remain, as a separate, but well-ordered Negro community of people who prefer to retain their own subculture within the larger urban setting?"

The social scientist is also led to reflect upon questions which have been taboo ever since Booker T. Washington made his Atlanta Compromise speech in the Nineties, but which the Swedish scholar, Gunnar Myrdal did raise obliquely when he wrote: "Social discrimination is powerful as a means of keeping the Negro down... In reality it is not possible to isolate a sphere of life and call it 'social.' There is in fact a social angle to all relations... Social segregation involves a substantial element of discrimination." Some questions which ought to be faced are: "Is it possible for Bronzevilles to disappear as long as social segregation exists?" and "Can Negroes, as individuals, ever expect to reap the full fruits of competition in American society so long as they are excluded from those 'social' situations in which so much of the nation's business is transacted and where vital contacts are made and important information communicated?" The question might even be raised as to whether it is not an abridgment of a fundamental right to deny Negroes the opportunities to make the quick jumps toward the top of society that come from 'marrying into' money or influence, or to block them from marrying those who have long-term chances for unusual success. (Interracial marriage is a criminal offense in over half of the states in the Union!)

These are questions which even the most liberal of whites and the majority of Negroes, for strategic reasons, seldom dare ask openly today. But intellectual honesty demands that they be asked, even if the hope still remains that a distinctively American kind of "equality" will evolve which will give Negroes full participation in the economic and political life of the nation without paying the price of full "social equality." In the meanwhile, America's Bronzevilles become the structures which "protect" white America from "social contact" with Negroes and which simultaneously provide a milieu for Negro Americans in which they can imbue their lives with meaning.

ST. CLAIR DRAKE

HORACE R. CAYTON

April, 1962

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ST-94 BLACK METROPOLIS

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"TONZEVILLE"

ROOM USE ONLY

PART III

CHAPTER 14

Bronzeville

Ezekiel saw a wheel—
Wheel in the middle of a wheel—
The big wheel run by faith,
An' the little wheel run by the grace of God—
Ezekiel saw a wheel.

――Negro spiritual


TWO LARGE THEATERS WILL CATCH YOUR EYE WITH THEIR BILLBOARDS FEATURING NEGRO ORCHESTRAS AND VAUDEVILLE TROUPES, AND THE NEGRO GREAT AND NEAR-GREAT OF HOLLYWOOD—LENA HORNE, ROCHESTER, HATTIE MCDANIELS.

ON A SPRING OR SUMMER DAY THIS SPOT, "42ND AND SOUTH PARK," IS THE URBAN EQUIVALENT OF A VILLAGE SQUARE. IN FACT, BLACK METROPOLIS HAS A SAYING, "IF YOU'RE TRYING TO FIND A CERTAIN NEGRO IN CHICAGO, STAND ON..."
the corner of 47th and South Park long enough and you're bound to
see him." There is continuous and colorful movement here—shoppers
streaming in and out of stores; insurance agents turning in their col-
clections at a funeral parlor; club reporters rushing into a newspaper
office with their social notes; irate tenants filing complaints with the
Office of Price Administration; job-seekers moving in and out of the
United States Employment Office. Today a picket line may be calling
attention to the "unfair labor practices" of a merchant. Tomorrow a
girl may be selling tags on the corner for a hospital or community
house. The next day you will find a group of boys soliciting signatures
to place Negroes on the All-Star football team. And always a beggar
or two will be in the background—a blind man, cup in hand, tapping
his way along, or a legless veteran propped up against the side of a
building. This is Bronzeville's central shopping district, where rents
are highest and Negro merchants compete fiercely with whites for the
choicest commercial spots. A few steps away from the intersection is
the "largest Negro-owned department store in America," attempting
to challenge the elder and more experienced white retail establishments
across the street. At an exclusive "Eat Shoppe" just off the boulevard,
you may find a Negro Congressman or ex-Congressman dining at your
elbow, or former heavyweight champion Jack Johnson, beret pushed
back on his head, chuckling at the next table; in the private dining-
room there may be a party of civic leaders, black and white, planning
reforms. A few doors away, behind the Venetian blinds of a well-
appointed tavern, the "big shots" of the sporting world crowd the bar
on one side of the house, while the respectable "elite" takes its beers
and "sizzling steaks" in the booths on the other side.

Within a half-mile radius of "47th and South Park" are clustered the
major community institutions: the Negro-staffed Provident Hospital;
the George Cleveland Hall Library (named for a colored physician);
the YWCA; the "largest colored Catholic church in the country"; the
"largest Protestant congregation in America"; the Black Belt's Hotel
Grand; Parkway Community House; and the imposing Michigan
Boulevard Garden Apartments for middle-income families.

As important as any of these is the large four-square-mile green,
Washington Park—playground of the South Side. Here in the summer
thousands of Negroes of all ages congregate to play softball and
tennis, to swim, or just lounge around. Here during the Depression,
stormy crowds met to listen to leaders of the unemployed.

Within Black Metropolis, there are neighborhood centers of activity
having their own drugstores, grocery stores, theaters, poolrooms, taw-
erns, and churches, but "47th and South Park" overshadows all other
business areas in size and importance.

If you wander about a bit in Black Metropolis you will note that
one of the most striking features of the area is the prevalence of
churches, numbering some 500. Many of these edifices still bear the
marks of previous ownership—six-pointed Stars of David, Hebrew and
Swedish inscriptions, or names chiseled on old cornerstones which do
not tally with those on new bulletin boards. On many of the business
streets in the more run-down areas there are scores of "storefront"
churches. To the uninstructed, this plethora of churches is no less baffling
than the bewildering variety and the colorful extravagance of the
names. Nowhere else in Midwest Metropolis could one find, within a
stone's throw of one another, a Hebrew Baptist Church, a Baptized
Believers' Holiness Church, a Universal Union Independent, a Church
of Love and Faith, Spiritual, a Holy Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal
Independent, and a United Pentecostal Holiness Church. Or a cluster
such as St. John's Christian Spiritual, Park Mission African Methodist
Episcopal, Philadelphia Baptist, Little Rock Baptist, and the Aryan
Full Gospel Mission, Spiritualist.

Churches are conspicuous, but to those who have eyes to see they are
rivaled in number by another community institution, the police stati-
tion, which is to the Negro community what the race-horse bookie is
to white neighborhoods. In these mysterious little shops, tucked away
in basements or behind stores, one may place a dime bet and hope to
win $20 if the numbers "fall right." Definitely illegal, but tolerated by
the law, the policy station is a ubiquitous institution, absent only from
the more exclusive residential neighborhoods.

In addition to these more or less legitimate institutions, "tea pads"
and "reefer dens," "buffet flats" and "call houses" also flourish, known
only to the habits of the underworld and to those respectable patrons,
white and colored, without whose faithful support they could not
exist. (Since 1912, when Chicago's Red-light District was abolished,
prostitution has become a clandestine affair, though open "street-walk-
ing" does occur in isolated areas.) An occasional feature story or news
article in the daily press or in a Negro weekly throws a sudden light
on one of these spots—a police raid or some unexpected tragedy—and
then, as in all communities, it is forgotten.
BLACK METROPOLIS

In its thinking, Black Metropolis draws a clear line between the “shady” and the “respectable,” the “sporting world,” and the world of churches, clubs, and polite society. In practice, however, as we shall see, the line is a continuously shifting one and is hard to maintain, in the Black Metropolis as in other parts of Midwest Metropolis.

This is a community of stark contrasts, the facets of its life as varied as the colors of its people’s skins. The tiny churches in deserted and dilapidated stores, with illiterately scrawled announcements on their painted windows, are marked off sharply from the fine edifices on the boulevards with stained-glass windows and electric bulletin boards. The rickety frame dwellings, sprawled along the railroad tracks, bespeak a way of life at an opposite pole from that of the quiet and well-groomed orderliness of middle-class neighborhoods. And many of the still stately-appearing old mansions, long since abandoned by Chicago’s wealthy whites, conceal interiors that are foul and decayed.

THE ANATOMY OF A BLACK GHETTO

As we have seen in Chapter 8, the Black Belt has higher rates of sickness and death than the rest of the city, and the lowest average incomes. But misery is not spread evenly over the Black Ghetto, for Black Metropolis, as a part of Midwest Metropolis, has followed the same general pattern of city growth. Those Negroes who through the years have become prosperous tend to gravitate to stable neighborhoods far from the center of the city.* They have slowly filtered southward within the Black Belt. Always, however, they hit the invisible barbed-wire fence of restrictive covenants. The fence may be moved back a little here and there, but never far enough nor far enough.

Out of this moving, this twenty-five-year-old search for “a better neighborhood,” has arisen a spatial pattern within the Black Belt similar to that found in the city as a whole. E. Franklin Frazier, a Negro sociologist, was the first to demonstrate clearly this progressive differentiation statistically. His Negro Family in Chicago graphically portrayed the existence of “zones” based on socio-economic status within Black Metropolis. (Figure 22.) The Cayton-Warner Research, some years later, revealed what happens in a ghetto when the successful and ambitious can’t get out and when the city does not provide the poor and the vicious with enough living space, or enough incentive and opportunity to modify their style of life. (Figure 22.) The “worst” areas begin to encroach upon the “more desirable areas,” and large “mixed” areas result. These, in turn, become gradually “worst,” and the “more desirable” areas begin to suffer from “blight” and become “mixed.”

A few people from time to time do manage to escape from the Black Ghetto into the city’s residential and commuters’ zones. (Cf. Chapter 8.) They are immediately encysted by restrictive covenants and “sealed off.” (Districts 1, 2, 21, 22, 23 in Figure 22.) Such settlements—“satellite areas”—are unable to expand freely, although there is a tendency, in time, for the white people in immediate proximity to move away.

THE SPIRIT OF BRONZEVILLE

“(Ghetto) is a harsh term, carrying overtones of poverty and suffering, of exclusion and subordination. In Midwest Metropolis it is used by civic leaders when they want to shock complacency into action. Most of the ordinary people in the Black Belt refer to their community as “the South Side,” but everybody is also familiar with another name for the area—Bronzeville. This name seems to have been used originally by an editor of the Chicago Bee, who, in 1930, sponsored a contest to elect a “Mayor of Bronzeville.” A year or two later, when this newspaperman joined the Defender staff, he took his brain-child with him. The annual election of the “Mayor of Bronzeville” grew into a community event with a significance far beyond that of a circulation stunt. Each year a Board of Directors composed of outstanding citizens of the Black Belt takes charge of the mock-election. Ballots are cast at corner stores and in barbershops and poolrooms. The “Mayor,” usually a businessman, is inaugurated with a colorful ceremony and a ball. Throughout his tenure he is expected to serve as a symbol of the community’s aspirations. He visits churches, files protests with the Mayor of the city, and acts as official greeter of visitors to Bronzeville. Tens of thousands of people participate in the annual election of the “Mayor.” In 1944-45, a physician was elected mayor.
Throughout the remainder of this book we shall use the term “Bronzeville” for Black Metropolis because it seems to express the feeling that the people have about their own community. They live in the Black Belt and to them it is more than the “ghetto” revealed by statistical analysis.

The Axes of Life: What are the dominating interests, the “centers of orientation,” the lines of attention, which claim the time and money of Bronzeville—the “axes of life”—around which individual and community life revolves? The most important of these are: (1) Staying Alive; (2) Having a Good Time; (3) Praising God; (4) Getting Ahead; (5) Advancing the Race.

The majority of Bronzeville’s people will insist that they came to Midwest Metropolis to “better their condition.” Usually they mean that they were seeking an opportunity to sell their labor for a steady supply of money to expend on food, clothing, housing, recreation, and plans for the future. They were also searching for adequate leisure time in which to enjoy themselves. Such goals are a part of the general American Dream. But when a Negro talks about “betering his condition” he means something more: he refers also to finding an environment where exclusion and subordination by white men are not rubbed in his face—as they are in the South.

**STAYING ALIVE**

Before people can enjoy liberty or pursue happiness, they must maintain life. During the Fat Years the problem of earning a living was not an acute one for Negroes in Chicago. More than three-fourths of the Negro men and almost half of the women were gainfully employed, though their work tended to be heavy or menial. Wages were generally lower than for the bulk of the white working people, but they permitted a plane of living considerably higher than anything

* The expression “Bronze” when counterposed to “Black” reveals a tendency on the part of Negroes to avoid referring to themselves as “black.” And, of course, as a descriptive term, the former is even more accurate than the latter, for most Negroes are brown.

† The term “axes of life” has been used by Samuel M. Strong, of the Cuyten-Warner Research, to describe the dominant interests of Bronzeville. It is used here with some modifications of the original list that Strong compiled. (Cf. Samuel M. Strong, “The Social Type Method: Social Types in the Negro Community of Chicago,” unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1940.)

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Figure 22

**ECOLOGICAL AREAS WITHIN NEGRO COMMUNITY**

**AS DEFINED IN 1920**

**AS DEFINED IN 1930**

The “zones” (note Roman numerals) as defined in 1920 are from E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago*, University of Chicago Press, 1932. The “districts” (note Arabic numerals) as defined in 1930 are from Cuyten-Warner Research maps. The “types of neighborhood” (“best,” “mixed,” and “worst”) were defined by the latter group and have been superimposed on Frazier’s zones. Neighborhood areas were classified on the basis of median rentals, median education, and juvenile delinquency, illegitimacy and insanity rates. Extensive demolition of substandard housing took place in the northern end of the Black Belt between 1920 and 1930.
most parts of the South had to offer. Though the first few years of the Depression resulted in much actual suffering in Bronzeville, the WPA eventually provided a bedrock of subsistence which guaranteed food and clothing. The ministrations of social workers and wide education in the use of public health facilities seem to have actually raised the level of health in the Black Ghetto during the Depression years. The Second World War once more incorporated Negroes into the productive economic life of Midwest Metropolis, and most of them had plenty of money to spend for the first time in a decade.

The high infant mortality and general death rates, the high incidence of disease, and the overcrowding and hazardous work, have all operated to keep the rate of natural increase for Negroes below that for whites. The man in the street is not aware of these statistical indices, but he does experience life in the Black Belt as a struggle for existence, a struggle which he consciously interprets as a fight against white people who deny Negroes the opportunity to compete for—and hold—"good jobs." Civic leaders, who see the whole picture, are also acutely aware of the role played by inadequate health and recreational facilities and poor housing. They also recognize the need for widespread adult education which will teach recent migrants how to make use of public health facilities and to protect themselves against disease. The struggle for survival proceeds on an unconscious level, except when it is highlighted by a depression, a race riot, or an economic conflict between Negroes and whites.

**ENJOYING LIFE**

Bronzeville's people have never let poverty, disease, and discrimination "get them down." The vigor with which they enjoy life seems to belie the gloomy observations of the statisticians and civic leaders who know the facts about the Black Ghetto. In the Lean Years as well as the Fat, Bronzeville has shared the general American interest in "having a good time." Its people like the movies and shows, athletic events, dancing, card-playing, and all the other recreational activities—commercial and noncommercial—which Midwest Metropolis offers.

* Data concerning pre-Depression incomes assembled for this study indicate that in a significant number of cases even the bare subsistence level permitted by relief allowances and WPA wages constituted a definitely higher material standard of living for the lowest income group than did the wages earned in private industry during the Fat Years.

**B R O N Z E V I L L E**

recreations of an industrial society reflect the need for an escape from the monotony of machine-tending and the discipline of office and factory. For the people of Bronzeville, "having a good time" also serves another function—escape from the tensions of contact with white people. Absorption in "pleasure" is, in part at least, a kind of adjustment to their separate, subordinate status in American life.

If working as servants, Negroes must be properly deferential to the white people upon whom they depend for meager wages and tips. In fact, they often have to overdo their act in order to earn a living; as they phrase it, they have to "Uncle Tom" to "Mr. Charley" a bit to survive. If working in a factory, they must take orders from a white managerial personnel and associate with white workers who, they know, do not accept them as social equals. If self-employed, they are continually frustrated by the indirect restrictions imposed upon Negro business and professional men. If civil servants, they are in continuous contact with situations that emphasize their ghetto existence and subordinate status. But, when work is over, the pressure of the white world is lifted. Within Bronzeville Negroes are at home. They find rest from white folks as well as from labor, and they make the most of it. In their homes, in lodge rooms and clubhouses, pool parlors and taverns, cabarets and movies, they can temporarily shake off the incumbrance of the white world. Their recreational activities parallel those of white people, but with distinctive nuances and shadings of behavior. What Bronzeville considers a good time—the pattern for enjoying life—is intimately connected with economic status, education, and social standing. A detailed discussion of recreational habits is therefore reserved for those chapters dealing with social class. Suffice it here to say that Bronzeville's people treasure their inalienable right to pursue happiness.

**PRAISING THE LORD**

It is a matter for continuous surprise that churches in America's large urban communities are able to compete with secular interests and to emerge even stronger than the church in rural areas. Despite the fact that only about half of the adults in America claim church membership, the strong Protestant and Catholic tradition in the cul-

* "City churches, collectively speaking, are succeeding better than rural ones." (H. Paul Douglass and Edmund deS. Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*, Harper, New York, 1935, p. 44.)
ture retains its hold upon the minds of the American people. The church and religion have been displaced from the center of the average man’s life, but remain an important side-interest for many people. The general trend toward secularization of interests has affected men more strongly than women, but probably the majority of Americans pay some lip-service to religion and participate occasionally in the rites and ceremonies—at least upon occasions of birth, marriage, and death.

It has become customary in America to refer to Negroes as a “religious people.” The movies and the radio, by their selection of incident and dialogue, “tend to reinforce this prevalent conception. A walk through Bronzeville also seems to lend confirmation to this belief, for the evidences of an interest in “praising the Lord” are everywhere—churches are omnipresent. Negroes have slightly more than their expected share of churches and twice their share of preachers; a large proportion of the people seem to enjoy “praising the Lord.” The spirit of Bronzeville is tinted with religion, but like “having a good time” the real importance of the church can be understood only by relating it to the economic and social status of the various groups in Bronzeville.

GETTING AHEAD

The dominating individual drive in American life is not “staying alive,” nor “enjoying life,” nor “praising the Lord”—it is “getting ahead.” (In its simplest sense this means progressively moving from low-paid to higher-paid jobs, acquiring a more comfortable home, laying up something for sickness and old age, and trying to make sure that the children will start out at a higher economic and cultural level than the parents. Individuals symbolize their progress by the way they spend their money—for clothes, real estate, automobiles, donations, entertaining; and the individual’s choice is dictated largely in terms of the circle of society in which he moves or which he wishes to impress. These circles or groupings are myriad and complex, for not all people set their goals at the same distance. Out of the differential estimates of the meaning of success arise various social classes and “centers of orientation.”)

There are, of course, some small groups in Midwest Metropolis, as elsewhere, who interpret success in noneconomic terms, who prize “morality,” or “culture,” or talent and technical competence. In general, however, Americans believe that if a man is really “getting ahead,” if he is really successful, his accomplishments will become translated into an effective increase in income. People are expected to “cash in” on brains or talent or political power.

For thousands of Negro migrants from the South, merely arriving in Bronzeville represented “getting ahead.” Yet Negroes, like other Americans, share the general interest in getting ahead in more conventional terms. The Job Ceiling and the Black Ghetto limit free competition for the money and for the residential symbols of success. Partly because of these limitations (which are not peculiar to Chicago) it has become customary among the masses of Negroes in America to center their interest upon living in the immediate present or upon going to heaven—upon “having a good time” or “praising the Lord.” Though some derive their prestige from the respect accorded them by the white world, or by the professional and business segments of the Negro world, most Negroes seem to adopt a pattern of conspicuous behavior and conspicuous consumption. Maintaining a “front” and “showing off” become very important substitutes for getting ahead in the economic sense. Leadership in various organizations often constitutes the evidence that a man has “arrived.”

Leaders in Bronzeville, like Negro leaders everywhere since the Civil War, are constantly urging the community to raise its sights above “survival,” “enjoying life,” and “praising the Lord.” They present “getting ahead” as a racial duty as well as a personal gain.) When a Negro saves money, buys bonds, invests in a business or in property, he is automatically “advancing The Race.” When Negroes “waste their substance,” they are “setting The Race back.” This appraisal of their activity is widely accepted by the rank and file, but leaders sometimes press their shots too hard. When they do so, they often get a response like that of the domestic servant who resented the attempts of a civic leader to discourage elaborate social club dances during the Depression: “We [the social club] give to the Federated Home and

* “Service” is a key word in American life, cherished alike by Rotarian and labor leader, politician and priest. All forms of intense individual competition are sanctified under the name of “service,” and individual success is represented as “service” to the community. The struggle for prestige, too, is dressed up as “service.” Bronzeville, like the rest of Midwest Metropolis, has its frequent money-raising drives for charitable institutions and its corps of enthusiastic volunteers who, under the auspices of churches, lodges, clubs, and social agencies, function as part-time civic leaders. “Service” in Bronzeville is usually interpreted as “advancing The Race.”
about ten or fifteen other institutions. If we want to give a dance, I think that's our business. We poor colored people don't have much as it is, and if we sat around and thought about our sufferings we'd go crazy."

ADVANCING THE RACE

White people in Midwest Metropolis become aware of Negroes only occasionally and sporadically. Negroes, however, live in a state of intense and perpetual awareness that they are a black minority in a white man's world. The Job Ceiling and the Black Ghetto are an ever-present experience. Petty discriminations (or actions that might be interpreted as such) occur daily. Unpleasant memories of the racial and individual past are a part of every Negro's personality structure. News and rumors of injustice and terror in the South and elsewhere circulate freely through Negro communities at all times. "Race consciousness" is not the work of "agitators" or "subversive influences"—it is forced upon Negroes by the very fact of their separate-subordinate status in American life. And it is tremendously reinforced by life in a compact community such as Black Metropolis, set within the framework of a large white community.

Negroes are ill at ease in the land of their birth. They are bombarded with the slogans of democracy, liberty, freedom, equality, but they are not allowed to participate freely in American life. They develop a tormenting ambivalence toward themselves and the larger society of which they are a part. America rejects them; so they tend to hate. But it is the only land they know; so they are sentimentally attached to it. Their skin color and social origins subject them to discrimination and contempt; so they often (consciously or unconsciously) despise The Race. The people they know most intimately, however, are colored, and men cannot totally hate themselves and their friends. Thus their moods fluctuate between shame and defiance. Their conversation becomes a bewildering mixture of expressions of "racial deprecation" and "race pride."

The Cult of Race: Negroes feel impelled to prove to themselves continually that they are not the inferior creatures which their minority status implies. Thus, ever since emancipation, Negro leaders have preached the necessity for cultivating "race pride." They have assiduously repeated the half-truth that "no other race has ever made the progress that Negroes have made in an equivalent length of time." They have patiently attempted to popularize an expanding roster of Race Heroes—individuals who have attained success or prominence. "Catching up with the white folks" has been developed as the dominating theme of inspirational exhortations, and the Negro "firsts" and "onlies" are set up as Race Heroes.* "Beating the white man at his own game" becomes a powerful motivation for achievement and explains the popularity of such personalities as Joe Louis or Jesse Owens, George Washington Carver or outstanding soldier-heroes. A myth of "special gifts" has also emerged, with Negroes (and whites also) believing that American Negroes have some inborn, unusual talent as dancers, musicians, artists and athletes.

In the period between the First and the Second World Wars, this emphasis upon race pride became a mass phenomenon among the Negroes in large urban communities. Race consciousness was transformed into a positive and aggressive defensive racialism. Negroes in Black Metropolis, as in other communities, feeling the strength of their economic and political power, have become increasingly aware of the achievements of individual Negroes, and have developed an absorbing interest in every scrap of evidence that "The Race is advancing," or is "catching up with white folks," or is "beating the white man at his own game." Unable to compete freely as individuals, the Negro masses take intense vicarious pleasure in watching Race Heroes vindicate them in the eyes of the white world.

Race pride is a defensive reaction that can become a mere verbal escape mechanism. Negro leaders are therefore perpetually involved in an effort to make race pride more than an end in itself: to utilize it as a morale builder, as the raw material of "racial solidarity." They seek to use it for "advancing The Race." They foster race pride in order to elicit support for collective action—the support of Negro business enterprises, the organization of petition and protest, the focusing of economic and political power. The most persistent theme of speeches and editorials in Bronzeville is: "Negroes must learn to stick together." The leaders use it also to encourage individual achievement, by inter-

* Among Bronzeville's "firsts" are: Dr. Daniel Williams, "first man to suture a human heart"; Dr. Julian Lewis, "first Negro to serve on the faculty of the University of Chicago's medical school"; and Robert R. Taylor, "first Negro to serve as the head of the Chicago Housing Authority." Among the "onlies" are the only Negro on the schoolboard of the city, and the only Negro on the library board.
Race Leadership: Race Leaders are expected to put up some sort of aggressive fight against the exclusion and subordination of Negroes. They must also stress “catching up with white folks,” and this involves the less dramatic activity of appeals for discipline within the Black Belt, and pleas for Negroes to take advantage of opportunities to “advance.” A Race Leader has to fight the Job Ceiling and Black Ghetto and at the same time needle, cajole, and denounce Negroes themselves for inertia, diffidence, and lack of race pride, and the functions sometimes conflict.

There is rather widespread agreement in Bronzeville on what an ideal Race Leader should be. When the people are asked to describe a “real Race Leader” they always stress “sincerity” as a cardinal virtue: A Race Leader, they say,

- knows the difficulties of the race and fights without a selfish reason;
- is a sincere person with some moral principle;
- is sincere and has a plan;
- has a constant, sincere interest in the race;
- is sincere and people know he is not after some hidden personal interest;
- has the interest and well-being of the Negro race uppermost in his life.

“Everybody will tell you,” a young stenographer observed, “that a real Race Leader is ‘square’!”

Sincerity is prized, but, as one of the persons quoted above stated, a leader must have a plan. Theories about solving the race problem range all the way from amalgamation to emigration to Africa, from sympathy with Communism to the demand for a “49th Negro state.” The “accepted leaders,” however, tend to be people who stress the use of political and economic pressure (without violence) and gradual advancement by slowly raising the economic and educational level of the entire group.

“An ardent racialist without ability is not a race leader,” comments a clerical worker; “he must have something to contribute.” A leader must be able to formulate and present the Negroes’ demands and aspirations to white people. Many people insist that a real leader must be “calm, well poised, well trained.” Some think he should be “an educated person who has a great deal of influence with whites and
prestige with Negroes." The more conservative people feel that he should also be a person who "believes strongly in caution and patience" and who is "adept in the arts of personal and political compromise."

Bronzeville knows that the powers of its leaders are limited, that in the final analysis the white majority can break any leader who is too aggressive. It is well aware that white America makes concessions to Negroes primarily from the imperatives of economic necessity and political expediency rather than from devotion to democratic ideals. Out of this knowledge arises a kind of cynical realism which does not expect too much from leaders.

Bronzeville knows, too, that "leaders are human," that they are motivated by the desire for power and prestige as well as by the "service" ideal. The whole business of "advancing The Race" offers wide opportunities for fraud, graft, and chicanery. There are opportunities for "selling out to the white folks," diverting funds from "the cause," or making a racket out of race. People try to draw a line between "sincere Race Leaders" and those Race Men who "are always clamoring for The Race, just for the glory of being known." They will characterize some leaders as being "like the William Randolph Hearst variety of patriot whose Americanism means a chance to make more money." They are skeptical of those who, "when you see them, are always talking about The Race." Sincerity is hard to test, however, and Bronzeville seems to expect that its leaders will "cash in" on their positions, in terms of personal influence if not in terms of money.

The Race Man: Frustrated in their isolation from the main streams of American life, and in their impotence to control their fate decisively, Negroes tend to admire an aggressive Race Man even when his motives are suspect. They will applaud him, because, in the face of

* The term Race Man is used in a dual sense in Bronzeville. It refers to any person who has a reputation as an uncompromising fighter against attempts to subordinate Negroes. It is also used in a derogatory sense to refer to people who pay loud lip-service to "race pride." It is interesting to note that Bronzeville is somewhat suspicious, generally, of its Race Men, but tends to be more trustful of the Race Woman. "A Race Woman is sincere," commented a prominent businessman; "she can't capitalize on her activities like a Race Man." The Race Woman is sometimes described as "forceful, outspoken, and fearless, a great advocate of race pride"... "devoted to the race"... "fulfills the conditions of the people"... "the Race is uppermost in her activities"... "you know her by the speeches she makes"... "she champions the rights of Negroes"... "active in civic affairs." The Race Woman is idealized as a "fighter," but her

the white world, he remains "proud of his race and always tries to uphold it whether it is good or bad, right or wrong," because he sees "only the good points of the race." One high schoolgirl explained that "the Race Man is interested in the welfare of the people. Everybody says that they admire a Race Man, but behind the scenes they may not regard him as being sincere. The Race Man is usually a politician or a businessman. He sponsors movements for the benefit of the people. It is a way of securing honor and admiration from the people. Personally, I admire a Race Man even if he seeks his own advancement." A well-known minister interpreted the admiration for the Race Man as follows: "The people are emotionally enthusiastic about a Race Man. They know that a Race Man may not be quite as sincere as some of the more quiet leaders. Still, the very fact of his working for the race gives him prestige in their eyes." A Race Man is one type of Race Hero.

The Race Hero: If a man "fights for The Race," if he seems to be "all for The Race," if he is "fearless in his approach to white people," he becomes a Race Hero. Similarly any Negro becomes a hero if he beats the white man at his own game or forces the white world to recognize his talent or service or achievement. Racketeer or preacher, reactionary or Communist, ignoramus or savant—if a man is an aggressive, vocal, uncompromising Race Man he is everybody's hero. Even conservative Negroes admire colored radicals who buck the white world. Preachers may oppose sin, but they will also express a sneaking admiration for a Negro criminal who decisively outwits white people. Even the quiet, well-disciplined family man may get a thrill when a "bad Negro" blows his top and goes down with both guns blazing at the White Law. Such identification is usually covert and unconscious, and may even be feared and regretted by the very persons who experience it. Race pride sometimes verges upon the vindictive, but it is a direct result of the position to which white America has consigned the Negro group.

associated role of "uplifter" seems to be accepted with less antagonism than in the case of the Race Man. She is sometimes described as "continually showing the Negro people why they should better their condition economically and educationally." Cynics are apt to add: "intelligent and forceful but has little influence with whites." Certain women were repeatedly named as "good Race Women"—one or two local Bronzeville women who were active in civic organizations, and such nationally known figures as Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune.