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INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

CJP - 7

"The Brotherhood of Blackness".

August 25, 1962,
13 Brechin Place,
London, S.W.7.
England.

Mr. Richard Nolte,
Institute of Current World Affairs,
366 Madison Avenue,
New York 17,
New York.

Dear Mr. Nolte,

The Transcription Centre is an organisation established in London to produce radio programs for the use of African broadcasting services. Eventually, the Centre plans to extend its work to include the United States, Brazil and Germany. Its present series of African programs includes lectures and discussions on African politics, literature, and art, poetry and short story readings, and performances of African music and music rooted in African culture.

Although the Transcription Centre, under the aegis of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, just started operating in June 1962, its productions are already extensively used by the broadcasting services of Uganda, Tanganyika, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The Extra-mural Department of the University College of Ibadan, Nigeria, has used one series in conjunction with some of its classes.

What follows is an edited transcription of the broadcast, "The Brotherhood of Blackness", produced by Dennis Duerden, Director of the Centre and formerly of the African Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and myself. The participants come from the major geographical and cultural areas of the world in which large numbers of Negroes dwell. They are:

WILLIAM ABRAHAM of Ghana, Professor of Philosophy, University of Ghana, once a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford University;

ARNOLD GIBBONS of British Guiana, novelist and broadcaster in the British Broadcasting Corporation's Caribbean Service;

NKAMBO MUGERWA of Uganda, Professor of Legal Studies, University College of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika;

LEWIS NKOSI of South Africa, journalist, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, contributor to "Drum", The Manchester Guardian, The New African, and The Observer;

CHARLES PATTERSON of the United States, holder of a research grant from the University of California at Berkeley, and a Fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs;

BARRY RECKORD of Jamaica, a playwright, whose work has been performed at the Royal Court Theatre in London and on B.B.C. Television.

PATTERSON: Today, all over the world, there is a great deal of discontent among the black people of the earth. One of the things that has come out of this discontent is increased discussion of the relationship between black people all

over the world. The Negro American poet, Langston Hughes, put it this way: "We are related, you and I, you from the West Indies, I from Kentucky. We're related, you and I. You from Africa, I from the States. We are brothers, you and I." Aime Cesaire of Martinique, in discussing the concept of negritude, said this: "Negritude denotes a certain quality which is common to the thoughts and behaviour of Negroes. It stands for the new consciousness of the Negro, his newly gained self-confidence, and for his distinctive outlook on life with which he distinguishes himself from non-Negroes."

Are we black men related? If we are, what is the nature of this relationship? What kind of "brothers" are we? What is our "certain quality"? What is it that is "common" to our thoughts and behaviour? Is there such a thing as our "distinctive outlook on life"? Does our "distinctive" behaviour and thoughts leap cultures, languages and boundaries? Does it leap across our different histories? Some writers have attempted to answer these questions. One of the best of these is the Negro American, James Baldwin, and his answer came in a discussion of the 1956 Congress of Black Writers and Artists held in Paris. Struck by the number of conflicts arising between black writers and artists at the conference, he endeavoured to figure out exactly what it was that had brought these black writers and artists together. This was his conclusion.

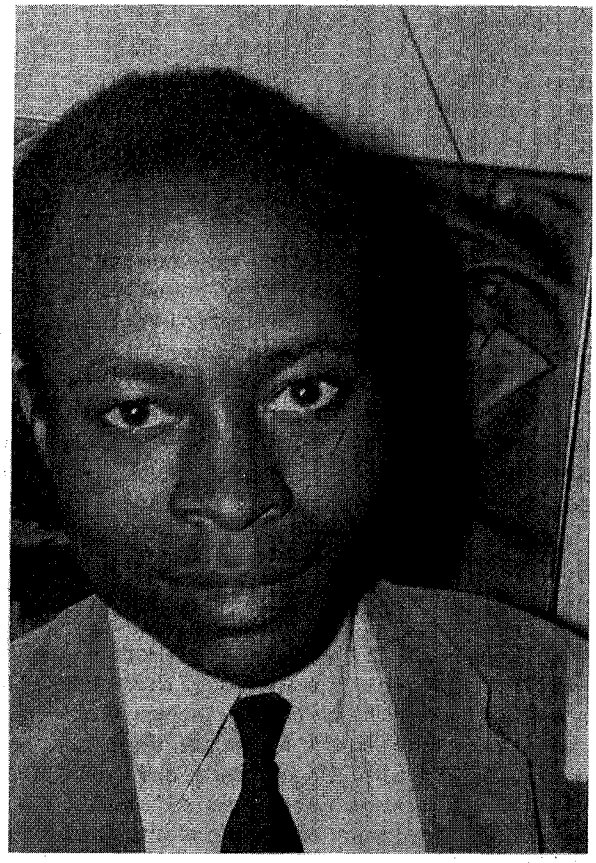
"There was something all black men held in common, something which cut across opposing points of view, and placed in the same context their widely dissimilar experience. What they had in common was their precarious, their unutterably painful relation with the white world. What they had in common was the necessity to remake the world in their own image, to impose this image on the world, and no longer be controlled by a vision of the world and of themselves held by other people. What, in sum, black men held in common was their ache to come to the world as men, and this ache united people who might otherwise have been divided as to what a man should be."

Arnold Gibbons from British Guiana will start our discussion.

GIBBONS: I should like to put to my friends just one aspect of the problem as it has occurred to me. Now, when one considers the topic, the basic premise of the discussion, it suggests a distinction on the basis of colour. When one says that there is a brotherhood of black people, it means that there is a basic affinity, a sense of togetherness, an awareness - a belonging to a particular entity. I think that we do - black peoples throughout the world - do have something in common which we will not really get rid of - it is inescapably with us, it is a part of our heritage. I put it to you, that a history of slavery has been a basic source of unity among the diverse black cultures, among the diverse black peoples of the world. This is just one suggestion, Charles, and I think I care to elaborate it after one or two of my friends have spoken.

PATTERSON: Nkambo Mugerwa of Uganda.

MUGERWA: Well, gentlemen, in approaching the question of the brotherhood of black people, wherever they may be, I prefer to divide it into two parts. The first part is the political one, namely the strong feeling to be free of control - in particular by Europe; and the second part is that consciousness which derives from a cultural expression which has been frustrated or inhibited or perverted for generations. In so far as almost all black people at one point or another, have been subjected to domination, either as slaves or as colonial people, that is certainly a very strong uniting bond. Whether one is a West Indian or a Nigerian



MUGERWA OF UGANDA

or a South African, one feels that Europe has, over the years, deprived him of what was his own, namely that most precious of assets - liberty.

When one goes on to the freedom for sultural expression, I'm afraid I do not share the conviction held by very important people, like Aime Cesaire, quoted earlier by Charles, who suggest that there is a kind of brotherhood, call it negritude, call it a blackhood, call it blackness. That, I'm afraid, I do not freely accept. I feel that to the extent the African people have been free to express themselves culturally, this feeling of wanting a certain self culturally does not arise in the same degree of intensity, as it does in French-speaking Africa where the black people, having entered the French establishment, found it lacking in some details, and have reacted by trying to make up or to introduce, or to assert what they believed was peculiarly African, something going under the name of negritude. With these two primary points, Charles, I think I'll let the discussion carry on and will join in later to elaborate my points.

PATTERSON: Barry Reckord of Jamaica.

RECKORD: I think we should remember that when we use a term like negritude, we are contributing to the sort of chauvinism that is more a 19th century than a 20th century concept. All struggles lead to this kind of backward statement that nations are superior to others, or that colours are superior to others, and I think we should take up now, as 20th century Negroes, where the backward 19th century Europeans left off, not repeat the mistakes that have led to so many wars, and to such unnecessary turmoil. We want. We realise that we have psychological difficulties that we share with working class people. We have been the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. We know that the kind of remedy for this is the same as that working class people have always had, economic and political. To talk about it as though it were anything but political and economic is silly. We must play the game that everyone else is playing, get rich and powerful and then quarrel with each other.

PATTERSON: Lewis Nkosi of South Africa.

NKOSI: It seems to me, and I agree with Barry here, that we might do well to start

off by expunging the word negritude from the discussion, because I think that it doesn't serve very well. It's too nebulous a term, and people mean different things by it. Some people mean that this black consciousness indicates a feeling amongst black people of superiority to the whites, which is a heinous idea as far as I'm concerned. Some people however, mean nothing more than that black people ought to start digging out their cultural heritages, which might have been neglected, because they were too busy trying to impress the whites and to manipulate the symbols that the white people had given to the world. Now that's something different.

But when we begin to ask ourselves: is there any common feeling among the black people of the world, is there any affinity? Well, I think that one might answer that question by saying that there are definite links between black people, especially in the Western world. We share a certain history of disenfranchisement whether American Negroes, West Indians or Africans, and the experience of colonialism is most profound in uniting us. I don't think that one can generalise very much in the cultural spheres. Certainly one could find certain African remains in the self-culture of the American Negro, even on the mainland. But that too is very superficial. I think the political thing is the more real

PATTERSON: William Abraham of Ghana has something to say about this.

ABRAHAM: Well, I must admit that I find Barry's opening statements perplexing. First of all I do not understand why he compares the Negro with a white working class. I do not think there is much in common between the Negro race and the white working class as such, but he appears to think that the Negro is on trial before the white man, and that the lowly educated Negro is a sort of David confronting the white Goliath. Now this I cannot accept at all and I do not think that it is this that is the source of any feelings of discomfort that the Negro might feel in the predominantly white society.

But since class has been brought into this, it is a well-known sociological phenomenon that where there are class stratifications every class wants to feel that there is another class underneath it. It is natural that in a white society, the working class, which is the lowest class in such a society, should cast around for some group which it can identify as an even lower class, In the white society only the Negro appears to foot the bill. And it does not matter how much trouble this Negro has taken to adorn himself with education, riches, what you will. As long as he's a Negro, the white working class man feels that there is a gap that cannot be bridged.

GIBBONS: Barry would not have us set the Negro aside, as a thing apart. Yet, he has been set aside as a thing apart for 2,000 years. I think he has got to work this out of his system. After all, as Jean Genet said in his play, The Blacks, "For two thousand years the world has been white, god has been white, he has wiped his mouth with a white napkin, he has taken white meat with a white fork, he has watched snow fall." Now this is a reappraisal of the world in terms of the white world. Now it's a world that we have only just come into; it's a world in which we are fighting to play our part. We have not always had these God-given rights; it's something that we've got to fight for; nobody gives this to us. We have got to reappraise our sense of values, vis-a-vis the white world, in order to be able to meet them on their terms. If we can discover the nature of the Negro personality, it is only then I think that we can discover the nature

of man. But we have got to find ourselves first, and it is going to take a very long time. I think we are on the road.

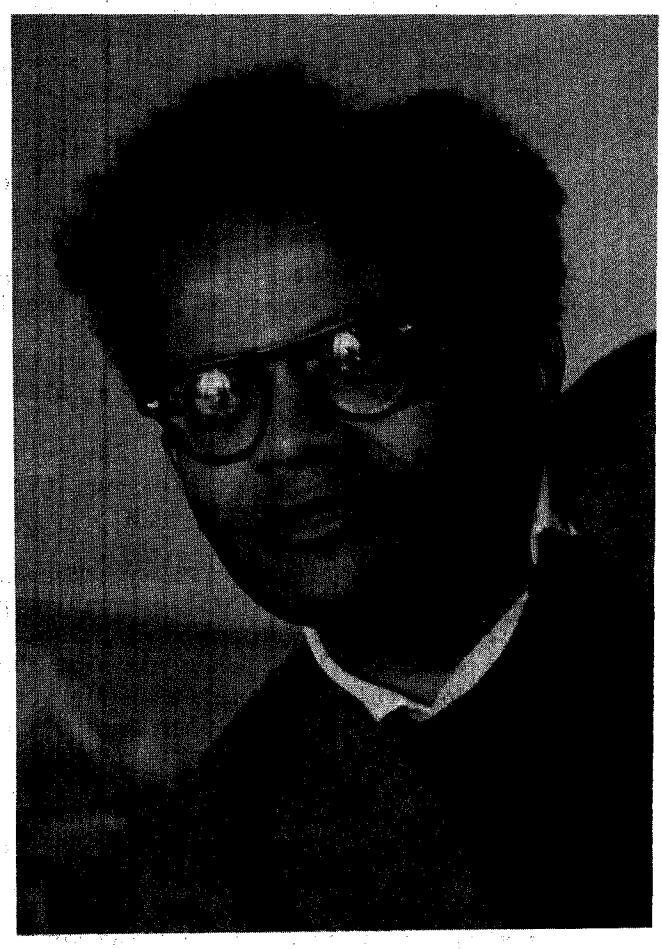
PATTERSON: Is there such a thing as the Negro personality?

GIBBONS: The Negro personality is in a process of evolution. I don't want to place the Negro as a man outside of man, but he must within the limits of man - and man here is spelt with capital M, capital A, capital N, mankind - within these limits he must find himself, because he has not been considered a man all along. This is what many people do not realise. The word MAN has an entirely new connotation, so far as the Negro is concerned, and he's only just discovering it in the 20th century.

RECKORD: I resent playing the white game of making the Negroes a special problem. They throw that ball to us, and instead of contemptuously letting it drop, we take it up and wrangle it about endlessly. We are not a special problem, we are seeking status, and this is a universal business. People are trying to move from insignificance to significance, one class moving up, one nation moving up, that sort of thing. Everybody is status-seeking and so are Negroes, and for us to continually regard ourselves as a special kind of status-seeker, with a special kind of personality that needs years to sort out, is just to play this humiliating game. We're not at all; we suffer from the same disadvantage that any disenfranchised people suffer from, and the remedies are common or garden, we know them, we're not starting from scratch. They're political and they're economic.

NKOSI: I find it very difficult to accept everything that Barry says. I think that people ought to be wary of this Marxist assumption that the working class people are the same all over the world, and that their disenfranchisement is exactly the same. The white working class is definitely different from the Negro working class, and this is exactly why the Marxists have failed to provide real momentum to the Negro struggle in America, because they tended to identify the Negro with the white working class. They failed to recognise that the white working class is deeply linked up with the ruling white class, and that, in fact, the white working class does assume a certain amount of superiority over the Negro.

For centuries now, the Negro has been manipulated by a white world using certain symbols. These symbols you find in the literature that children read, in the cinema and so on. The white child does not undergo the same



RECKORD OF JAMAICA

stresses during his formative years that the Negro child undergoes when he starts going to school, and finds himself surrounded with these symbols equating the white skin with superiority; equating the European history with superiority over the black one. Broadly speaking, the problem may be the same, but I think that the Negro's problem has certain features which must be tackled.

RECKORD: The feature that it has is that whereas the working class English child is faced with an accent, that marks him as low, he can change that accent. The working class Negro child can't change his skin. To that extent, the problems are different. But it seems to me that if you get the Negro concentrating on the same thing the working class will have to concentrate on - his education, his pounds, shillings and pence, or dollars, then the problem no longer faces him that we Negroes tend to wrangle about. We know of people who have been educated and do not find any difficulty in dealing with any white man. I did when I was 20, I don't now, because I have had the same sort of education as he has had. The inferiority that I felt in the colonial childhood has worked itself out because I have looked around the world. I've had the chance to see that I'm in no way inferior, and - the problem doesn't arise. I think I would like to know why both Lewis and Arnold laugh at this.

GIBBONS: But Barry, I think you're missing the entire point of my argument. My argument doesn't dwell on any inferiority complexes, or any complexes indeed. I'm looking at it very broadly, because, you see, for thousands of years we have been treated as specimens, indeed as things apart from the norm.

RECKORD: Could you talk about yourself? This is what it boils down to now. My point is that the large masses of Negroes are in much the same position as the large masses of working class, and the fact that they can change their accent and we can't change our skins doesn't make all that much difference. The proof of this is, that the educated Negro, which is what we have around this table, doesn't seem to me to suffer from those things that James Baldwin talks about. They apply to the mass of Negroes, but not to the educated. Now, can you tell me whether you in fact, as an educated Negro, Arnold, you, as an educated Negro, suffer from this sort of feeling about the white man.

GIBBONS: I do not personally, but at the same time Barry, I am not in as fortunate a position as you are, able to separate myself from my people.

RECKORD: This is nonsense. The point is this: that I'm not separating myself from my people, I am just saying that the cure for my people is exactly the same cure that I have gone through.

NKOSI: If I may say so Barry, according to you, you haven't got any particular people - I mean, you belong, your people are the entire working class people of the world who are disenfranchised. I find this quite ridiculous, because once you admit that being visible, just being visible as a black man, makes you much more vulnerable in the white world, you have come face to face with your own black uniqueness. This does not necessarily have to indicate that you feel a sense of inferiority. The point is that when you appear before white people, they single you out as a black person, and in their minds, any black face suggests some things which flow from certain historical concepts of the Negro race. We can't pretend that we're not living in that kind of world, even when you achieve something. Earlier, you were talking to Charles, and he happened to say that someone was a Negro writer. You didn't like this, because you said it suggested a sense of inferiority, but the very reason that you're sensitive about that indicates that you define yourself against a white world which has tended to

NKOSI OF SOUTH AFRICA

assume the inferiority of Negroes.

MUGERWA: On this point I can accept Barry's analysis of the situation, and perhaps here I find myself in a minority. You see, most of you are from places where the Negro, people of African descent, are minorities - or if not minorities, at any rate their culture has been taken to be inferior to that of the ruling power.

I come from a society, Uganda, where is spite of colonialism for about 62 years, one's sense of values and attitude to life is not such that one feels he has to educate himself in order to catch up with the pattern set by the former colonial masters. While admitting that we are all united in the general sense of having been disenfranchised, my reaction is different from Barry's. He says: 'By all means let's get down to business, climb up politically and economically, and in due course we shall be like the whites who've been despising us for two thousand years.' I react differently. I say: 'his education - I will accept some bits of it, I'll reject some, but I'm not going to make myself climb up this ladder set up by these people.'

RECKORD: I mustn't be taken to think that whites are on a pedestal, that we must aspire to as blacks, that we must get educated and be like them. That is a kind of statement I'm fighting against. I cannot regard any people in a mass as having any qualities, desirable or undesirable, that one can talk about. This is just utter nonsense. What I'm saying is that all the people in the world are going through much the same process, that when they're educated, or when they make money, they have a kind of confidence that they don't have when they're uneducated and when they don't have money. This goes for black as well as white, and what I want to know is whether my friends here, who are both educated and have enough money to live on, feel the kind of inferiority that James Baldwin says brought the blacks together at that conference. That is, an unease in the presence of a white man, because I am pretty damned sure that they don't.

NKOSI: Well, may I ask you a question Barry? Suppose in Montgomery, in the South in America you found yourself among a group of Negroes or among whites, and at that particular time there happened to be a riot? Could you tell me how your being educated and having money helps you in this situation? Do you not react automatically as a black man in a hostile world?

RECKORD: Yes - but this doesn't make any difference at all. I mean, if a group of Americans, white Americans, find themselves in East Germany, it doesn't matter anything about their money or their education. There might be riots there - you might have something going on, bad business.

You have had fights going on between whites, you know, so the business of fighting between black and white is a particular situation. It means that we are regarded in a particular way and we are going to have to fight that out.

NKOSI: You don't answer my question at all. I said, do you react as a person of black skin. I'm sure that if white Americans found themselves in a riot situation in Germany, people might not automatically assume that they were American, but if, in Atlanta, Georgia, there is a riot, do you, because you have the money and the education, do you tend to be less insecure than the Negro who is uneducated?

RECKORD: The question is, what is the difference of the Negro from, say, the white working class? How far, since even an educated Negro is going to have the door slammed in his face, can he feel that he is any different from other Negroes? The answer is that he doesn't feel that he is different from other Negroes. He knows perfectly well what is happening, he also knows that when there are more and more educated Negroes like himself, and Negroes that have money, that doors are going to slam less and less.

ABRAHAM: Is the fact that the more Negroes are rich and educated and the doors of landladies in New York and London slam less and less in their faces really an answer to problems of black identity? This surely doesn't touch upon a rich African chieftain who is a millionaire, but who insists on eating foufou, insists on listening to his own music and insists on doing things the way he would have done them in Lagos or in Kampala. Does not a large part of the reality of black brotherhood lie in when the white world will accept foufou as a food as good as any French dish, and African dress as a dress as good as any Western dress? Indeed, the example of the American Negro has demonstrated the acquisition of money and education is not enough. They are still Negroes.

RECKORD: But the answer here is that Negroes who get themselves cars and get themselves educated are so few relatively, that they are still naturally being seen as just the same as the mass of their fellow Negroes. This is inevitable, but you can't therefore say that the channels are discredited because a few Negroes who are educated, and well off are still discriminated against - that this means that the channels, the political, economic channels are discredited, this is nonsense. It's just that we are few and we want to be more, and when we are more, we will see less this kind of discrimination.

MUGERWA: I don't agree with you at all Barry. You seem to magine that a great deal of education and a certain amount of wealth on the part of the Negroes will perhaps gain them admission into doors which have hitherto been closed. I don't agree, I think a reciprocal amount of education on the part of white people is necessary. I think our education must go hand in hand with theirs.

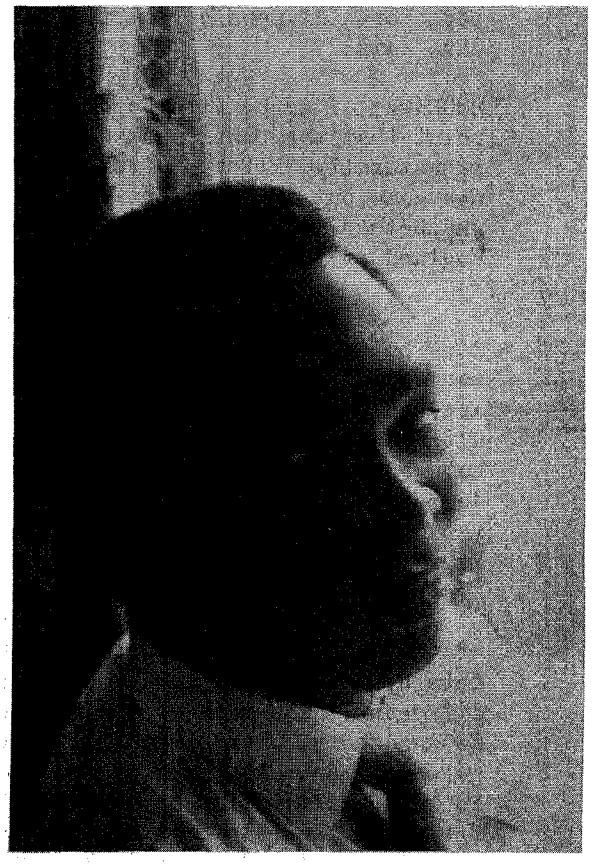
They must be prepared to see things in a completely different way. They must be able to measure our advance against their retrogression, and very few, very few of them are prepared to look at things in this way. The more Negroes that are educated, and in this my opinion is confined to the United States, the more reason to feel that Negroes constitute a threat, a threat that

must be put down in as forcible a manner as possible. How else can you possibly explain the black college graduates who fail to pass a simple voting test in Mississippi? This is a concrete case where black people who have educated themselves by their own hard efforts, at the best universities, have got to undergo the indignity of a simple voting test which a child of ten or eleven should be able to get through. This is what I mean, that however much we educate ourselves, if there is not a proportion of reciprocal education on the other side, we are just hammering our heads against a brick wall.

RECKORD: This seems really astonishing that we go on talking about the mass of Negroes and won't talk about ourselves. Do you really feel that the white working class casts around and finds you and takes you as a lower specimen?

ABRAHAM: But of course. I mean, if education had any contribution in this then it's only logical that the white working class man should first of all want to find out how educated I am and what my blood count is like! When your white landlady turns you away, it's not because she's got in touch with Scotland Yard and found out details about you. She looks at your face and what she sees is that you are a Negro and so she says, sorry.

RECKORD: We're confusing two things. I admit that education and money are not going to make the Negro feel easy, but this is because white people are looking at him through a mass. He's not being regarded as an educated Negro, he's being regarded as a Negro, and Negro means uneducated, dirty, all that kind of thing that people associate with workers. In England, for instance, working class people are invariably talked about as dirty by the middle class. All these terms apply to the proletariat, black and white. White landladies who are middle class won't like having an Irishman, they won't like having a Cockney, because there are certain prejudices and the same prejudices apply to Negroes.



ABRAHAM OF GHANA

Now that's one thing, the few educated Negroes are seen through the eyes of the mass. The second thing I want to clear up, is that I am NOT saying that Negroes must knock on the door of white people for acceptance. I am not concerned about white people in mass, or Negroes in mass; what I am concerned about is the Negro who feels inferior although he's educated Some people here say we're educated, we have a certain amount of money, yet we still feel inferior. The answer to that is we feel inferior because the mass of our people are still proletarian workers, and this is, this is quite understandable.

ABRAHAM: But this is quite false, I mean, the mass of our people are not proletarian. You might say that they are largely peasants but certainly not proletarian, in any case, the masses of our people do not live in white societies.

RECKORD: What is the difference if I may ask between peasant and proletarian?

ABRAHAM: Well, I suppose one might say it's technical but a proletarian must work for wages.....

RECKORD: But why must you use things like that? It's an absolute mess up. It's difficult enough and to bring in sort of technical distinctions is nonsense. Don't just argue and quibble.

ABRAHAM: I'm not trying to quibble. It may well be that there is nonsense somewhere, but that's just what I'm trying to find out. Now what I'm trying to point out is that the masses of Negroes do not live in white societies, they live in Africa and Africa is not predominantly white. Now when people feel inferior, when Negroes feel inferior, it is usually in a white society. So I think it irrelevant to draw upon something that is not the case, to pretend that all Negroes live in white societies, and that white men in white societies can see for themselves that all the Negroes who are going to live in white societies are proletarian and hence they don't have to bother to pick the corn from among the chaff. This is not so at all, because the mass of Negroes do not live in white societies. So it is not just through white inspections of them and their relations with white men in white societies that black men are encouraged to feel inferior. If people feel inferior the reason must be elsewhere, not in what you have said.

MUGERWA: I agree with an element of what Abraham said. I said at some earlier point that the problem as seen by a Negro in a predominantly white environment is naturally different from that as seen by me or by a Ghanaian. Someone could now come out and say, but if your society is so well looked up to by your people, why bother to come to the United States or England to study those things which England or the U.S. can offer? I can answer that quite simply.

My society recognises that some things are lacking and that they are done better in England or Germany. These will be learned but this does not go to the social code, it does not go to the fundamental values of the society, these are, so to speak, material additions, they may influence the ultimate picture, the ultimate pattern of that society, but the change will be imperceptible. We won't have any of this heart burning in a man who lives in a society and is trying desperately to be prim and proper because everybody is prim and proper and he's the only Negro who's a Harvard graduate. We don't have this in predominantly Negro societies.

Charles, another point is this, the African, I mean in America, the mass of the Negroes are a drawback to the man who is rising, he feels he is being drawn down by the mass of his people, In Africa I think the picture is slightly different. The mass of the Africans in Africa do not come to Europe, do not go to Johannesburg, where they feel that they are kind of outcasts of the society set up by white men. The mass of the people are comfortable in their simple way, settled in their cultivation in their little establishments. It is the African who comes from this group to England, who is rejected by a white landlady, who in fact feels far more hurt and has got these tensions which you, Barry, have been trying to minimise all the time, by saying that you are an educated Negro. The point is that the African who has come out of the mass of his own surroundings feels these race tensions. Admittedly, it varies from one person to another. I feel personally that the earlier one comes out of his society, the better for him. I came out when I

GIBBONS OF BRITISH GUIANA

that many white men may hold of him?

was 23, I was too cynical to be impressed by white values, and to the extent that I am looked at by landladies I am angry, but it doesn't make me feel in any way that I am inferior. I just feel that they understand far less than they ought. I've seen children run away in my own village when a white man approaches.

ABRAHAM: It is doubtful that the feelings that many Negroes feel in the presence of white men are feelings of inferiority. The feelings are of racial awareness, but this does not mean that one accepts a certain attitude about oneself of unworthiness in a certain kind of society. It's more of a consciousness of difference than of inferiority. Mingled with that sense of difference there may be hostility.

PATTERSON: Does this mean that there is a kind of war that goes on between black men and white men, especially in a predominantly white society, a sort of war that means that each black man in the society has to be continually prepared to fight off certain kinds of pressures, the most important of these being the heavy pressure to accept the negative view

ABRAHAM: Without a doubt. I think that this is the proof that the feeling is not of inferiority. For if I felt inferior, that would be that, there would be nothing more to it, and I wouldn't feel necessarily annoyed simply because my attention is drawn to this however gratuitously. But it is because I do not feel I am inferior to anyone because he's white, that I feel deep annoyance when one pretends that the contrary is so.

NKOSI: Yes, and I would like to add this to the discussion. I do feel that the white child when he comes to the world and begins to look at the world, the first assumption he makes is that the world was really made for him and that the world confirms this vision he has of it. The black child, because of this history of disenfranchisement, does not make this assumption. It is this that defines the relation between the black and the white world and the black man's refusal, when he gains political consciousness, to admit to this vision that the white world has. This is, in fact, the beginning of his consciousness, a sort of casting around and saying "Who am I?" and "Who are the black people around the world?" We cannot escape the fact that we are trying to define ourselves vis-a-vis a white world.

PATTERSON: I think before we end, we should take one more crack at where we began.

We started out asking the question about the relationship of all of us as black men. We have touched upon some of the complications, some of the agonies, and some of the rewards of this presumed relationship between black people. Can I have a final word from each of you on the brotherhood of blackness?

RECKORD: I think that there is a brotherhood of blackness for the obvious reason that black people have been disenfranchised, and even those who enfranchised themselves always have in their memory that the majority of their race are not enfranchised like themselves. So they are bound always to be aware of this kind of inferiority, it is inferiority because the world - the standards in the world - are economic and political. We have not had bread and we have not had freedom, and to that extent we are inferior. When we have bread and when we have freedom, there are still millions of us who don't, and we can never forget that, and to that extent there is a brotherhood. But I want to emphasise that the channels towards getting bread and freedom are the normal economic and political channels, that there is no mystery about black people that doesn't apply to a white working class. We must not, because we are egotistic and want to talk about ourselves, invent differences between ourselves and the whole history of the world. There is nothing new about the black man that hasn't applied to any different disenfranchised group anywhere else.

ABRAHAM: Well, I think there is such a brotherhood, I do not think it simply arises from a similarity in history. If it were that, it wouldn't be worth stressing. I think it is based on some things like a deeper attitude to life, attitude to one another and attitude to certain common problems. It is founded on culture for example and on types of social organisation and things like that. It is also founded today on common hopes and hopes for the future and efforts to make something new of Africa. It is this vision which drives one on to great efforts,

GIBBONS: I do believe that there is such a thing as the brotherhood of man, I do believe that there is such a thing as the brotherhood of black men. I think that the greater one of these is the brotherhood of man, but in order for us to achieve this we have got to realise what we are, where we have come from. Until such time when we can generally convince the white world that we do exist, that we do belong, we must continue to struggle. We are like people in a sardine tin, air-tight tin, who are travelling to something. There's a perpetual war going on and it's a war we must realise and carry on at its highest. In this war a victory for the brotherhood of blackness is a victory for brotherhood period.

MUGERWA: Well, I do accept the proposition of there being a separate blackness, a brotherhood of black people - apart from the brotherhood of man as a whole, but I would like to add this. I do feel that this brotherhood is based in part, at any rate, in its political manifestation, on the negative feeling of having been disenfranchised - this is the phrase we have been using tonight - but at the same time I think potentially richer and even more positive in its contribution to the general development of humanity and black men in general is our common heritage of having lived in the geographical unit called Africa. Even if you're an American Negro there are certain things that in spite of changing names, in spite of the erasure of the language, there are certain rhythms of life and so on which have been carried over. In Africa, of course, much more remains alive. I think that in the mass of the world's cultural material there is a contribution by black people to the general human heritage. To the extent that we all come from Africa, to the extent that we all share certain frustrations and aspirations, we are just another group of humanity who under unique circumstances have behaved like other humans. The brotherhood of black people is not based on inherently natural qualities, but on thousands of years of common circumstances. These

hold us together today.

NKOSI: At the risk of repeating myself, I should say that I do feel that there is such a thing as the brotherhood of black people and I think it's based on very definable things like colonial, political and economic factors. I think these go together. It is based on more arbitrary factors like colour.

When I see a white man fighting a black man there are certain emotional kinks in me and I make certain assumptions about this which I would not necessarily make if a black man were fighting a black man, or a white man were fighting a white man. It's no use, Barry, blaming me for this, or blaming this on an inferiority complex. It's a matter of historical heritage which we cannot deny. We want to get rid of it now. It certainly is there and I would feel less secure if I were talking about this as being based on cultural heritage, although there might be an affinity between certain Negroes and certain Africans. I feel strongly however, that politically there is this affinity because of the way we have experienced the white man in our midst.

PATTERSON: There is something quite ironic about this brotherhood of blackness we have been discussing. It has its roots and origins in the refusal of the white western world long possessed of brilliant and dedicated preachers and practitioners of brotherhood, to fully and freely extend brotherhood across racial lines. Perhaps, from what some of you have said, black men who have internalized the notion of brotherhood will not be content to confine it solely to those like themselves.

I would hope, that because of the anguished birth of this brotherhood, this deeper attitude to life black men now claim for themselves, that Negroes, wherever they dwell, would not perpetuate or recreate those agonies for others. I would that those who are of the community of colour, would recognise that regardless of the painful path along which the community has developed, the community will continue to exist only as long as it rejects vengeance and retribution.

This is a lot to ask from those newly free from the bondage of fear and the fear of bondage. But is seems to me that it must be asked, otherwise all of us, black and white, are destined to go down the years, as mirrors face to face, reflecting forever each other's most brutal and debased image.

PATTERSON OF THE UNITED STATES

In Africa, the United States, the West Indies, and South America, the visions held by black men, and the versions of black men held by white men are now indeed in the crucible.

THE END.

Sincerely yours,

Charles J. Patterson

Charles J. Patterson.

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