

FROM 'JEGAR SAHADUTHA' TO GARY, INDIANA:
UNCLE TOMISM AND THE BLACK LITERARY REVOLUTION

BY

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Harriet Beecher Stowe's novels pose the question of the real nature of good and evil. There is in them a consistent effort to resolve the conflicting notions of good and evil¹ as mutually exclusive components of experience, and they translate the mystical resolution of circumstances arising out of the interactions of good-and-evil into mundane concreteness by a rude jolting of myth against history in the cravings, frustrations, conflicts, successes and anticipations of the various characters. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*² can be viewed not just as a degrading sketch of an impassive, improvident and reactionary nigger, but as an apocalyptic prophecy (even if an unwitting one) of a social quake, and an insight into some great future event. But Prophecy must have validity against historical development.

When the book opens, we are introduced to two men. Mr. Shelby and Haley, differing from each other as widely in physique as in motive. One is gaudy and coarse, the other "had the appearance of a gentleman: and the arrangements of the house, and the general air of the house-keeping, indicated easy, and even opulent circumstances." (p. 12) Mr. Shelby appraises Tom as an "uncommon fellow. . . steady, honest, capable," who manages "my whole farm like a clock." This is not a value judgment on Tom's worth as a human being but an evaluation of his utility as chattel. Tom's uncommon honesty has been attributed to religiosity acquired at a camp-meeting. Haley's catalogue of his business experience includes knowledge of several articles of similar disposition.

"Some folks don't believe there is pious niggers, Shelby," said Haley, "but I DO. I had a fellow, now, on this yer last lot I took to Orleans, - 't was as good as meetin', now really, to hear that critter pray; and he was quite gentle and quiet like. He fetched me a good sum, too, for I bought him cheap. . . so I realized

six hundred on him. Yes, I consider religion a valeyable thing in a nigger, when it's the genuine article, and no mistake." (p. 12)

When the discussion shifts to the sale of little Harry, Mr. Shelby will not sell him because "the fact is, sir, I am a humane man, and I hate to take the boy from his mother, sir." Shelby, of course, understands this brand of humaneness and its problems do not bother him.

"Oh, you do? - La! yes, - something of that ar natur. I understand, perfectly. It is mighty onpleasant getting on with women, sometimes, I al'ays hates these yer screechin', screamin' times. They are mighty onpleasant; but, as I manages business, I generally avoids them sir. Naw, what if you get the girl off for a day, or a week, or so; then the thing's done quietly, - all over before she comes home. Your wife might get her some ear-rings, or a new gown or some such truck, to make up with her." (p. 16)

The several levels of conflicts in this novel are set in motion when the needy and insolvent Mr. Shelby complies with the ruthless and scheming demands of Haley. Tom ignores a warning to escape before he is sold to Haley:

"No, no, - I an't going. Let Eliza go, - it's her right! . . . Mas'r always found me on the spot, - he always will. I never have broke trust, nor used my pass no ways contrary to my word and I never will. It's better for me alone to go, than to break up the place and sell. Mas'r an't to blame, Chloe, and he'll take care of you and the poor." (p. 50)

How much of the sentiment expressed here can be attributed to gullibility and naivety? How much of it can be described as the inspiration of a revolutionary missionary? In order to attempt an answer to these questions, it is necessary to reflect on the continued implications of man's rise or fall from grace. After the experience of birth, man becomes caught up in a constant struggle between the ideal and the exigent forces of life, the one drawing him to what

he *ought* to do, the other to what he *can* do. The complex contradictions of human nature and motivations are played out in the ambiguities of his hates and likes, his attractions and repugnances under varied circumstances. Mid-nineteenth century neo-Platonism asserts, not without historical antecedents, that the more idealistic half of human nature strives towards a reunion with God or the Ultimate. In the *Book of TheL*, Blake illustrates the case of a soul newly detached from God and about to receive a corporeal form. It hovers on the fringe of birth and is shocked back to ether by the ignominy and turbulence of earthly life. Somehow, the biological act of being born presupposes the acceptance of an ordained good-through-evil cycle. In this cycle can be found a teleological rationale for the paradox of divine impotence and divine omnipotence, a probable answer to the rhetorical question addressed by Blake to the tiger, "did he who made the lamb make thee?"

In being born, and in acquiring world-wisdom or speech, Uncle Tom, like Christ before him, of his own free-will chooses to suffer, not essentially because of want of impulsive opportunism, but principally because his spirit is informed by a higher cosmic order of things, even in the ordinary world of slave-and-master. Transcendence into this higher order involves, for Tom, unpragmatic self-denials and sacrificial postures. Any heroic act would be incomplete if the hero's self-sacrifice is made in ignorance of alternatives for escape. This is how Christ, both as a mythical and historical figure, moves from Gethsemane, through Calvary, into "Glory": at each point in the movement fully aware of his options to bow out of the predicament. By his last day on earth, we are shown how he was tortured and crucified:

Then the whole company of them arose, and brought him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him saying, 'we found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king.' And Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' And he answered him, 'You have said so.' And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, 'I find no crime in this man.'

Luke 23 (1-4)

Like Mr. Shelby, Pilate here is forced by the roaring mob to hand over an *innocent* man for torture and crucifixion in

order to save his own head. Since Christ almost literally insisted that his 'Kingdom' is not of this world, another crucial question here, is how a Christ-figure like Uncle Tom, fits into the scheme of the "American Dream" which is essentially meaningful in terms of a materialistic-scientific ethic.

Orthodox American pragmatism balances a theory of successes on a scale of Christian mythology versus Darwinian/Malthusian theories of survival and sustenance. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Chinga-chgook (interestingly re-christened John, the Indian), and the entire gamut of devastated animals, birds and natural phenomena belong to the same group of *things* poised against an impatient and irresistible tide. In subjugating Leatherstocking, condemning him to a term in prison and thus to death, Judge Temple somehow assumes Pilate's and Mr. Shelby's role, that is, publicly condemning a character he clandestinely admires. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne creates a Pyncheon lineage culminating in Jaffrey Pyncheon, a hardened Machiavellian materialist. The crisis of the Pyncheon success-myth is in a death which clarifies his significance as an inevitable but corruptible pillar in the new construct of powerful affluence. In the final union of Phoebe (a Pyncheon) and Holgrave (the wizard's descendant), a new prophecy is made, anticipating a levelling up of inequalities in society. Herman Melville's Pierre seems a direct heir to the vast and *forcibly* acquired estates of the Pyncheons. But through a metaphoric use of *conceit*, Melville constructs and deconstructs Pierre as a man of the world and as a mythical symbol. The *conceit* underlies Pierre's extraordinary resolve - namely, the nominal conversion of a sister into a wife which might have had a basis "in the previous *conversational* conversion of a mother into a sister." Uncle Tom fits clearly into this mainstream of characters in American nineteenth-century fiction who, trapped in the invincible tide of socio-historical events, have nothing to rely on but their human instincts and faculties. The social obstacles and taboos against which Pierre had to battle are comparable to the weight laid on Eva St. Claire's heart by her love for Uncle Tom in her identification with the oppressed and the suffering.

Nina Gordon in *Dred*³ and Eva St. Claire, like Pierre, are pawns illustrative of Melville's "chronometrical and horological *conceit*; that in things terrestrial (horological), a man must not be governed by ideas celestial (chronometrical), that certain minor self-renunciations in this

life, his own mere instinct for his own everyday general well-being will teach him to make, but he must by no means make a complete unconditional sacrifice of himself in behalf of any other being, or any other cause or any *conceit*."⁴ According to Professor Lyle Glazier,⁵ Harriet Beecher Stowe probably intended Tom's piety to be genuinely naive, that is, that Tom should become a specimen of the 'good nigger,' truly ignorant of the meaning of his sacrifice:

Behind her anti-slavery talk is her conviction that it is really best for all men to expect their deliverance only after they die. . . . True, as Mr. Alexander claimed, Tom 'refused Simon Legree's orders to murder, loot, and generally abuse fellow Blacks.' But not in order to save them from slavery. To save his soul from hell. He did not interfere with punishment when Legree and his Black stooges administered it; then Tom stood submissive, as he submitted - in a way Frederick Douglas could not - to his own brutal punishment.

There is some truth here in so far as the argument places Tom within the bounds of Melville's horological and chronometrical metaphysics. But there is certainly a "defense of right." To emphasize Mrs. Stowe's intention to create in Tom a shining example of a 'good nigger' is to deny the validity of Tom's growth or development as a fictional character. "Mrs. Stowe's real hope," Professor Glazier continues, "must be that White consciences will be moved by her book so that they will by their initiative give Negroes what they have every right to have, but no right to take." This may be partly true. But the real issue is that Tom has psychologically turned the tables against Mrs. Stowe's intentions by a sensitive analysis of all circumstances and possibilities surrounding him. Tom, I would say, by his inaction implies that in the future, other Blacks will by their own initiative take from Whites what he (Tom) knows they have *every right* to have but in the meantime, *no might* to take. In this light, Tom becomes an inarticulate but tremendously visible symbol of courage and resolution.

The Black man in the slave code is degraded below the level of the animal. Tom is in perfect mental control of his situation, realizing that he is possibly farther from

the animal than those who consistently strove to brutalize him. He would not plunge into any plans for escape because all the odds would be against his chances of success. Eliza and George Harris could try since they could pass for white. But for Tom, there is neither color, nor legislation, nor consideration for age to his advantage. His action or non-action does not in any way stem from an ignorance or renunciation of his rights to freedom. When Augustine St. Claire announces his intention to free Tom,

the sudden light of joy that shone in Tom's face as he raised his hand to Heaven, his emphatic 'Bless the Lord!' rather discomposed St. Claire; he did not like it that Tom should be so ready to leave him. 'You haven't had such very bad times here, that you need be in such a rapture, Tom,' he said, dryly. 'No, no, Mis'r! an't that, - it's bein' a free man! That's what I'm joyin' for.' 'Why, Tom, don't you think, for your own part, you've been better off than to be free?' 'No, indeed, Mis'r St. Claire,' said Tom, with a flash of energy. 'No indeed!' 'Why, Tom, you couldn't possibly have earned, by your work, such clothes and such living as I have given you.' 'Knows all that, Mis'r St. Claire; Mis'r's been too good; but, Mis'r, I'd rather have poor clothes, poor house, poor everything, and them mine, than have the best, and have 'em any man's else, - I had so, Mis'r' I think it's natur, Mis'r.'

There is enough social and political philosophy in this little dialogue to convince any critic that Tom has said less than he knows. He hungers for freedom but will achieve it neither through selfish heroism nor through quixotic bravery. This shows that though Tom can bear chastisement and anticipate an eternal reward, he also anticipates an earthly reward in terms of *freedom*, not only for himself alone but also for his progeny.

The scenes of Tom's last days must be analyzed in terms of this dual hope for reward. As the rough and tough Sambo and Quimbo drag him into Legree's presence, he commends his spirit into the hands of the Lord.

'Well, Tom!' said Legree. . . 'do you know I've made up my mind to KILL you?' 'It's very likely, Mas'r,' said Tom calmly.

'I have,' said Legree, with grim, terrible calmness, 'done-just-that-thing', Tom, unless you'll tell me what you know about these yer gals!' Tom stood silent. 'D' ye hear?' said Legree stamping, with a roar like that of an incensed lion.

'Speak!' 'I han't got nothing to tell, Mas'r,' said Tom, with a slow, firm deliberate utterance. 'Do you dare tell me, ye old black Christian, ye don't know?' Tom was silent. 'Speak!' thundered Legree, striking him furiously, 'Do you know anything?' 'I know, Mas'r; but I can't tell anything. I can die!'

After the tortures, a new message permeates the brute sensibilities of Sambo and Quimbo. As people who understand more of the language of pain, it completely overwhelms them to see a man, a black man like themselves, so noble, so resolute, even in suffering.

'Sartin, we's been doin' a drefful wicked thing!' said Sambo; 'hopes Mas'r'll have to 'count for it, and not we.' . . . 'Oh, Tom!' said Quimbo, 'we's been awful wicked to ye!' 'I forgive ye, with all my heart!' said Tom faintly. 'Oh, Tom! do tell us who is JESUS, anyhow?' said Sambo, - 'Jesus, that's been a standin' by you so, all this night? - Who is he?' The word roused the failing, fainting spirit. He poured forth a few energetic sentences of that wondrous one, - his life, his death, his everlasting presence, and power to save. They wept, - both the two savage men. 'Why didn't I never hear this before?' said Sambo; 'but I do believe! - I can't help it! Lord Jesus have mercy on us!' 'Poor critturs!' said Tom, 'I'd be willin to bear all I have, if it'll only bring ye to Christ! give me these two more souls, I pray!' That prayer was answered. (pp. 440-442)

It would be sentimental to relish the religious contents of these conversions without anticipating their social and political implications. Mrs. Stowe at this

point dismisses Quimbo and Sambo, presumably out of an unreadiness or inability to manage in literary terms what a confrontation might be between the slave institution and Quimbo/Sambo, imbued with a new sense of *right* and *wrong*. This is also probably why Dred, who could be a direct descendant of Quimbo/Sambo, is located in the swamps only to launch a moral guerilla war on his slave-holding neighbors from there.

The first volume of *Dred* set the scene of action for the hero. In it, all liberal and tyrannical forces of the slave institution are melodramatically polarised. Tom Gordon and Mr. Jekyl are wedged against Clayton and Russel while there are between them the fragile and vulnerable Nina and Harry Gordon. Like Eva St. Claire, Nina Gordon dies due to her indiscriminate identification with the poor and the sick. The camp-meeting serves as a favorable meeting point for all the polarised forces and peoples: The Gordons, the Claytons, the slave-buying Father Bonnie and the pious liberal Father Dickson, Ben Darkins, who came to the meeting straight from "a fight with another slave-hunter, who had boasted a better-trained pack of dogs than his own," Jim Stokes who feels "a troublous, vague yearning, deep down within him, which makes him for the moment doubt whether he had better knock down Ben at the end of the meeting." (p. 305) Meanwhile, Abijah Skinflint has set up his retail booth in the middle of the fair and we over-hear him combining a distribution of whiskey to customers with a rap at high Calvinism:

'Well,' said Abijah, 'strange how folks will see things! Why, it's just as clear to me that all things is decreed! Why, that ar nails everything up tight and handsome. It gives a fellow a kind of confort to think on it. Things is just as they have got to be. All this free-grace stuff is drefful loose talk. If things is been decreed 'fore the world was made, well, there seems to be some sense in their coming to pass. But, if everything kind of turns up whenever folks think ot 't, it's a kind of shaky business.'

As the preachings and prostrations of the day reach a peak, Nina Gordon entreats Clayton: "Do take me out, - it's dreadful!" The genuineness of her nature rebels against the

stage-managed piety of the congregation while Clayton tries to explain away his indifference in pantheism:

'If we may judge our Father by his voice in nature, he deems severity a necessary part of our training. How inflexibly and terribly regular are all his laws! Fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind fulfilling his word - all these have a crushing regularity in their movements, which show that he is to be feared as well as loved.' (p. 317)

The sudden outburst of Dred's voice from among the trees and above the heads of the assembly is in keeping with the out-of-this world nature of the entire narrative. Somehow, Mrs. Stowe rather absurdly circumvents the real point of conflict which could have reduced the esoteric lingo of the preachers and Dred to earthly actions and challenges. And we are forced to acknowledge that despite their gross inhumanity, the only characters endowed with some life are Skinflints and the double-dealing priests. The inaction, particularly of Dred, crystallizes once again an important and delicate aspect of the confrontation between a sensitive slave and his powerful adversaries. He cannot attack and destroy the slave institution because he is not sufficiently armed. Instead, he lives in a clearing in the swamps where he cares for refugee slaves from the surrounding camps. Obviously, the intention of the author in depicting Dred as a swamp-dweller, some intermediary between beast and man, versed in snake charming and priding himself in possessing occult powers, is not complimentary. The important thing is the level or progression of action in the line of Uncle Tom, which Dred represents at his moments of inspiration. Following on the heels of Father Bonnie, Dred takes the air and repeats the apocalyptic prophecy of Augustine St. Claire about a *dies irae* (see *Uncle Tom*, p. 252).

'Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end shall it be for you? The day of the Lord shall be darkness, and not light! . . . The Lord hath sworn, saying, I will never forget their works. I will surely visit you! . . . Hear, O rebellious people! The Lord is against this nation! The Lord shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the

stones of emptiness! . . . Woe upon the bloody city! It is full of lies and robbery! The noise of a whip! - the horseman lifeth up the sword and glittering spear! and there is a multitude slain! There is no end of their corpses! - They are stumbling upon the corpses! For, Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord, and I will make thee utterly desolate! (Dred, p. 320)

After this mesmeric pronouncement, Dred leaps from tree to tree back to his swamp reserve, leaving his audience consternated. It is necessary to note that as long as Dred remains a mysterious fugitive slave trying to metamorphose into an animal in the swamps, the plantation owners would let him alone. But as soon as his colony becomes a social center, catering for several other runaway couples, including Harry Gordon, then he has touched a sensitive spot or, as Achebe would say, killed the sacred python. Tom Gordon immediately organises a massive hunt during which Dred is shot in the chest. As he lies dying, he instructs that he be laid "beneath the heap of witness."

In the quaint and shaggy mound to which Dred had attached that strange, rugged, oriental appellation, Jegar Sahadutha, or 'the heap of witness,' there was wildly flaring a huge pine-knot torch whose light fell with a red, distinct glare on the prostrate form that lay there like a kingly cedar uprooted. . .
(p. 298)

The torch which the death of Dred lit did not die with him and by its guidance all the members of the camp escaped to the northern states through the underground railroad.

Good literature has to grow out of fertile imagination and real experiences in life. But the conditioned and stereotyped criticism of 'Uncle Tomism' does not acknowledge the necessity of a rationalized action in life, nor does it appreciate the psychological barrier between Tom and his creator. It took the American Civil War⁶ (even after the American Revolution), to shock Black American sensibilities and alert the Black man to the full implications of his American citizenship. It is necessary to realize that if Uncle Tom were as historical as Frederick Douglass, he would not fight on the side of the Confederacy in order to

remain a slave. His confrontation with Simon Legree clearly demonstrates this fact. The place of Dred and the fugitive slaves in the emancipation myth is also clear. After the civil war and the emancipation, poetry and prose about Black people began to be written increasingly by the Blacks. The authors and their characters gained mythic and spiritual sustenance from the Uncle Toms and the Dreds while seeking militant inspiration from Toussant, Nat Turner and Frederick Douglass. These trends find a blend in W.E.B. DuBois whose *Souls of Black Folk* shows that despite the distance the Black man has covered to get to his present position, not much has changed in black-white relationship. After a long and arduous life, the Black man's frustration and failure to secure the good life in America has given rise to a new class of Black activists and intellectuals who have lost all hope in man and the efficacy of 'even-handed' justice.

After the DuBois - Booker T. Washington discord⁷ of the early twenties, the formation of the pro-integrationist NAACP and the militant back-to-Africa Garveyism, there followed an era of mixed leadership in Black literary ranks. But the lull was only preparatory to the Harlem renaissance, to the violent assassinations of the 60's which threw into clear relief the insincerity of all social and political maneuvers aimed at securing equal opportunities for the Black man in America. This state of uncertainty is reflected in the writings of Black Americans from Paul Lawrence Dunbar almost to Ishmael Reed. In *The Outsider*, 1953, Richard Wright brings to a focus the trend of a character he has tried to develop from *Native Son*, 1940, through *Black Boy*, 1942. Very much like the unnamed hero of Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, 1953, Wright's Cross Damon, through a conspiracy of fate and society, turns into a demon in a heated quest for identity in non-identity that carries a wave of death and destruction wherever he shows up.

Today's Black writers seem to have found an identity, at least they capitalize on a common denominator: Blackness. They are now banded in an irreverent, screaming and vituperative but self-justifying front constituting what Peter Labrie has called "the new breed."⁸ It seems indeed that what this group needs most is their self-justifying confidence. Their "psychology of the damned" grows out of "the ceaseless and unmitigated bigotry, torture, lawlessness and killings that American white men and women have historically inflicted upon Black people in this country. . . ." Therefore, each Black American today, in

fact or in fiction, is an embodiment of the experiences of his predecessors. Each Bigger Thomas, each Cross Damon, each militant or non-violent-leader is an amalgam of the hurdles and tribulations of Uncle Tom, Dred, Frederick Douglass, Garvey, King, Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon. Charles Anderson sums up the completion of the Black Man's Christian religious-cycle in the poem "Prayer To The White Man's God."⁹

*I've been prayin' for centuries
To some God up in the sky
Lord, what's the delay?
Help me today.
God said, @ 'way, boy
I don't want to hear you cry,
But I know Jesus heard me
Cause he spit right in my eye.*

The important point here is that this is the same God who is said to have been used to illustrate the Black man's naivety in Uncle Tom. This is the same God that 'refined' Phyllis Wheatley's "benighted" soul and made lynching a salutary act for Countee Cullen in *Black Christ*. The Black man's spiritual acculturation has gone full circle and arrived where it began; and Uncle Tom, both mythically and historically, has been a cardinal point in this revolution of the Black mind. Every Black man in America carries in him not only a bit of Bigger Thomas, but also a bit of Uncle Thomas. This is the fact and basis of his survival.

From this consideration, it is easy to understand the impact of the memorandum adopted by a Black convention held recently at Gary, Indiana. Either as material for history or literature, the memorandum comes at a moment of crisis in the consciousness of Black people the world over. It comes at a time when all Black people are realizing their common destiny, signified superficially by skin color but primarily by the collective experience as descendants of long oppressed and brutalized peoples. The consequence is a dilemma of choice.

We come to Gary, the memo says, in an hour of great crisis and tremendous promises for Black America. While the white nation hovers on the brink of chaos, while its politicians offer no hope of real change, we stand on the edge of history and are faced with an amazing and frightening choice: We may choose 1972 to slop back into the decadent white politics

of American life, or we may press forward,
moving relentlessly from Gory to the creation
of our own Black life. The choice is large,
but the time is very short.¹⁰

This resolution has come a long way. Hitherto, only white liberals or "God Fathers" have interceded for the oppressed and the Blacks. Having tried all avenues to freedom, from man to Christian God, and found them unreliable, the Blacks and other exploited peoples seem now ready to take the bull by the horns and face the consequences. The bull is not an easy enemy, and those who invite the lion to dinner must have enough meat in store. Man has never succeeded in extricating himself from the tangles of the horological and chronometrical forces; and while we are still corporeal and still use language, there is no place for chronometrical perfection among mankind. Like Christ and Herod in Biblical history, caught up in the conflicts between God and society; like Uncle Tom and Augustine St. Claire in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Dred and Clayton in *Dred*, Black people are caught in the tangles of antithetical forces. Continued existence is thus synonymous with continued struggle fortified with intense will power. The literature of Uncle Tomism might yet be reassessed in the course of the Black socio-literary revolution.

Footnotes

1. In "The Problem of Job," *American Thought: Civil War to World War I*, ed. Perry Miller. (San Francisco, 1954), 1-25, Josiah Royce talks of "good," as we mortals experience it, as something which "when it comes or is expected, we actively welcome, try to maintain or keep, and regard with content. By evil in general, as it is in our experience, we mean whatever we find in any sense repugnant and intolerable. . . Commonly and rightly, when we speak of evil, we make reference to acts of resistance, of struggle, of shrinking, of flight, of removal of ourselves from a source of mischief - acts which not only follow the experience of evil, but which serve to define in a pursuit and of welcome what we mean by good."

2. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York, 1966).
[References to this and other works will be enclosed in parentheses in the text.]
3. Stowe, *Dred*, Vols. I & II, ed. Samson Phillips (Boston, 1956).
4. Herman Melville, *Pierre or, The Ambiguities* (N.Y.: Signet Classic, 1964), 248.
5. Lyle Glazier, *Pointing Upward* (Hacettepe Bulletin of Social Sciences & Humanities, Ankara, Vol. 3, No. 1, June, 1971).
6. According to Rayford W. Logan, in *The Negro in the United States* (N.Y., 1957), "Some 186,000 Negro troops took part in 198 battles and skirmishes and suffered 68,000 casualties. The total number of Negroes, including servants, laborers, and spies, amounted to more than 300,000. A much smaller number of Negro soldiers served in the ranks of the Confederate army. On September 17, 1862, following a Union victory at Antietam, Lincoln proclaimed a Preliminary Emancipation Edict. On January 1, 1863, acting in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy, he proclaimed the emancipation of all slaves except in those states or parts of the state not in rebellion against the United States at that time. Even before the Emancipation Proclamation, Negroes had begun to desert the plantations. After the Proclamation, the arrival of Union troops led to even larger-scale flight to the Union forces. On December 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery everywhere in the United States."
7. In *Souls of Black Folk* (London, 1965) in the essay "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and others," DuBois attacks Washington's program of political power through economic influence for the Black American. He asks "Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men?" It is obvious today that both Washington and DuBois sought the same goal but took different lines to it, the former rather pragmatically and the latter more idealistically. Their differences got magnified in the militant versus pacifist ideologies of

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.

8. Peter Labrie, "The New Breed," in *Black Fire*, eds. LeRoi Jones and Larry Neal (New York, 1971). [Calvin C. Hernton also refers to this group as possessing a "psychology of the damned," in an essay "Dynamite growing out of Their Skulls," in *Black Fire*.]
9. *Black Fire*, p. 191.
10. *Time Magazine*, March 27, 1972, under the title "Frail Black Consensus" calls the Gary accord "an encounter of militants and integrationists" reporting that "the politics of the assembled Blacks - 3,009 delegates to the first national political convention of Blacks in the U.S. - were as wildly varied as their attire. . . . Committees working on segments of the agenda encountered the full range of philosophies within the Black community. . . ." Whatever institutionalized propaganda may wish to think, Black American awareness is an ignited affair. The torch may have been burning on the wrong end, but whichever way, America has in its Blacks and the oppressed, a fatal heart cancer.

Pol Ndu is a doctoral student at the State University of New York, Buffalo. He is one of the most promising of the younger generation of Nigerian poets, and a volume of his poems is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.