed vision, exhibiting clear perimeters. Black Empowerment advocates held themselves accountable to the "undiscovered country". In the context of the world community, the ideal principles had never been actualized. The dynamics of the "undiscovered country" called for a break-down of established assumptions through uncharted courses of action. The perimeters of this vision were unknown. It's target was the liberal methodology, that which embodies the UU ethos and theory of redemption for "common humanity".

The Board of Trustees opted for the method~~ology~~ of "free inquiry", allowing room for all voices to generate the UU ethos that was believed to

be sufficient within the existing terms. Black Empowerment methodology challenged the UU ethos, as yet unrealized, to be incarnated through political actions of liberation.

As stated in the preface, I do not know if the Black Empowerment movement would have successfully transformed the denomination. There were intrinsic problems within the movement and the spiral of distrust, jealousies, self-righteousness and resentment generated on all sides may not have resolved into a working solution. However, the movement did expose the UU institutional propensity to remain within its ideological cocoon, disengaging authentic interaction in the cause for protection of a way of life. It is this exposure that I will focus on.

John Haynes Holmes, in his article "Unitarianism and the Social Question" printed in 1908 in The Unitarian, identifies the limits within the Unitarian vision toward systemic social reform. He expressed hope that the association would find its way toward "seeking the causes of (social) disease and their eradication." "But it must be admitted," he continues," that our exaggerated notions of freedom, our tradition of individualism and an inherited conservatism (as people of the 'upper classes')...all seem against it."(2)

The "exaggerated notions of freedom" stem from the UU historical crusade for freedom of the individual. This freedom is founded in the struggle for right of conscience, primarily an intellectual pursuit. Mark Morrison-Reed characterizes the Unitarian emphasis on freedom:

> The freedom that is foremost in the heart of the Unitarian is the freedom of the mind, not of the body, for the enslavement they struggled against was intellectual and psychological, not physical. Political freedom is practically an afterthought for Unitarians... (3)

This is not entirely accurate, for within UU heritage is remembrance

of religious persecution, even unto death. Additionally, individuals within the Association have struggled with the political oppression of sexism, heterosexism and racism. However, these struggles are framed within a class-bound community. UU collective memory does not encompass cultural and socio-political bondage of those disinherited from the American caste system. Extensions of individual experience, amplified by class-bound social interaction justifies the vision in limited awareness of the choice, freedom and power afforded the world community.

Liberation of the mind, with tolerance of difference, is the ideal liberal method by which the "common good" will be realized for "common humanity". What became apparent in the controversy was the exaggerated notion of "free inquiry" and the "democratic process". First, there are clear boundaries within the ideal of "free inquiry". Each class manifests its own language, imagery and sense of values by which acceptance is measured. Secondly, "democratic process", the theory in which every participant of the community should be afforded their own contribution, in this context, can prove ineffectual. In the comfort of socio-economic privilege, people can "agree to disagree" and be on their way, informed by the engagement but not necessarily moved to transform. The posit of tolerance of difference can then be more an exercise of selective coexistence rather than dynamic interdependence, which calls for shared power or even at times one's own ability to give power over to another, if that is necessary for the collective cause. Emphasis on individual response rather than collective commitment can generate the "crazies of too much choice", which, depending on the urgency, would either take a long time to resolve or end up in institutional inefficacy.

Added to these limitations was the stark contradiction revealed in the argument of the emergent movement violated democratic processes.

Policy making in UU circles is engaged by representative democracy. The question at hand in the controversy was who would represent the UU response to racial relations. Twice the General Assembly opted for Black leadership in this cause and yet the Board continually resisted the majority decision. The argument posed was to preserve traditional methods, but the issue really was forfeiting power.

And yet there is a "Catch 22" inherent in the UU ethos toward dynamic diversity and centralized action. That is the tradition of individualism. Autonomy is the pride of the "discovered country" as pioneers and prophets proved the power of the individual in the pursuit of freedom. Morrison-Reed quotes Robert L'H. Miller's study of "The Religious Value System of Unitarian Universalists" in describing the individualistic character of Unitarian Universalism. "Orientation (is) towards competence rather than morality and stresses personal realization, individual self-fulfillment, and self-actualization."(4) Morrison-Reed goes on to point out that the principle of freedom ranked higher than the principle of equality in the survey. This can indicate two things. One, the principle of the inherent worth and dignity of each person may generate an unnamed assumption of equality. Two, class mystification may decrease the sense of inequality and temper the urgency for equalization of power.

The emphasis on individualism caused a good percentage of fiscal non-response. Additionally, with many societies outside of cities, considerable apathy towards the urgency of the cause hindered input and energy. However, had the institution rallied a commitment to the method of response directed by two General Assemblies, education and encouragement may have strengthened the mission to dispel racism. But "mission" demands a collective enterprise which calls for a degree of

sacrifice of individuality, a sacrifice vehemently fought against in UU heritage. Juggling voluntary consensus with political action is indeed a difficult stumbling block.

mixed metaphor

Don Harrington surmised in a 1984 article for the UU World that the error of ways within the controversy arose from the attempt to focus "on the denominational apparatus rather than on the churches and fellowships where the delegates, the money and the problem originate." (5) "The problem" cannot be minimized to the individual, for it is the manifestation of a systemic historical context. However, perhaps Harrington was right in terms of UU ethical action. As a denomination insistent on individualism, can we generate a centralized imperative toward social action? Are we simply an ethical training ground for individuals to act according to their conscience? Certainly, our heritage is numbered with social reformers and political ground-breakers. Perhaps that is the inherent consensus, to bolster individuals to do the "good work" on their own.

And yet, corporate action is necessary to create social transformation. This would mean a commitment to a collective cause, emphasizing interdependence in direct relation to autonomy. It would mean engaging a critical awareness of our limited vision.

Mark Morrison-Reed comments on the UU potential to move toward a more dynamic diversity:

> (An option) for Unitarian Universalists may be to try to change who we are, not by pursuing blacks for the sake of our image, not by waiting until the forces of cultural amalgamation bring us more people like ourselves, but by appreciating who we are and what we have already accomplished, while striving to move beyond our present limits. (6)

It is my hope that the lessons from this past, can help reveal

possibilities for dynamic diversity in the future within a denomination whose ideal purposes and principles can embrace and aid transformation through expansion of vision toward an authentically pluralistic society. If we fail to take stock of our defense mechanisms against reform, and fail to incarnate our principles systemically, the ideals we expound, in the face of a growing multi-cultural world community, will lose their relevance. Seeking ethnic leadership and membership will increase our collective experience of a multi-cultural society. But we do not necessarily have an inclusive society by merely "colorizing" our denomination.

When we recognize the limits of our traditional vision and risk beyond fear, denial and guilt we can enter into an active engagement of the interdependent web of all existence. For what we see depends on where we stand and, further, what we are willing to see depends on where we are willing to stand. We must train ourselves toward mutuality, the dynamic of shared power, and keep ever mindful of interdependence in our striving for self-actualization. For the self is intricately tied to the human family and will not attain equality until all persons attain equality. Mutuality and interdependence and the challenge of coalition that risks engagement with difference will help to expand our vision, no longer bound by prescriptions but liberated by a sense of justice, that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns to the inequities of the status quo.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AUA	American Unitarian Association
BAC	Black Affairs Council
BAWA	Black and White Action
BUUC	Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus
BURR	Black Unitarian Universalists for Radical Reform
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
FFR	Fellowship For Renewal
FULLBAC	White Caucus in Full Support of Funding BAC
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SOBURR	White Supporters of BURR
UCA	Universalist Church of America
UUA	Unitarian Universalist Association
UU	Unitarian Universalist

APPENDIX A

ARTICLE III

Principals and Purposes

Section C-2.1. Principles.

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all'
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Section C-2.2. Purposes.

The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles.

Section C-2.3. Non-discrimination.

The Association declares and affirms its special responsibility, and that of its member societies and organizations, to promote the full participation of persons in all of its and their activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to the race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.

Section C-2.4. Freedom of Belief.

Nothing herein shall be deemed to infringe upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages or to conflict with any statement of purpose, covenant, or bond of union used by any society unless such is used as a creedal test.

AS STATED IN THE 1990 UUA DIRECTORY.

APPENDIX B

MESSAGE FOR COMMISSION III

by Miss Jeannette Hopkins

I have asked Virgil Murdock, the Secretary of the Commission, to preside for the rest of the session. My customary sense of duty to a commitment has been displaced by a compelling need to withdraw. I can no longer, with any sense of self-respect, participate in what I regard as a charade.

When I learned that some or all of those Negroes who had stuck with our Commission had decided not to participate in the final drafting session, I knew that whatever their needs might be to join in a united front in the Black Caucus, my own needs included an inability to lead a segregated group--particularly one organized in the name of Unitarianism. But, after a restless night, I have concluded that my responses are far more inclusive than this.

The Conference has had some moving and genuine experiences--perhaps for me the most real the discussion group on "The New Role of the Black Unitarian Universalist," in which individual encountered individual, as though they were human beings. But, on the whole, the following seem to me to be true:

--that the program itself seems to me to be essentially irresponsible, directed less to a serious and profound discussion of the severe and tragic crisis confronting American society, and the cities, in particular, a discussion leading to real and revolutionary social change, than it is directed to self-conscious problems, to uncritical rhetoric and to racial rituals.

--that the Black Caucus, with its scheduling of meetings concurrent with the action commissions, was intended to disrupt all action other than its own, and to reinforce rather than to break down racial barriers. Its methods of imposed discipline, secrecy, exclusivity, are the opposite of the methods I have cherished in Unitarianism. Its rituals may seem to others exhilarating; to me they seem artificial and cynical. I have no wish to participate in a ritual dance of black demand and white obsequiousness, a dance in which neither take the other seriously.

--that the White Response to the Conference and to the fact of and the methods of the Caucus seems to me to reflect considerable political and racial naivete, confusion as to goals and priorities, dilettantism as to purpose and program, and a lack of sophistication about the uses of power that also seems to be alien to the Unitarian and Universalist movements.

There is much that is genuine in the pain and the confusion that have been expressed at the Conference, but there is considerable superficiality in it also, or so it seems to me. We are all being cast in roles in a game-playing exercise that comes close to farce.

But the stakes are far too high to permit this. The relevance and survival of the entire society--let alone the denomination--are at stake. The New Left conference in Chicago, with similar rituals and dogmas, ended in the disruption and degradation of the new radical movement. If this is the best we have to offer, the liberal church also faces the probability of being judged irrelevant in this time.

I am sorry for the harshness and tone of judgment in all of this. It is not meant to be anything other than a candid expression of my own response--and my own inadequacy. I cannot lead a Commission when I have lost confidence in the direction of the Conference as a whole. That would be to compound the pretense.

APPENDIX C

MINORITY REPORT OF GREGORY M. BONI FROM COMMISSION III

This Conference has mad us, or should have made us, aware that a strong social force exists that is growing out of the use as a rallying cry of the words, Black Power. For many or most of us at the Conference actual contact with this force was an experience occurring for the first time. The existence of the Black Caucus provided for us in microcosm a display of the separation that may have come about, and of the impact upon possible choice of actions when such separation exists.

In my opinion, our commission has made no serious effort to develop a program in the light of the implications of this experience or of the true significance of the movement spoken about by Floyd McKissick and Nathan Wright. The "true significance" could not be contemplated in our program unless definitive steps were first taken to understand the implications of Black Power. Our failure to do so in our Commission was due to many causes. Among these, unquestionably, is the lack of desire to face apparently unpleasant issues. Further, the Conference provided no speakers to acquaint us with points of view about Black Power that differ from those presented and, therefore, there was not present an atmosphere in which inquiry about this subject appeared appropriate. But perhaps the strongest reason for non-inquiry was because of a relatively complete lack of knowledge by the participants in the Commission about a newly-emerging force.

Certain things do stand out as apparent. A strong separatist movement exists. This movement includes a program for transferring wealth to people identifiable as Blacks by means of strong and aggressive organization. This contemplates the acquisition of a wealth-producing environment for a class of people. The designation of this movement as the Black Power Movement tells us nothing. Not in the title of its objective, but in its actual doings, can meaning be found.

Negroes do have power. The issue is not to get power, but to get more or different kinds of power. This activity is not new. The only thing that can be new is that different tactics will result in a significant change in the behavior of Black people. Conceivably if the new behavior is badly accepted, the changes could result in retrogression for Blacks having power. Other Negro movements have been and are seeking power, from whites, and from each other. The National Urban League under Whitney Young, the NAACP, and the SCLC are a few of the better known organizations.

We are not yet in a position to formulate a premise for our actions with respect to whether the new movement is to result in a Black community that needs to be dealt with as a separate nation or whether we should continue to treat Blacks as individuals. The difference is material.

If the Blacks are to become a separate nation, we must look upon our continuing relationship as one that will be carried on through diplomatic channels. We will not speak to each other as individuals trying to organize together around mutual interests. We will not endeavor even to deal directly with even groups of Blacks. Each dealing between whites and Blacks will have to authorized and approved by upper bodies that will asses the consistency of efforts with their respective overall programs. Such an approach would be required under the description of Black Power given by Dr. Wright.

If the emerging of a nation is not serious, if the proportion of Black constituents for this approach is to remain a minority, as it now is, our program must be quite different than the program appropriate for a "separate nation" status.

To deal with this vital question I therefore propose that the denomination strongly encourage, support, and participate in all steps that will permit us to get close to the inner city problems. This should be done so that the denomination my better furnish to our churches meaningful leadership on our future response to the Black Rebellion.

As part of this effort, the formation of "listening" ministries in the inner city should be fostered. The significance of the CUUP program in Cleveland should be looked at. It should be understood that the term, "listening," includes inter-action with the Black communities by such means as living with and participating in the educational facilities and the economic aspects of inner city life. If necessary this can be done in neighborhoods where there is confrontation between whites and Blacks. These ministries in themselves constitute a positive response to the Blacks. We say by this response that we are interested. But this response also provides a sound basis for the development of a long-range program.

For the long-range program, I further propose that an adequate Task Force be structured somewhere in the denomination to foster, develop, and coordinate the listening ministry programs followed by an interpretation of results. The Task Force is to be charged with establishing a long-range program founded on premises about Black Power that flow from a sensible and factual interpretation of the direction in which the organization of Black people may be expected to go. The Task Force should have power to develop any means of obtaining information necessary to carry out such a long-range program.

APPENDIX D

A STATEMENT FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST BLACK CAUCUS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

At a meeting yesterday of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the proposals of a group of Black Unitarians were scorned and rejected in favor of a conservative reform proposal from the Commission on Religion and Race. The Black group was formed in New York on October 6, 1967 at an Emergency Conference on Unitarian Universalist response to the Black Rebellion. This Conference, made up of Black and white Unitarian Universalists resolved to present a series of proposals asking for increased representation on Boards and Committees, a Black Affairs Council, and an official Black organization within the church structure.

According to the Chairman of the Black Caucus Steering Committee, Hayward Henry, "If this is their response, it's too little and too late. It represents a traumatic blow to Black people both inside and outside of this denomination, not to mention its white liberal faction. We view this as an indication of white backlash in this church.

"The non-Black President of the Association, former civil rights advocate Dana Greeley, spearheaded this humiliating rejection of the proposal. We are the only organized Black group within this church, and we were hopeful that we could stop the traditional racist and paternalistic approach to Black problems in this denomination.

"Because we do not believe that the Board's action reflects the feeling of most of the denomination, we are asking member churches and fellowships to respond to the challenge of their fellow Black Unitarian Universalists by:

1) Withdrawal of their financial support from the U.U.A. until the next General Assembly meeting.
2) Contribute instead to the Black Caucus fund, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Chicago, 910 East 83rd Street, Chicago, Illinois.
3) Immediately notifying the Board of Trustees of their displeasure.

"We are asking our Black Unitarian Universalist brothers and sisters to give us their unequivocal support in this crisis and to join us in a national caucus of Black Unitarian Universalists in Chicago in February, 1968.

"The confrontation in the General Assembly will determine the future role, if any, of Blacks within this denomination."

END END END

NEWS RELEASE ISSUED NOVEMBER 13, 1967.

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY DR. DANA MCLEAN GREELEY, PRESIDENT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

The number one domestic problem facing the United States today is the absence of racial justice. We agree with the members of our recently formed Unitarian Universalist Black Caucus that we must demonstrate our knowledge of this by finding ways to make immediate progress that will be meaningful to an anguished segment of our society. However, the problem of bringing racial justice has never been seen Unitarian Universalists as a black problem. It is, if anything, more a problem for our white members than for the black ones. We have long advocated an integrated society. We have demonstrated this by insisting upon integration in our churches and fellowships and in our homes. It is the temper of our Board that we would not today honor or give funds to any group which organized on purely racial lines. The Black has not abridged this liberal principle for either black or whites. We understand the frustration that painful and continuing delay has caused to all who seek progress in race relations. People who need food, housing, and jobs are never impressed by words. Even so we have taken some exception to the procedures of the Unitarian Universalist Black Caucus. Their policies of separation, exclusiveness and abrogation of what we have always considered essential democratic procedures are perhaps understandable. We understand, but we do not concur.

In this struggle the white man is not to be absolved and we would do nothing to make it appear as if he were absolved. We intend to overhaul our official machinery but it will not be separatist. It may well become a black affairs council or it may develop into an even more effective device for this Association. Our commitment to the cause is well known. The test of our commitment at this point in history will be whether we can devise the organizational machinery to make the meaningful impact which is absolutely required. The Board and Administration of the Unitarian Universalist Association are committed to do just that.

If a black affairs organization is voluntarily effected, I hope that it would be non-racial and on such grounds I would be happy to recommend the denomination's hearty cooperation with it.

END END END

NEWS RELEASE ISSUED NOVEMBER 13, 1967.

NOTES

I: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1. UUA Directory:1990. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association. p.447
2. Ibid. Excerpts from Bylaws II, Section C-2.1. p.447. For full text of Principles and Purposes, see Appendix A.
3. Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest For Racial Justice: 1967-1982. Report of the Unitarian Universalist Commission on Appraisal to the General Assembly, UUA, June 1983. Boston, MA: UUA, 1984. p.2
4. Ibid. p.3
5. David Robinson. The Unitarians and The Universalists. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press. 1985. p.3
6. Ibid. p.169.
7. Russel E. Miller. The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870. Boston, MA: UUA, 1979. p.808 (originally printed in Trumpet 29, 9 October, 1847. p.66)
8. Anecdotes shared in an interview with Rev. John A. Buehrens, Unitarian Universalist Minister, All Souls Unitarian Church. March, 1991.
9. Merger and Alternatives: An Information Manual. Prepared under the Auspices of the Joint Commission on Merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. Wellesley Hills, MA. September, 1958. p.74.
10. Robinson. The Unitarians and the Universalists. p.175.
11. Empowerment. p.13.
12. Miller. The Larger Hope. p.575.
13. Empowerment. p.12-13.
14. Ibid. p.13. (Emphasis in the orginal text).
15. Thandeka. "How Black Are We?". The World, Jan/Feb, 1989. p.14.
16. Empowerment. p.13.
17. Mark Morrison-Reed. Black Pioneers in a White Denomination. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1984. p.70.
18. Ibid. p.147.
19. Ibid. p.26
20. Empowerment. p.14.
21. Resolutions and Resources: A Social Responsibility Handbook. editors: Catherine Devine and Mary Rosa. Boston, MA: UUA. 1985. p.190.
22. Charles Fager. Selma 1965: The March That Changed the South. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1974. p.124ff
23. Resolutions and Resources. p.192.
24. Report of the Commmittee on Goals. Boston, MA: UUA. Feb. 1967. p.5
25. Ibid. pp.13 and 33 respectively.
26. Figure of member societies quoted by Kristi Heescher, public information assistant of the UUA, March 1991 (taken from the UUA Directory, 1968). Estimation of Black membership taken from Morrison-Reed, Black Pioneers...p.ix.

NOTES CONTINUED, Chapter II

II: DEFIANCE OF RITUAL

1. Bayard Rustin. "A Way Out of the Ghetto". New York Times Magazine, Aug. 13, 1967. Cited in: Homer A. Jack. Toward Understanding The Black Rebellion: Some Personal Observations. Boston, MA: UUA Dept. of Social Responsibility. Aug. 21, 1967. p.1.
2. "The Cities". Time. August 11, 1967. Cited in: Homer A. Jack. Ibid. p.2.
3. Special Report: The Emergency Conference On the Unitarian Universalist Response to the Black Rebellion: Proceedings. Boston, MA: UUA Dept. of Social Responsibility. Oct. 23, 1967. p.5
4. Ibid. p.6
5. Ibid. p.6
6. Henry Hampton. "An Insider's View of the Black Caucus". The Register-Leader. Vol. 149, No.10, December, 1967. p.4
7. Interview conversation with Henry Hampton, conducted by Mark Morrison-Reed. Published in How Open The Door. UUA. 1989. p.45.
8. Hampton. "An Insider's View". p.5.
9. Hampton. "Ibid."p.5
10. Special Report: The Emergency Conference. p.19
11. Ibid. p.31.
12. Ibid. p.32.
13. Hampton. "An Insider's View". p.5
14. Hampton. "Last Exit To Grosse Point". Respond. Vol II, No.3. Fall, 1967. p.15.
15. Empowerment. p.27.
16. Ibid. p.27.
17. Special Report: Emergency Conference. p.9.
18. Hampton. "An Insider's View" p.5.
19. Robert E. Jones. "Reflections on the Black Caucus". Respond. Vol II. No. 3. Fall 1967. p.9
20. Victor Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.16
21. Joseph N. Ulman, Jr. "Editorial". Register-Leader. Vol 149. No.10. Dec. 1967. p.2.
22. Daniel Higgins. The UUA and the Color Line. Dissertation. Chicago, IL. June, 1977. p.36.
23. G. Robert Hohler. "Notes On A Confrontation: The Black Caucus and the UUA Board". Respond. Vol I. No.3. Fall, 1967. p.17
24. Hohler. "Ibid". p.18
25. November 13, 1967 New Release: "Statement From the Steering Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Black Caucus". Cited from: Higgins. UUA and The Color Line. Appendix C.
26. November 13, 1967 News Release: "Statement by Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, President, UUA." Cited from: Higgins. Ibid. Appendix D.
27. Empowerment. p.73. Dr. Kenneth B. Clark pioneered the studies used as a basis for the U.S. Supreme Court decision to outlaw segregation in public schools in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954.
28. Higgins. UUA and the Color Line. p.40.
29. Higgins. Ibid. p.42.
30. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.23.
31. Empowerment. p.28.

NOTES CONTINUED, Chapter II & III

32. Hayward Henry. "The Caucus Story". Caucus. May 1968. p.4
33. Henry. "Ibid". p.5 & 7 respectively.
34. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.23.
35. Empowerment. p.30.
36. "What is BAC?" Editorial Staff. Caucus. May 1969 p.9
37. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.27.
38. W.H. Herbert. Register-Leader. Vol.50.No.2, Feb.1968 p.6
39. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.28.
40. Carpenter. Ibid. p.29.
41. Empowerment. p.53.
42. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.24.
43. Carpenter. Ibid. p.26
44. Empowerment. p.54.
45. Separate interview conversations with Donald Harrington and Cornelius McDougald, respectively. Feb. 1991.
46. Letters from Donald Harrington to Homer Jack (4/26/68) and Homer Jack to Donald Harrington (4/29/68) Cited in: Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.30.
47. Carpenter. Ibid. p.31
48. Empowerment. p.72.
49. Ibid. p.73.
50. "BAWA: Unitarian Universalists For a Black and White Alternative" Pamphlet, undated. circa May, 1968. Verified by Empowerment. p.74

CHAPTER III: CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES

1. "UU Views of Black-White Relations". UUA pamphlet. 1968. p.13. Cited in: Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.31.
2. "Ibid". p.10.
3. Empowerment. Figures taken from p.75 & 29, respectively.
4. Ibid. p.29.
5. Higgins. UUA and The Color Line. p.68.
6. Higgins. Ibid. p.68.
7. Higgins. Ibid. p.68.
8. Empowerment. p.75.
9. UUA Board Minutes. June 21-22, 1968.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Empowerment. p.31.
13. Ibid. p.31.
14. Ibid. p.31.
15. Letter from Henry Hampton, dated Sept. 10, 1968 and reply from Dayton Yoder, dated Sept. 23, 1968.
16. Empowerment. p.32.
17. "White Racism". A Study of the World Council of Churches. Uppsala, July, 1968. Republished by the UUA. Boston, MA. July, 1968. p.4
18. "Ibid". p.4
19. Duke T. Gray. "Toward a Definition of Racism". Letter for circulation. Brooklyn, NY. circa 1969. Duke T. Gray was field director of FULLBAC.

NOTES CONTINUED. CHAPTER III & CONCLUSION.

20. Empowerment. p.55.
21. Ibid. p.55
22. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.39.
23. Jack A. Kent. "Letter to the UU General Assembly". Chicago: IL. May 24, 1968.
24. Empowerment. p.76.
25. Interview with Marcia McBroom Landess conducted by Mark Morrison-Reed. Printed in How Open The Door. 1989. p.46.
26. Empowerment. p.81.
27. "How To Integrate Racially A Unitarian Universalist Church". BAWA Project Papers. No.4, Part I. Editor: Betty Seiden. Oakland, CA: Unitarian Universalists for BAWA. circa. 1970. (Date estimation verified in Empowerment. p.83) p.2
28. "Ibid". p.2
29. "Ibid". p.3 & 5 respectively.
30. Interview conversation with Marcia McBroom Landess. Jan. 1991.
31. Empowerment. p.78.
32. Ibid. pp.78-79.
33. Ibid. p.77.
34. Ibid. p.115.
35. Ibid. p.116
36. Ibid. p.116
37. Dana McLean Greeeley. "President's Report". Boston, MA: UUA. July 14, 1969. p.11
38. Greeley. "Ibid". p.18.
39. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.42.
40. Ibid. p.44
41. Interview with Max Gaebler conducted by Mark Morrison-Reed. Printed in How Open The Door. 1989. p.45.
42. UUA Directory, 1970. p.175.
43. Empowerment. p.37.
44. Ibid. p.47.
45. Ibid. p.35.
46. "The Annual Report: 1969-1970", Black Affairs Couuncil, Inc. Administrative Secretary, Richard L. Traylor. Philadelphia, PA. Feb. 20, 1970. p.15.
47. Empowerment. p.37.
48. "BAWA Invites Black Civil Rights Leader Under False Pretenses". BUUC leaflet. circa July 1970. Cited in: Ibid. p.86.
49. Empowerment. p.35
50. Ibid. Figures found on pp.53 & 95, respectively.
51. Interview Conversation with Henry Hampton. Carpenter. MINNS LECTURES 1983. p.50.

CONCLUSION

1. James Luther Adams. "Theological Bases of Social Action". On Being Human Religiously. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1976. p.104.
2. John Haynes Holmes. "Unitarianism and the Social Question". The Unitarian. Summer, 1908. p.441.

NOTES CONTINUED: CONCLUSION.

3. Morrison-Reed. Black Pioneers In A White Denomination. p.18-19.
4. Ibid. p.28
5. "Religious Liberals share views on Black Empowerment". UU World. March 15, 1984. Comment by Donald Harrington. p.4.
6. Morrison-Reed. Black Pioneers In A White Denomination. p.178.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

James Luther Adams. "Theological Bases of Social Action". On Being Human Religiously. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1976. pp.102-119.

_____. "The Shock of Recognition: The Black Revolution and Greek Tragedy". The Prophethood of All Believers. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1968. pp.274-281.

"The Annual Report: 1969-1970", Black Affairs Council, Inc. Administrative Secretary, Richard L. Traylor. Phil., PA: Feb. 20, 1970. 29 pp.

Bennett, Lerone, Jr. "Freedom In Black and White". Respond. Vol. I. No.1. January, 1967. pp.7-12.

Carpenter, Rev. Victor Howard. MINNS LECTURES 1983: The Black Empowerment Controversy and the Unitarian Universalist Association: 1967-1970. Delivered at the Arlington Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts, March,1983. Printed by the Cotting School For Handicapped Children, Boston, MA.

Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest For Racial Justice: 1967-1982. Report of the Unitarian Universalist Commission on Appraisal to the General Assembly, UUA, June 1983. Boston, MA: UUA, 1984.

FULLBAC. Pamphlet describing purpose. circa 1968. 3pp.

Greeley, Dana McLean. "President's Report". Boston, MA: UUA. July 14, 1969. 19pp.

Hampton, Henry. "An Insider's View of the Black Caucus". The Register-Leader of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Vol. 149, No.10, December, 1967. pp.4-5.

_____. "Last Exit To Grosse Pointe". Respond. Vol.3, Fall 1967. pp.11-16.

Henry, Hayward. "The Caucus Story". Caucus. May 1968. pp.4-8

Higgins, Daniel G. The Unitarian Universalist Association and The Color Line. Dissertation. Chicago, Illinois: Meadville Theological School of Lombard College. June 1977.

Hohler, Robert G. "Notes On A Confrontation: The Black Caucus and the UUA Board". Respond. Vol I. No.3. Fall, 1967. pp.17-19.

Holmes, John Haynes. "Unitarianism and the Social Question". The Unitarian. Summer, 1908. pp.417-441.

"How To Integrate Racially A Unitarian Universalist Church". BAWA Project Papers. No.4, Part I. Editor: Betty Seiden. Oakland, CA: Unitarian Universalists for BAWA. circa. 1970. 5 pp. (Date estimation verified in Empowerment. p.83)

BIBLIOGRAPHY CONTINUED

Jack, Homer A. Special Report: Toward Understanding The Black Rebellion: Some Personal Observations. Boston, MA: UUA Dept. of Social Responsibility. Second Printing. March 12, 1968.

Jones. Robert E. "Reflections on the Black Caucus". Respond. Vol II. No. 3. Fall 1967. pp.7-10.

Merger and Alternatives: An Information Manual. Prepared under the Auspices of the Joint Commission on Merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. Wellesley Hills, MA. September, 1958.pp.11-18, 74-79.

Morrison-Reed, Mark D. Black Pioneers in a White Denomination. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1984.

_____. How Open The Door? Afro-Americans' Experience in Unitarian Universalism. A Multimedia Program for Adults. Boston, MA: UUA. 1989. Interview recordings and transcripts of Jack Mendelsohn, Max Gaebler, Henry Hampton and Marcia McBroom Landess. Transcripts: pp.43-47.

"Religious Liberals share views on Black Empowerment". UU World. March 15, 1984. pp.4,5,8.

Report of the Commmittee on Goals. Boston, MA: UUA. February, 1967.

Resolutions and Resources: A Social Responsibility Handbook. editors: Catherine Devine and Mary Rosa. Boston, MA: UUA. 1985. pp.189-204.

Special Report: The Emergency Conference On the Unitarian Universalist Response to the Black Rebellion: Proceedings. Boston, MA: UUA Dept. of Social Responsibility. Oct. 23, 1967.

Thandeka. "How Black Are We?". The World, Jan/Feb, 1989. pp.12-14,46.

UUA Board Minutes. Boston, MA: UUA. November, 1967 - April, 1970

"White Racism". A Study of the World Council of Churches. Uppsala, July, 1968. Republished by the UUA. Boston, MA. July, 1968. 18 pp.

SOURCES USED FOR SPOT REFERENCE

Fager, Charles. Selma 1965: The March That Changed the South. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1974.

Miller, Russel E. The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870. Boston, MA: UUA, 1979.

Robinson, David. The Unitarians and The Universalists. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press. 1985.

UUA Directory:1990. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association.