

Moynihan report provided a strong justification. For a government that wanted to 'cool it,' to avoid action that could no longer be afforded without having to take the blame for inaction, the Moynihan controversy provided an ideal distraction." Few men in recent history have been so unjustifiably maligned as Daniel P. Moynihan, and few men have served their country and their fellow men better.

*Charles E. Silberman, Board of Editors, Fortune  
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The description of the controversy engendered by the Moynihan report makes fascinating reading. But it was hard for me to see how a moderately detached study of the document could have led to Rainwater's and Yancey's remark that "the brunt of Moynihan's argument was that underemployment and related poverty produced family breakdown" (emphasis added). This factor was discussed, together with slavery, Jim Crow, and urbanization. But "The Negro Family"—whatever else Moynihan had said or written elsewhere—called for action targeted on family structure, *not* unemployment. The ominous tone in which the supposed demise of the unemployment-AFDC correlation is presented cannot be read as support for programs to create more jobs.

Moynihan *et al.* located their tangled pathology in the Negro community of today, not in American society of today. I think it was ultimately this analytical myopia (and strategic mistake) which led to their condemnation—not the vicissitudes of the relationship between the White House and the civil rights movement, not intra-government factionalism, not inaccurate press reports, not the sloppiness of their use of statistics, and certainly not the association between Dr. Benjamin Payton and Mrs. Anna Hedgeman in the New York City mayoralty campaign.

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Lee Rainwater and William Yancey are to be congratulated for an accurate presentation of the development of the controversy surrounding the Moynihan report and the consequent implications for the national government, civil rights organizations, and social scientists. ("Black Families and the White House," July/August)

I would like to reemphasize a point Bayard Rustin and Whitney Young have made. It is true that Moynihan wrote what was intended to be an "in-house" document deliberately selecting those characteristics illustrating the degree of disorganization in Negro family life. Equally significant is the fact that more than 75 percent of Negro marriages are stable, better than three-quarters of Negro births are legitimate, and more than three-quarters of Negro families are headed by males in spite of centuries of poverty, discrimination, and exploitation. Any public analysis of the Negro family with this emphasis is likely to be received more favorably by the Negro community.

Underlying the Moynihan dispute and the inept handling of the White House Conference by the administration is the urgent need for the civil rights movement to develop the political consciousness and maturity necessary to effectively pressure the administration to make a sufficient commitment of resources to deal with the fundamental economic and social problems of the Negro (which are really, in exaggerated form, weaknesses in American society affecting all of the country's poor).

An economic program which is an example of intelligent use of the social sciences by the civil rights organizations and could be the basis of such a political thrust is the soon-to-be-published "Randolph Freedom Budget."

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## THE AUTHORS REPLY

Steven Polgar's shorthand characterization of the Moynihan report's policy goal—that it "called for action targeted on family structure"—neatly illustrates the "image" which the report came to have. The report itself ended by urging the federal programs "be designed to have the effect, directly or indirectly, of enhancing the stability and resources of the Negro American family." Such enhancement does not necessarily imply direct intervention into family life, and it is now clear from Moynihan's memorandum to the President that his argument, however it was later received and interpreted, was for basic socio-economic programs (jobs, wages, housing, family planning) and not for direct manipulation of families. That Moynihan was primarily concerned with the economic causes of family breakdown is suggested by the fact that, aside from urban-rural differences, the only contemporary causal factors dealt with in the report are ones having to do with unemployment and income (pages 22-24 of the report).

Norman Hill is undoubtedly correct that a report emphasizing areas of stability of Negro families would have been better received, but Moynihan did at two points emphasize that he was talking about only part of the Negro community, the part which he felt most needed realistic federal programs. His argument that this was a growing section of the Negro community, even as more prosperous segments were experiencing gains, is supported by the recent Census Bureau "Report on the Negro Population" in 1965 which suggests that the proportion of female-headed Negro families has increased from 21.7 percent in 1960 to 24.9 percent in 1965. The Randolph Freedom Budget is indeed a good example of the application of social science thinking by a civil rights organization; the findings of the Moynihan report provide strong intellectual support for that plan but unfortunately the disrepute into which the report fell vitiates the political support it might also have provided.

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## CORRECTION:

The picture on page 33 of the July-August 1966 issue was incorrectly identified. It is by NEIL BEITZELL.

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