

MARX, GARY T. *Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community*. New York. Harper Torchbooks. 1969. Pp. xxviii, 256.

This study by Gary T. Marx represents a solid piece of sociological research which combines a careful analysis of interview data with the debunking of some popular myths current in the white community, all tempered by a sensitivity to the human struggle described. This paperback edition is a reissue of the third book in the *Patterns of American Prejudice* series on anti-semitism sponsored by the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League and carried out by the Survey Research Center of the University of California at Berkeley. The other volumes in this series include: C. Y. Glock and R. Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, 1966 (see my review in *Jewish Social Studies*, July, 1970, pp. 232-47); C. Y. Glock, G. J. Selznick, and J. L. Spaeth, *The Apathetic Majority*, 1966; G.

J. Selznick and S. Steinberg, *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, 1969; and S. M. Lipset and E. Raab, *Politics of Unreason*, 1970.

Within the scope of the Five-Year Study of Antisemitism in the United States, black antisemitism was originally to be studied within a general national assessment. Before the time came to carry out the field work of this general study in 1964, it became apparent that "so called Negro anti-Semitism could no longer be studied apart from Negro attitudes toward their own situation, the whites, the community, and the civil rights movement" (p. xix). By virtue of its breadth of perspective the merit of this study is increased. Through its discussion of the great diversity of belief within the black community, the study belies the unanimity assumed to be present by many whites, whose racist notions are nurtured in the sensationalism of the mass media. The depth of this analysis is demonstrated in the book's eight chapters that discuss the climate of opinion on civil rights, the social and psychological contexts of civil rights militancy (as operationalized in 1964), the role of religion and black nationalism (in 1964 represented primarily by the adherents of the Nation of Islam popularly called "Black Muslims"), relationships with Jews in particular and whites in general, and attitudes towards civil rights and tolerance.

Some of the major findings of this study are especially worthy of note given the usually one-dimensional characterization of the black mood in the mass media:

- Only a third of the Negro community was consistently militant in outlook.
- In spite of what many would consider provocation, even fewer were strongly anti-white.

—To the degree Negroes distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish whites, they prefer Jews.

—Civil rights militancy was negatively related to anti-white and anti-Jewish feeling.

—In spite of its importance to protest in some respects, religiosity is an important factor inhibiting militancy.

—Conventional civil rights groups and leaders enjoyed overwhelming popularity.

—Very few Negroes were strong supporters of the Muslims.

—The least-privileged Negroes who are most likely to profit from social change, were the least likely to be militant (pp. 205-206).

A closer examination of the findings highlights the thoroughness of the research. Eight items were used in the completed version of an Index of Conventional Militancy for 1964 which included the following representative statements: "In your opinion, is the government in Washington pushing integration too slow, too fast, or about right? (Too slow.)" "Would you like to see more demonstrations or less demonstrations? (More.)" "An owner of property should not have to sell to Negroes if he doesn't want to. (Disagree.)" It can be seen that these items seem to measure discontent rather than militancy, which in today's parlance implies activism. Thus, the subsequent references to militancy are based on Marx's terminology not the contemporary imagery.

In terms of the relationships between various social factors and militancy, the latter was found to be greater among those individuals who were exposed to a value system which legitimized protest (that is, spent most of their childhood outside the South or the United States, grew up in a big city, were younger, were male), had a higher socio-economic position, and were characterized by a high degree of social involvement. In tracing the psychological sources of militancy the latter was found to be greater for those who were intellectually sophisticated, had high morale, and a positive self-image. Marx is particularly insightful in his discussion of the relationship between social and psychological factors. The former set up conditions conducive to the appearance of the latter, which in turn promote the development of a militant outlook.

The historic role of religion in civil rights militancy was seen as a double-edged charge: at times an opiate and at times an inspiration. Marx found that while be-

longing to a largely white denomination was conducive to militancy, being high on religiosity was not. Thus, piety and protest were incompatible. To the extent, however, that religious involvement included temporal concerns, in contrast to other-worldly concerns, religion served to inspire and sustain militancy.

In the discussion on black nationalism Marx explains that "broadly speaking, it implies pride in being black—a positive regard for Afro-American origins, history and culture" (pp. 106-107). At the time of the study the adherents to the Nation of Islam were the dominant nationalist group. Only 4 per cent of the population indicated moderate support for the Muslims. These nationalists were more similar in social and psychological characteristics to those characterized as conservatives than they were to militants. Here again the terminology of 1964 no longer applies today. As Charles V. Hamilton has observed, a variety of themes have persisted in the black American experience incorporating different goals (constitutionalism, sovereign nationalism, plural nationalism, socialism, and pan-Africanism). The emphasis placed on nationalism as well as on activism and the degree of militancy (or discontent) varies among members of the black community. Their contemporary connotations, moreover, have become blurred.

In assessing the attitudes of blacks towards Jews, Marx is careful to point out a variety of factors affecting relationships between the two communities both favorable and unfavorable. In point of fact most respondents did not distinguish between Jews and other whites; however, "among 25 per cent of Negroes who made a distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish whites, *Jews were seen in a more favorable light than other whites by a four-to-one ratio*" (p. 139). The major factor which acted to increase antisemitism was increased impersonal economic contact with Jews. Among the factors that inhibited antisemitism were shared minority group consciousness and the recognition of Jews as a group that supports civil rights. The influence of ghetto economic

relations on antisemitic feelings among blacks, however, was substantially reduced when there was a perception of Jews as a minority group committed to social justice. Furthermore, only 4 per cent of the sample had purely antisemitic attitudes unaccompanied by anti-white feelings. The same proportion had anti-white attitudes not accompanied by antisemitism. Among the vast majority of blacks these two attitudes were indistinguishable. Moreover, over half the respondents expressed very little hostility on either index. In terms of anti-white hostility it was found that nearly all the variables related to militancy were related to anti-white hostility *but in a different direction*.

The new paperback edition is enhanced with a Postscript, which summarizes the results of fifteen studies (including two national and thirty-four city samples) completed during 1967-1968 subsequent to the publication of the hardcover edition and adduces continued support for the previous findings. The absence, moreover, of any integrated theoretical statement—this may be a general tendency of agency research—is compensated for to some extent by a discussion in the Postscript of the relationship between social movements and mass opinion. Since Marx reports no significant changes have taken place in black attitudes, he raises the issue as to why it *appears* that anti-white feelings have increased. The explanation Marx offers lies in the fact that the mass media can play an important role in creating or distorting mass support for social movements and confusing the attitudes of the activists with the masses. Nevertheless, while mass attitudes may not have changed, this does not "suggest that black anger is insignificant. . . . About 5 to 20 per cent of the black population (from 1 to 4 million people) hold attitudes indicating a depth of estrangement and bitterness unique in American history" (p. 231). The proportion appears to be growing among the younger population and in the North.

The confusion of activist and mass attitudes appears to this reviewer to be particularly instructive with regard to the

negative response of some activists in the Jewish community to the statements or actions of some members of the black community. Such negative characterizations, all communicated through the mass media, may be interpreted by the mass of blacks as an indication of the general hostility of Jews towards them. Hence, the actions of some Jewish activists can contribute to the operation of a self-fulfilling prophecy, increasing antisemitic attitudes where they were rather weak. This elaboration of Marx's theme is similar to Herbert Blumer's discussion of "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position." He argues that prejudice operates through the mass media, in which spokesmen for an ethnic group publicly characterize another ethnic group and thereby create a sense of social distance and group position with individuals expressing differing viewpoints being subjected to in-group ostracism.

The readability of this work is increased by the frequent insertion of quotations from the respondents which often elo-

quently summarize a particular point. In addition, the existence of a paperback edition extends the scope of its readership particularly to college audiences where the trend in sociology courses appears to be away from the use of textbooks. Indeed, this work would be a useful supplementary text for courses in social psychology or minorities. In this regard, the inclusion of all of the tables (124 of them) in the body of the text while a convenience to serious scholars and students may pose a difficulty for the uninitiated. Appending most of them after the text might have been a desirable alternative.

Gary Marx has conducted an insightful sociological investigation. Perhaps one of the unanticipated consequences of such agency-sponsored research is its potential to generate ameliorative social action. As Bayard Rustin concluded in his Foreword, the problems are already known: ". . . now we must get on with the solution."

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