

"BLESSINGS FLOWING FREE" : THE FATHER DIVINE
PEACE MISSION MOVEMENT IN HARLEM, NEW YORK
CITY, 1932-1941. IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: EVANGELICAL POLITICS AND RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT.
PART I.

The Peace Mission Movement reached its peak membership in 1934 and 1935. It claimed an international following and its style of organisation and apparent prosperity attracted the interest of contemporaries not only in the press, but also in the church and in politics. If few outside the Movement accepted Father Divine's pretensions to divinity he was acknowledged, nonetheless, as a remarkable leader. He was secure in his authority within the Movement and the followers were well-organised around the disciplines of the "evangelical life."

The history of the Peace Mission's first years in Harlem is a history of growth and increasing confidence. There was good reason for both. By revitalising the aspirations of his converts, both black and white, and in dealing with his followers' immediate economic problems in a manner that was unprecedentedly successful, Father Divine appeared to have fulfilled the promise that he made on coming to New York that he would free all who followed him from "limitations, lacks and wants."

Of course, the Movement succeeded at great cost. Its denial and disruption of sexual and family relationships; its antipathy to modern medicine and its social conformity were assaults on the followers' physical and social well-being that could not be taken lightly. But had the Movement not offered much that was positive and appreciated by the believers, Father Divine's ambitions would have been quickly curtailed. Ironically, it was the Movement's success, and the pretensions that success fed, which were to lead to the Peace Mission's eventual decline in the second half of the decade.

Success led the Movement to expand its horizons. Throughout

the first years of the Movement, Father Divine had concentrated on consolidating his personal following and on organising the internal life of the Peace Mission. Although his teachings explicitly criticised the outside society, he rarely spoke of changing it. Instead he described the kingdom of heaven on earth as a state of being to be reached by each individual through obedience to the dictates of the "evangelical life". His emphasis was on the possibility of achieving prosperity, happiness and eternity through personal, spiritual change and on spreading this knowledge to others by individual example. Most of the black followers who joined the Movement in the early 'thirties sought this acutely personal salvation. They had little perception of the political implications of either the Movement's size or ideals. They were content to leave the outside society and had little desire to change it fundamentally. Yet it was impossible for the Movement to isolate itself from the outside society.

The early attempts to close down the Movement's premises in Sayville and Newark, as well as the continuing clashes with the courts over the followers' abnegation of family and marital responsibilities, were regular reminders that the believers challenged, in their daily lives, the conventions and beliefs of the outside society. Furthermore, there was within the Peace Mission, a group of politically sensitive and articulate believers, who believed that Father Divine's teachings held a significance for the whole of society.

To A. Honael Meriditas, the editor of the Spoken Word and the organiser of the Los Angeles branch of the Movement, Father Divine's teachings offered the basis for a total transformation of social and economic life. The Depression in America and Europe, and the rise of belligerent nationalist movements convinced Meriditas that

the human race faced disaster. In late 1934 he wrote, "it would appear that man has reached an extremity ... Tremendous things [are] shaking the very foundations of earth, striking at the roots of human institutions." He believed that only Father Divine's teachings offered an alternative to annihilation. "The time has come for a house-cleaning," he wrote, "the human family must undergo a complete shake-up, a drastic revision and readjustment of the entire social structure."¹ For, instead of war, the tenets of the "evangelical life" offered peace and brotherhood; instead of competition and greed, the values of the Movement prompted cooperation; and instead of corruption and dishonesty, the "evangelical lifeway" offered justice and honesty. This, Meriditas believed, was the only path to world salvation: "there can be no true economic and political freedom without the other - the emancipation of the soul through spiritual awakening."²

Thus the Movement's nature and perceptions meant that it would, sooner or later, be tempted to try and change society directly rather than trust in the slower, simpler process of conversion.

Exactly how this change could be effected was not clear even to Meriditas. His editorials in early editions of the Spoken Word were suffused with a "latter day" outlook; with a conviction that Father Divine would soon expel the corrupt and unjust and usher in a miraculous new era.³ As it was, as the Movement grew and Father Divine was courted by interest groups and by politicians, Father Divine expanded his horizons beyond the conversion of individuals by persuasion and example, to the conversion of the entire American society by political action.

No doubt Father Divine and his leading advisors were encouraged in their ambition by the intellectual and political climate of the New Deal. It was a time when the discussion of social, economic

and political panaceas was a major preoccupation. It was also a time of fundamental re-thinking about the moral bases of American society; when many different schemes claimed to be sanctioned both by the Christian faith and the American Constitution. Father Coughlin, Dr. Francis Townsend and Senator Huey Long⁴ are already familiar figures. To an extent, it is a measure of the enforced provincialism of black America (and black American historiography) that Father Divine has not previously taken his place beside them. But the Peace Mission differed from these other movements not only in its more limited sphere of influence, but in its more expansive vision: the Peace Mission sought not the enactment of particular economic or social measures, but the entire re-ordering of American society.

The followers seem to have regarded the democratic political process not, as modern political scientists recognize it to be, as an adjustment of the conflicting demands of powerful interest groups, but as a means by which just policies could be reached by reason and debate, without fear or favour. They believed that it was the strength of a politician's argument, his adherence to first principles and the degree to which his life reflected his beliefs that ought to be the important factors in deciding upon his election. Of course, Father Divine and his followers recognised that American politics was not as it should be, but this they seem to have ascribed to the ignorance and the apathy of the voters and the cowardice and corruption of the politicians.

The Peace Mission's political activity, with its watchword "Righteousness, Truth and Justice", was a call for America to return to its first principles. It was an evangelical crusade in which the Peace Mission sought by argument, example, and not least, by the power of God, to convince the politicians and the electorate of the

need for change. It was conversion writ large, in which the enduring fundamentals of the Constitution would be established in reality, just as God, himself, had come to earth.

The turn toward politics dramatically changed the routine life of the Movement. For the first time, converts were encouraged to take an active interest in the ideas and affairs of the outside society. Political instruction and debate, voter registration and education campaigns, as well as the innumerable visits by local politicians, became a regular feature of Peace Mission life. The political activists among the believers, moreover, sought to bring a new style to the Peace Mission's affairs befitting its serious political intent.

In part, it was its vaulting ambition that guaranteed the ultimate downfall of the Movement's political campaign. But it was constantly undermined, too, by internal contradictions.

Surprisingly, the followers saw no contradiction between Father Divine's declared omnipotence and the Peace Mission's reliance on the ballot and lobby to achieve its ends: there was always an implicit assumption that Father Divine, as an American messiah, would work by persuasion rather than by might. Yet, at times, especially when the political road proved too rough, Father Divine was quick to remind the followers that he would see his policies enacted and his opponents confounded, regardless of the outcome at the polls and in the state and federal legislatures, merely because he was, after all, God.

Moreover, there was a contradiction between the processes of politics - rational discussion, self-interest, calculation and compromise - and the sweeping nature of the changes that the Peace Mission sought to bring about. So it was that, in its earliest period of political activity and despite its interest in the regular

political parties, it was closest to a party that shared the Peace Mission's adherence to the principles of racial equality, peace, and social and economic justice, yet was dedicated to the overthrow of the American democratic system - the Communist Party.

It was the visits of New York City's mayoralty candidates to the Peace Mission during the 1933 election campaign that first excited Father Divine's interest in politics. Fiorello H. La Guardia, the Fusion-Republican candidate, and J.P. O'Brien, the Democratic incumbent, visited the followers soliciting votes. In his speech, O'Brien talked of "Father Divine's great work" while La Guardia was effusive in his praise. Speaking before five thousand believers at a meeting at the Rockland Palace, La Guardia pledged his support to Father Divine. Commending the Peace Mission Movement as a lesson in "applied and practical Christianity" he told Father Divine, "no matter what you do I will support YOU ... for I believe, FATHER DIVINE, in what you say."⁵

La Guardia's campaign pivoted on his pledge to remove graft and corruption from city politics following the expose by the Seabury Committee of the practices of the Democratic Party's Tammany Hall machine and the Democratic administration of ex-Mayor J.J. Walker.⁶ La Guardia acknowledged the Movement's antipathy to vice, crime and corruption and requested Father Divine's "help and counsel" in his campaign to "clean up" the city if elected.⁷

Of course, the candidates' visit to the Peace Mission was but a small part of their attempt to court organised opinion in the city's ethnic communities. Both men regarded the Movement merely as a large group of interested voters. Father Divine, however, was flattered by their attention and he told reporters that though he

refused to endorse either candidate - for "I'm not advocating a person, but a principle" - he did believe that 'clean government' could be achieved by adherence to the "gospel of the identical life of Christ." He wrote immediately to Mayor O'Brien urging him to investigate instances of racial discrimination and segregation in New York. Then, when La Guardia was elected, Father Divine forwarded his recommendations to the new Mayor and informed him that he was "willing and ready" to "cooperate with you and all your constructive ideals in an effort to eliminate all vice and crime and other violations to our present Government."⁸

Persuaded by the token interest of the politicians and by an election campaign in which questions of public ethics appeared to be predominant, Father Divine began to apply his teachings explicitly to the realm of politics and government. He argued that to teach that religion and politics did not mix would be to stand in the way of progressive change. It would be to keep religious people "submissive" and "meek" before injustice, corruption and suffering: "obedient to dishonesty, obedient to wickedness, obedient to unrighteousness":

"What profit would it be for us to-day to bring you into the Spirit and action of Righteousness, unless we have a Righteous Government? ... without the true concept of CHRIST and the recognition of HIS PRESENCE among the Politicians, the world will continue to be filled with corruption, and it is a matter of impossibility to receive your deliverance saving through this great Conversion."

It was the Movement's responsibility, he said, to ensure that as "Politics elects officials to rule the people, GOD must be in it, as GOD must rule THEM." Once this was achieved, he promised, the world would be dramatically transformed:

"RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE shall become a Living Reality and shall be established Universally ... and every nation, language, tongue and people shall accept it as the Fundamental." 9

As Father Divine first envisaged it, then, the political process was but another means of conversion - conversion by persuasion and ballot. "Righteous Government" was thus in tune with democratic ideals of political action.

In response to Father Divine's initiative sixteen followers, styling themselves an "executive board", met at 103 West 117th Street in February 1935 to organise the Peace Mission's "Department of Righteous Government." To begin with, they had no fixed programme or principles. But two sub-committees, a "Political" committee and an "Education" committee, were set up at this meeting and three more were added subsequently: "Research", "Welfare" and "Vocational".¹⁰ Discussion and rational agreement, rather than spiritual inspiration, were to be the bases of political action in pursuit of Righteous Government.

The Righteous Government executive eventually arrived at a programme of work for its sub-committees. The Political committee, headed by Miss Fineness Fidelity, Miss Claudia Pearson and Mr. John Kommer agreed to prepare and register the followers to vote and also to select worthy candidates from those seeking public office. The Research committee, headed by Miss Grace Lemmon, decided to record and analyse all major state and national legislation; chart all the principal bills presented to Congress; tabulate the views and careers of each bill's endorsers and opponents; and record the course of Congressional debates. This committee also assumed the task of creating a reference library on the operations of government, industry and education; and compiling reading lists on all public issues. A special investigating sub-committee was organized to expose the abuse of existing laws and to monitor the conduct of magistrates, judges and the police.¹¹

The three other committees - Education, Welfare and

Vocational were less politically orthodox. The Education committee, led by Anne Perry and Eva Barbee, assumed the work of monitoring the educational standards of the followers; studying the schools in the outside society; and reporting on the quality of school text books. The Vocational committee sought to organize vocational training classes within the Movement in order to help the followers improve themselves to the limits of their ability; while the Welfare committee set itself to deal with a variety of internal matters ranging from advice on insurance, job opportunities and child guidance to the problems of preparing oneself to vote.¹²

From the programmes of these sub committees it is clear that Righteous Government involved not only bringing the outside society into line with Father Divine's teachings through the political process, but also demonstrating, by the example of a well-run Movement, the type of new standards that they sought others to adopt.

The committee members opted for a sombre and conventional style of organisation which they felt befitted their new venture. In contrast to most Peace Mission gatherings, where the followers conducted themselves "as the Spirit dictated", Righteous Government committee meetings were self-consciously formal; the followers self-effacing. Myrtle Pollard described a characteristic meeting of the executive board. Each member, she said, presented his or her ideas and observations for discussion by the group. They were accepted or rejected on the grounds of merit and then referred to the appropriate subcommittee. "No-one," she remarked, "expects a special recognition for any contribution of ideas."¹³

It was to be conversion by politics: and this required a different approach to that of spiritual conversion. In March 1935, the Spoken Word suggested the course that the followers should take:

"Besides voting for the one who lives Evangelical, a great deal can be accomplished in the way of constructive legislation and securing the rights of all equally, when all act as 'one man at Jerusalem' to claim their rights and press their claims by writing letters, and in other graphic ways registering their demands and requests with law makers and officials in all high places." 14

Yet in its attempt to prepare the Movement for action in the political arena, the Righteous Government executive found that many of the followers were far from being the "intelligent letter writers and petition signers" that the Spoken Word felt that they ought to be.

Most basic was the lack of education among the mass of the followers. As the victims of poverty and an inadequate and segregated educational system in the American South, some of Father Divine's older black followers had no more than a cursory education.¹⁵ Early in 1935 Father Divine and his leading advisors realized that a crash course of adult education was needed if the followers were to pass electoral literacy tests and have the skills to promote Righteous Government. That spring, Father Divine instructed the believers to "go to school and qualify yourselves to meet the issues of life."¹⁶

The response was dramatic. Followers flocked into Harlem's evening schools and astonished the teachers with their enthusiasm to learn. The night school at P.S. 89 was due to close until Father Divine's followers suddenly enrolled. Brother Joseph, said to be in his nineties, was one of two hundred followers who, sitting in seats normally used by the school's third grade pupils, now tackled reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, history, geography and civics.¹⁷

There was a fresh influx of followers into the evening classes when the new term began in September 1935. P.S. 89 increased its schedule of classes from seven to eleven to meet the demand and

P.S. 184 at 31 West 116th Street ran over twenty-five classes. For the first time in ten years women students enrolled at P.S. 89. As a result of this enthusiasm, there was an acute shortage of teachers. But, a Peace Mission reporter rejoiced, "the wheels of wisdom are turning - the oil of gladness being used to keep out the squeaks."¹⁸

At the same time the Righteous Government Education committee, itself, set out to tackle the problem of illiteracy and ignorance. The committee organised classes for those followers who were unable to attend the public schools because of their hours of work, and it inaugurated a number of emergency literacy classes in the extensions. By late August 1935 the committee claimed that one thousand five hundred followers were enrolled in classes in fifteen different extensions and five city schools.¹⁹

The Movement's own "emergency classes" seem to have been remarkably successful. Miss Eva Barbee, who supervised the programme, was herself a qualified teacher and other educated believers were encouraged to assist. Although the students were stiffly graded and expected to reach "perfection", the rapport between teacher and pupil, the encouragement given to the student and the use of informal teaching methods was such that some success was possible. The followers were taught to read and write by studying street signs or Father Divine's messages and advertisements in the Peace Mission press. Spelling was taught by handling familiar objects with names printed on them. Arithmetic was based on learning to distinguish between different units of money. Radio announcers were studied to grasp pronunciation and the techniques of public speaking; and, as a follower said, "faith and loving kindness accomplishes miracles in our schools as elsewhere. It can move mountains".²⁰

Some followers were also encouraged by Father Divine's emphasis on education to go beyond the requirements of registering to vote.

The Peace Mission housed, in 1937 and 1938, W.P.A. adult education classes²¹ on mathematics, chemistry, advanced English, public speaking and preparation for Civil Service examinations in addition to the classes that followers attended at evening schools. In 1938 the Peace Mission opened its own "Extension School" on 123rd Street to teach commercial and secretarial subjects.²²

The philosophy behind the classes, that of preparing the followers "to competently meet the issues and demands of life",²³ was shared even by the teachers from outside the Movement. Miss Dunhide, teacher of a class at P.S. 184, told her graduates: "Through education we can make the world a better place." On the students' side, Miss Sunshine Bright told her fellow W.P.A. graduates that Father's work in education had "sent individuals back to school, many of whom believed they were too old. It has given a new life to live for."²⁴

But many of the followers who enrolled in the elementary classes did so more from loyalty and love for Father Divine than for any idea of righteous action in the political arena or widening their own horizons. "Father Divine expects us to be here," said one sister, "and what he expects must be."²⁵ Learning was simply an act of devotion. As the words of one Peace Mission song went:

"SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAYS
GOOD OLE GOLDEN RULE DAYS
Reading and 'Riting and 'Rithmetic
FATHER'S OUR TEACHER, don't need a stick
We'll have good lessons every day
We know he's GOD and we'll obey.
And we write on our slate
I LOVE YOU GOD,
For we are the Children DIVINE." 26

If the followers' devotion to Father Divine helped, nonetheless, in the process of preparing them to vote, there were still more problems. Some of the followers were immigrants who had never applied for naturalisation as American citizens. While Father

Divine and his advisors were still vague about the nature of their future activity, Righteous Government required that the followers should be registered and able to vote. So, Father Divine instructed John Kommer of the Political committee to coach the immigrants for citizenship tests. In July 1935, Father Divine accompanied a 'bus load of twenty-eight followers to the Bureau of Naturalisation in New York to take out their first papers and pay their fees. By the end of the next month, the Movement claimed to have helped one hundred and sixty-one people from countries as various as India, Czechoslovakia, the British West Indies, Russia, Germany, Italy, Sweden and South America.²⁷

The next step of actually registering the followers to vote also ran into difficulties. On July 1 1935 three hundred followers led by John Kommer presented themselves to register at the office of the New York City Board of Elections. Overwhelmed by the influx, the officials insisted that they could only cope with fifty applicants, explaining that the office was only open at this time to register those people who would be unable to register during the regular registration period later. Then, the officials became ruffled and hostile when the followers sought to register in their "heavenly" names. Faced with "Joy Praise", "Blessed Virgin", "Truth Delight" and "Sympathetic Heart", the chief clerk, Edward J. McGowan, refused to accept the affidavits unless the followers provided their "right" names. Mr. McGowan angrily told a city reporter, "we do not intend to let them make this department look ridiculous by putting such names on our registration books"; and, after accepting only eighteen affidavits, he turned the rest of the followers away.²⁸

This rebuff provided Father Divine with his first "righteous" battle. The "Kingdom names", as one of the symbols of conversion,

were central to the followers' commitment to the "evangelical life". To deny their use challenged Father Divine's determination to effect righteous change in the wider society. So, in late July 1935, a group of followers using their "Kingdom names" filed an application in the State Supreme Court for a writ requiring the Board of Elections to register them under their assumed names. State Supreme Court Justice Cohn denied the application, ruling that only their former names were correct. The followers, acting on Father Divine's advice, then defied the ruling and applied, once more, to register at the Board of Elections. The State Supreme Court reaffirmed its decision; but, finally, in November 1935, a compromise was reached in which the Court accepted the believers' right to use their "Kingdom names" provided that they supplied the Board of Elections with their former names and addresses to eliminate the risk of electoral fraud.²⁹

Although the followers were still obliged to produce the shells of their former identities, the Righteous Government Department was vindicated for its persistence.³⁰

There were other and, perhaps, more profound difficulties. The initiative to launch the Righteous Government campaign had been taken by a small band of dedicated, educated and politically conscious followers with the consent and support of Father Divine. Yet the pursuit of Righteous Government depended on persuading the mass of the believers to take an interest in the affairs of the outside society. The experience of the literacy programme and the voter registration campaign suggested that loyalty and obedience were enough to mobilise even the most apolitical of the believers. Some of the followers recognized a broadly political purpose to their studies. "Father Divine sent us here," one man told Donald Levy, the principal of P.S. 89, "[so] that we can understand our brothers in all parts of the world."³¹ But most of the followers

had to be weaned away from a purely religious perception of affairs.

To educate this group of believers and to keep the questions of good government ever before them, forums for discussion and debate were established within the Peace Mission. From early 1935, public meetings were held at 20 West 115th Street on questions of voting, naturalisation, civil service and government. Righteous Government "Forums" were launched in leading extensions to tempt the followers into consideration and discussion of contemporary issues. The articulate and politically aware believers were drafted into a "Speakers Bureau" to organise programmes of lectures within the Movement.³²

Meanwhile, Father Divine searched for ways to apply his "evangelical" teachings in civic and political life. He had no clear idea of his plans, but conditions in Harlem gave him the stimulus and opportunity for action. Here he found evidence of the suffering, injustice and despair that, in his eyes, flowed from a life devoid of "evangelical" understanding. Here was a chance to make the city and state administrations more responsive to people's needs and to bring standards of "righteousness" into government. Already, community groups were demanding justice and fair treatment for the people of Harlem. Father Divine decided to offer his services to them.

Early in 1935 Father Divine gave his support to the campaign for political reapportionment in Upper Manhattan. In 1917, following the first black settlement in Harlem, the Republican State Assembly had created electoral districts whose boundaries cut through the black community and ensured that blacks were a minority in each of the newly created districts. This had been done to

prevent the rise of local black party leaders and the election of black representatives.³³ Aware that these boundaries threatened to leave blacks in a minority and thus deprive them of the benefits of political patronage and representation, black politicians had pressed repeatedly for reapportionment.³⁴

The gerrymandering had not been completely successful. In the nineteen-thirties such had been the increase in the black population in Harlem that, even without reapportionment, blacks formed the majority of the electors in the 19th and 21st Assembly Districts. By then, blacks had been elected as State Assemblymen from both parties and had begun to oust the white bosses in the Republican and Democratic party organisations. But blacks were still a minority in the State Senatorial and Congressional Districts.³⁵ Moves within the State Legislature in the 'thirties for wider reapportionment of electoral boundaries thus revived black interest. In 1934 under the auspices of an umbrella group, the Harlem Political Union (H.P.U.), Harlemites organised to lobby the State Legislature and the Governor for new State Senatorial and Congressional boundaries in Harlem that would ensure a black Senator and a black Congressman.³⁶

Father Divine took an immediate interest in the H.P.U's campaign. He offered to speak at its meetings and to bring his followers to swell the audiences. He also distributed petition blanks around the Peace Mission's extensions on the H.P.U's behalf.³⁷

However, his participation was not appreciated by all the H.P.U's leading members. It was only the desire to build a wide base of support in Harlem that encouraged the H.P.U. to accept Father Divine's offer of help. He was allowed to speak for just ten minutes at the close of the H.P.U's first rally; and at another, he so disrupted the dignified and determined tone of the proceedings

by his flamboyant arrival, that he was invited to address the rally only after all the other speakers had finished. Rising to the microphone after a four hour wait, Father Divine made veiled threats to withdraw his support. He told the rally's organisers: "With or without the organizations, I HAVE THE MASSES!" Turning to the followers in the audience he said, "you will do what I say, will you not?" - "Yes, Father" came the reply.³⁸

There was another, more important, barrier to co-operation. To the organisers of the H.P.U., the reapportionment campaign was a demonstration that Harlem would no longer tolerate white political control and neglect. They saw it as a question of 'race representation' and as an assertion of black militancy. Father Divine saw the issue differently. He rejected the arguments of race as anti-thetical to the spirit of the "evangelical life." He viewed reapportionment solely as a question of justice and equity for people living in the community. "We are fighting for our constitutional rights," he told the audience at one H.P.U. rally, "not as a race, and not on the basis of color but as a people." He meant, he said, to "emancipate all people, and every individual that is limited, from every angle, whatsoever."³⁹ Unwilling to accept Father Divine's approach or his leadership, the H.P.U. did nothing to encourage co-operation with the Peace Mission and the association quickly disintegrated.⁴⁰

Father Divine, however, continued to see himself as a champion of Harlem's needs. With faith in himself as a spokesman and a force for justice and equity for all those in despair, trouble and difficulty, Father Divine wrote to Mayor La Guardia to draw his attention to the reapportionment campaign and to urge him to act on other issues vexing Harlemites - particularly, racial discrimination in the city. He reminded La Guardia of his pre-election visit to

the Peace Mission in 1933 and his "agreement and pledge ... to support ME in anything I do thru which you were elected." La Guardia ignored Father Divine's letter. "This is a day," a follower wrote angrily in the Spoken Word, "when a pledge to the people in matters of justice and right is a pledge to GOD." If public officials failed in their duty, this follower warned, "they will, as FATHER DIVINE so graphically and definitely says, be 'cancelled'."⁴¹

When riot disrupted Harlem in March 1935 a staff writer for the Spoken Word saw the violence as a salutary warning of the dire consequences of ignoring Father Divine's advice. Only Father Divine had the formula to put an end to such "rowdyism" and "disorder"; only his philosophy of harmony, justice and brotherhood could eradicate the injustices that provoked the riot. As one Peace Mission journalist noted, there were "no true followers" of Father Divine in the riot because they had found exactly what Harlem needed so badly: security, happiness and fulfilment through obedience to the dictates of the "evangelical life". In bold type the follower urged, "JOIN THE CRUSADE FOR RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT" and, in a lead article, another journalist urged La Guardia to pay heed to Father Divine's work and advice.⁴²

Father Divine continued to petition La Guardia on Harlem's behalf but with less faith, now, in the Mayor's sincerity. In May 1935, he wrote to urge La Guardia to "consider Harlem" in his appointments to the judiciary. "The majority of the organisations and masses [in Harlem]," he wrote, "do not see your administration as EQUITABLE." But if, he added, La Guardia acted "without regard to races, creeds or colors" in his appointments to the Bench, then "matters can be adjusted satisfactorily."⁴³

Although La Guardia felt under no obligation to acknowledge Father Divine's advice or curry the favour of the followers, other

city politicians were more cautious about Father Divine's unpredictable influence in local politics. His unexpected support for the reapportionment campaign and his new, militant interest in Harlem's needs and grievances suggested that he might become an important factor in local politics. Although the reapportionment campaign foundered, he had added his support to the voice of revolt in the community. With Righteous Government work assuming increasing importance within the Peace Mission and the followers apparently preparing to vote in the autumn, it seemed likely that the Movement's protest would take a pragmatic political direction.

It was Harlem's black Democrats that first took the Movement's potential political influence seriously and, by their overtures to Father Divine, alerted other city politicians to the Movement's possible importance. In mid-1935, the black Democrats were in search of allies within the black community for their campaign to break white political control of the Democratic Party organisation in Harlem's Nineteenth Assembly District. Determined to capture political control for blacks in an Assembly District where the electorate was almost entirely black, the black Democrats in the Nineteenth A.D. organised insurgent political clubs to fight for the district leadership. The white Democratic leader of the Nineteenth, Martin J. Healey, found himself challenged not only by a white ex-district leader, Harry Perry, but by a number of independent black aspirants.⁴⁴ One of the black clubs, mistaking Father Divine's participation in the reapportionment campaign and his support for Harlem causes as a sign of race assertiveness, approached the Peace Mission for its endorsement. In July 1935 the Algonquin F.D.R. Democratic Club invited Father Divine and his followers to promote the candidacy of Archibald M. Ray for leadership in the Nineteenth A.D. Democratic organisation. When Father Divine agreed to attend

the Club's mass rally, it was popularly mooted that Ray was standing as "a candidate of Father Divine's."⁴⁵ Ray's candidacy was dropped, subsequently, by the black insurgents. But, Ferdinand Q. Morton, the black political strongman who had led Tammany Hall's segregated fief, the United Colored Democracy, throughout the 'twenties and now emerged as the principal black challenger in the leadership fight, attended a Peace Mission banquet meeting in September 1935 to explain the situation in the Nineteenth A.D. to the followers and win their help.⁴⁶

Father Divine was encouraged by such attention. "We have in our midst this evening," he said during Morton's visit, "some of our honored candidates ... even though we may be classed as Religious fanatics."⁴⁷ But Father Divine remained firm to his own ideals. Assuming that the politicians were, at last, acknowledging his own political authority, Father Divine took the opportunity to promote his own Righteous Government campaign. At the Algonquin F.D.R. Club's rally, Father Divine chose to speak of Ray's candidacy as a question of "righteous government" rather than race representation; and when Morton visited the Peace Mission, Father Divine reprimanded him for his "racial appeal". His aim, he told the black insurgents, was to establish "Righteous Government on earth."⁴⁸

The regular political parties, however, were blind to Father Divine's rejection of race politics. They took a more calculated view of his participation in the district leadership campaign. Although the black challenge failed in the Nineteenth A.D. and the white insurgent, Harry Perry won the leadership,⁴⁹ the campaign excited interest precisely because it was a question of race politics. The Democratic Party's city machine was seriously weak: bruised by the scandals of the early 'thirties and deprived of patronage by La Guardia's election in 1933. The Party was vulnerable

as never before, to pressure from blacks to accord them greater power and responsibility in return for electoral support.⁵⁰

With elections approaching in November 1935, Father Divine was guaranteed the political attention he sought. William Solomon, the white district leader of Lower Harlem's Seventeenth A.D. Democratic organisation, decided, on the eve of the elections, to visit the Peace Mission Movement. Two years earlier he had discounted Father Divine's political significance. But, in 1935, he had faced and defeated a leadership challenge from black realtor, Victor Williams, in the Seventeenth A.D. and was a little more cautious about Father Divine's political intentions in Harlem. He appeared at the Peace Mission to present Meyer Alterman and Max Bollt, the Democratic candidates for the State Assembly and the City Board of Aldermen, respectively, for Father Divine's endorsement. Father Divine told Solomon's group that he intended to take a crucial role in politics over the next six years. "We mean for this Movement," he said, "to be eligible to SPEAK and APPOINT from the WHITE HOUSE down."⁵¹

But nothing constructive emerged from these early contacts with the regular politicians. The politicians and party workers were interested in Father Divine only as the leader of a large following in the heart of the Harlem ghetto. They were anxious to assess his potential influence in local politics; his power as a vote broker. But Father Divine, himself, rejected the roles of race leader and vote broker and his own attempts to influence the course of city and state politics were ineffectual and short-lived. He was ignored by La Guardia and out of tune with the community groups whose interests he sought to promote. Most of the early campaign for Righteous Government was destined, instead, to follow less orthodox paths. In the latter half of 1934 and throughout 1935, the Peace Mission found a more rewarding and sympathetic relationship with an

organisation on the fringes of political power and hostile to the established political order: the American Communist Party.

The association between the two movements aroused considerable speculation, even disquiet in some quarters, but it flourished because Father Divine and his followers found in the Communists a group which, despite its political powerlessness, shared many of their own ideals. Although Father Divine and the followers always saw themselves as part of the democratic political process, their search for complete solutions to the problems of society drew them close to the Communists. They had similar hopes for a new, just and harmonious society; and a way of political thinking that looked beyond short-term bargaining to broad political perspectives. They shared a global vision and a sense of crisis, as well as a determination to work for the fundamental changes in human values necessary to resolve conflict and distress.

The Communists' practical work also commended them to Father Divine and the followers. By the mid-'thirties the Party had proved itself to be the most vocal advocate of social equality and economic redistribution; a champion of racial justice and inter-racial co-operation in America.⁵²

On this basis of shared interests, an informal alliance between the two movements flourished: the Communists finding in the believers a large group of sympathisers and advocates; the followers finding in the Communists political activists who gave them respect and serious consideration.

The Communists first approached the Peace Mission in mid-and late 1934 after a shift in Party ideology and strategy. During the early 'thirties, the Communist Party had followed an explicitly

revolutionary course that had precluded alliances or overtures to movements like the Peace Mission. Convinced that the collapse of capitalism was imminent, the Party had dedicated itself to aggressive agitation and confrontation with the existing institutions and organisations of American society. It had attacked all "reformist" groups which threatened to blunt the revolutionary situation. Party workers had heaped abuse on the "petit-bourgeois misleaders" of religious, social, civic and political organisations and they had worked to detach the rank and file members for a revolutionary proletarian "united front from below." But a softening of the revolutionary line in international Communism and changing pre-occupations within the American Party undermined this approach. Party workers were then told to seek cordial "United Front" alliances on key Party issues with the mass organisations of the poor and the working class.⁵³

In the Party's "Negro Work", Party spokesman, James W. Ford, invited Party members to approach black social clubs, fraternal organisations, churches and civic groups for mutual "United Front" actions. While Party Workers, he wrote, should always seek to educate the members of these groups in Communist thinking, they should not be abrasive or dogmatic. "We must not come to these organisations with the idea of destroying them," he wrote, but to build and strengthen the Party's fight against Jim Crow, lynching, social and economic injustice, war and fascism. He singled out the church because of its size and influence, as one of the most important arenas for action in the black community; and he urged Party workers to make common cause with the minor black preachers and the congregations of the poor.⁵⁴

It was in this context that members of the Harlem Section of the American Communist Party first approached the Peace Mission.

in the summer of 1934. Party officials invited the followers to participate in two parades in New York City against war and fascism and the followers accepted.⁵⁵ But not all the Party's rank and file workers were yet convinced about the validity of United Front cooperation with the movement. Only a year before, Party workers had been disgusted by the attitude of a group of believers who had rejected help from a Communist Party anti-eviction squad when their belongings were put out onto a Harlem sidewalk for non-payment of rent.⁵⁶ When the followers participated in the Party's anti-war parades with banners declaring, "Father Divine is God" and "Father Divine Will Stop War", some Communist Party members were convinced that the Party was making "serious opportunistic deviations" in the name of the United Front.⁵⁷

But the Daily Worker defended a special place for Father Divine and the followers in the Party's work. Although the Communist Party opposed the religious superstition that kept groups like the Peace Mission alive, the Daily Worker urged Party members to appreciate that religious fanaticism sprang from the "persecution, oppression and exploitation" of the workers. United Front cooperation with the Movement was not incompatible with the Party's aims, for behind the followers' allegiance to Father Divine lay a rudimentary class consciousness and an inchoate striving for "true democracy, freedom, equality and love." It was the Party's responsibility to teach the believers that their true salvation lay not through religion but through the class struggle.⁵⁸

For their part, spokesmen for the Peace Mission formally acknowledged their common ground with the Communist Party in a series of articles and editorials in the Spoken Word even before the paper moved its headquarters to New York City. Written in measured academic style, these pieces considered the ideals and actions of

the Party in the light of Father Divine's teachings. They were partly critical. The writers deplored the Communists' belief in class warfare and revolutionary violence. "Their philosophy is too negative," wrote a follower in an early article in December 1934, "they believe in fighting, hating, the reality of oppression, depression, exploitation, disease [and] degradation." This writer criticised the Communists, too, for trying to set up a community of goods "without God":

"Materialistic culture cannot possibly give them health. The only way to obtain a true security and abundance is by fulfilling that great commandment uttered by JESUS 'Seek ye first the Kingdom (Consciousness) of GOD and his righteousness (right-use-ness) and all these THINGS will be added to you."

But all the Peace Mission writers were impressed by the Party's advocacy of social and economic equality, its defence of human rights, its support for inter-racial unity and its alertness to the rising threat of war and fascism. "Some consider Communism a great menace," wrote the author of the December 1934 article, "but this is not so. Communism is on the side of the wage-earner, the unemployed, the political prisoner, the struggling minorities ... in this its ideal is worthy." The Party, this believer argued, needed only to renounce its destructive ideology of class warfare, realize the "absolute necessity of living the Christ life" and co-operate in the "growing movement of spiritual conversion and recognition of the Presence of GOD personified upon earth in FATHER DIVINE" to achieve the result it "set out to attain": namely, a kingdom of heaven on earth.⁵⁹

Such editorials and articles were contributed by the politically sophisticated in the Movement and had a certain intellectual detachment.⁶⁰ More important was the common ground accepted by Father Divine's less educated and less articulate followers. As James W.

Ford recognized, there was little explicit class consciousness among the believers. Perhaps little could be expected from middle-aged black women devotees who had scarcely come into contact with the ideology of capital and labour in their own domestic and service jobs. But the concept of the "evangelical life" lent itself, nonetheless, to a raw political radicalism. This was demonstrated by the writings of Frank J. David, one of Father Divine's rank and file devotees in the 'thirties; and his was a point of view that may have attracted wider support within the Peace Mission.

David was an unusual figure. As an ex-steel worker from Pennsylvania⁶¹ he had an experience of work and organised labour that was denied most of Father Divine's black women followers. He was a prolific writer. He contributed a column called the "Iconoclast" to the Spoken Word and later joined the paper's editorial staff. His columns and poems also appeared in issues of the New Day during the summer of 1936. His writings were vigorous and deliberately plain-spoken and, by any definition, revolutionary in spirit. But his commitment to social change stemmed directly from his belief in Father Divine and the "evangelical life."⁶²

In the mid-'thirties David collected his ideas into a small book of verse called Into the Light. The sin against the Holy Ghost in which he swore to bring "INTO THE LIGHT, the corruption and chicanery that has been hidden and evaded, so that it will be burned up by the unquenchable Fire of Truth."⁶³

This book of verse was a remorseless assault on contemporary society and politics and a stern warning that the day of reckoning had come. As with much of the other followers' written political opinion, it was informed by a sense of crisis; a conviction that the existence of poverty, suffering, inequality and war proved that man had reached the depths of depravity and could be saved only by

God come to earth: Father Divine.

David had no doubt where the blame lay for the sins and disasters of society. He lashed out at the middle-classes, the "puff ball strutters" and "spirit-buffers", who ridiculed Father Divine and his teachings yet put their own best efforts into social affectation and political manipulation: "GOD they mock / the proud peacock / truth they muff / to strut their stuff / with words prolix / play politics."⁶⁴

He assailed the leading institutions of society for pursuing the interests of the middle-class rather than the needs of the people. He damned the church for its pre-occupation with the niceties of theology and the pursuit of fine buildings and wealth. Enveloped in "intellect" and materialism, he charged, the church had neglected its stewardship and the pursuit of the kingdom of heaven on earth: "Do you know the Sin / of your Siamese Twin / The Twin of Finance / That stole your chance / To serve the Common People / Not with Church Steeple / But with action and deed / Not to cater to greed." The church had abnegated its duty as a peacemaker by its silent complicity in war and injustice. "PEACE on earth / Joy and Mirth / Goodwill to Men / This is CHRIST'S Teaching / So far reaching," he wrote, and he called on the church to stand up and be counted on the side of peace and humanity. "If HIM you profess," David challenged, "Come clean and confess / With money changers stand not / show you're not bought."⁶⁵

In the schools he found damning evidence of prejudice and segregation. "What's called Education," he wrote, "is a shame to the Nation / To School side by side / Then they divide." Teachers and educators, he claimed, used education to advance capitalism: "Call it knowledge / Not to free masses / Make more classes / Wax fat on brother / Truth they smother / One Blood All Nation's / That's

how God made / This they evade." These same teachers polluted patriotism into an aggressive national arrogance and an acceptance of war. They willingly "wave a flag," he wrote, "while others drag / The flower of youth / a tooth for a tooth / with a cannon thud / To a bath of blood." Without hesitation, David claimed, "It's the capitalist system that incites / These demagogic rights / By a subsidised Press / And schools nonetheless / Inculcate false lore / Prepare Children for WAR."⁶⁶ His solution was equally simple: "We've got to clean the earth for the masses / Eliminate classes / For the just impunity / and equal opportunity." It was time, David wrote, to end this "cupidity / Larceny legalised / Rich never penalised" of a society without God.⁶⁷

Here, in the rough verse of this follower, was an example of the way in which Father Divine's teachings lent themselves to a politically radical interpretation. In David's eyes, the "evangelical life" stood in opposition to the existing social, political and economic order. In his view, Father Divine automatically ranged himself on the side of the oppressed common people and the causes of peace, justice and brotherhood against war, capitalism and the machinations of its arch-defenders - the politicians, the monied, the educated and the ruling class.⁶⁸

So, without compromising their commitment to Father Divine in any way, both the educated and the less sophisticated spokesmen for the Movement opened the doors to co-operation with the Party. The Communists' radicalism sprang from purely secular consideration; the followers' radicalism from their interpretation of the meaning of the "evangelical life" applied to the outside society. But the community of interests was broad enough to allow the Movement to accept the Party's overtures.

Certainly, Father Divine, himself, was pleased by the Party's conciliatory and co-operative interest in the Movement. He welcomed the Party to use the Peace Mission's premises and although, he said, he was politically independent, he was ready to work with the Communists in pursuit of peace and justice. "I stand," he said, "for anything that will deal justly between man and man. The Communists stand for social equality and justice in every issue and this is the Principle for which I stand."⁶⁹

Co-operation began in earnest in 1935. Communist Party workers sought out opportunities to meet and address the followers and, as Righteous Government Forums were launched in the extensions, Party spokesmen readily accepted invitations to present topics for the believers' consideration. Followers were encouraged to attend the Party's educational and political forums that were held in Harlem at 415 Lenox Avenue and Party members subscribed to and studied the Spoken Word to further their understanding of the Movement and to win the followers' confidence.⁷⁰

Considerable deference was shown to Father Divine's authority among the followers and even to his claims to divinity. Party officials arranged for a contingent of comrades to march in the Peace Mission's 1935 Easter parade through Harlem which celebrated Father Divine's work and mission; and Party workers conscientiously adopted the conventions and vocabulary of the Peace Mission in their dealings with the followers. Indeed, at one banquet meeting in July 1935, a spokesman for the Party's legal wing, the International Labor Defense (I.L.D.), received a "hearty response" from the followers when, according to a report in the Spoken Word, he "declared Father's Divinity and their need of HIS Assistance in protecting the rights of the masses."⁷¹

It was their willingness to defer to the particular beliefs

of the Movement for the sake of the United Front, that also allowed Party leaders to invite the Peace Mission in 1935 to join the Party's most important annual event: the May Day parade and rally in downtown New York.

The "hammer and sickle" waved beside the "Stars and Stripes" at the head of the march as Father Divine rode in his limousine before the Peace Mission contingent, two thousand strong, in the May Day parade. As the Divine delegation entered Union Square, the traditional rallying place, the announcer welcomed it in the name of the United Front and added, sourly, that the progress of the United Front would be tremendous if only the recalcitrant leaders of the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) unions and the Socialist Party, the hostile critics of the Communists, showed the same "sincere desire" to co-operate as the Peace Mission. Father Divine was invited to speak and, after rising to the microphone, he briefly recalled the Bible's description of communistic enterprises at Antioch and applauded the Party for its opposition to war and fascism. He was not in complete accord with the Communists, he added, but he was willing to co-operate with any movement that sought to "abolish racial discrimination, eradicate prejudice and establish the fundamentals which stand for the good of humanity."

"Unify yourselves with righteousness and justice," he told the crowds. "Amen, Father," came the followers' response.⁷²

There were advantages for the Party in its contact with the Peace Mission. Although the overtures to Father Divine and his followers gave amusement to the Party's ideological rivals, Trotskyist and Socialist, in New York City,⁷³ the contact gave the Communists an immediate forum for United Front organising in Harlem.

The Peace Mission was never suspicious of the Party's motives, nor distrustful of its determined inter-racialism. As an inter-racial

organisation, itself, the Peace Mission welcomed the Party's own "mixed ranks." But other mass black organisations in Harlem approached by Party workers undoubtedly had reservations about the Party's sincerity, if only because its commitment to inter-racial harmony was alien to the usual pattern of race relations and because its recent ideological reverses suggested that the Party's ideals were vulnerable to changes in the party line. Certainly, Harlem's nationalist groups were deeply suspicious of the Party's United Front work, since they had been the main target of Communist abuse at the beginning of the decade and resented the Party's attempt to bring an inter-racial approach to community campaigns that they treated as "race issues" and their own preserve. None of these problems bedevilled the Party's relationship with the Peace Mission. The Movement accepted the sincerity of the Party's motives; the validity of its approach; and its style of organisation.⁷⁴

The followers proved receptive and co-operative. They added their numbers to the Party's parades against war and fascism; discussed the Party's defence of the nine Scottsboro boys accused of rape in Alabama; and gave a warm welcome to a group of friends and relatives of Angelo Herndon brought by Party workers in July 1935 to seek Father Divine's help.⁷⁵ Herndon, a young black Communist was in prison in Georgia, on a slave insurrection law charge, after trying to organise an inter-racial union.⁷⁶ The followers discussed Herndon's case and, with Father Divine's consent, petitioned Governor Talmadge of Georgia for Herndon's release as well as for the repeal of the slave insurrection law.⁷⁷

There were times, early in this period of close co-operation, when the Movement seemed extraordinarily amenable to Party causes. Despite Father Divine's declared opposition to insurance as anti-thetical to the "evangelical life", he sent a personal delegation of

thirteen, with the Communists, in January 1935 to lobby for the passage of a bill to introduce a scheme of national unemployment and social insurance. In the Party's May Day parade, a few months later, Father's followers carried placards declaring their support "For Unemployment Insurance" and for "HR 2827 the Workers' Bill".⁷⁸

Throughout 1935, moreover, the Peace Mission press provided an extraordinary forum for the publication of editorials, articles and news items about Communism and the international Communist movement. The choice of items reflected the Movement's sympathy for the Party's stand for peace, inter-racial brotherhood, justice and the redistribution of wealth. There were, for instance, special features on Party heroes Angelo Herndon and Tom Mooney who had suffered privation and prison for their ideals. There were items about the Italian Communist Party's opposition to Mussolini and the international Communist movement's call for all workers to resist Italian fascist aggression in Ethiopia.⁷⁹ The Spoken Word commended the pamphlet War In Africa written by James W. Ford and Harry Gannes as evidence that "the Communist Party is honestly and seriously working to establish the Brotherhood of Man, in the manner the churches should be doing."⁸⁰

Most noticeable of all was the wealth of news items and articles about the Soviet Union. It was Russia's social and economic reconstruction along "righteous" lines that particularly impressed the Peace Mission's staff writers. In October 1935 Carnegie Pullen used his "New Day" column in the Spoken Word to praise the progress of education in the Soviet Union. "Seventy two school houses were opened in Moscow in time for the new school year," he wrote, "only one new school opened in New York City although many schools attended by followers of FATHER DIVINE are seriously overcrowded." In November 1935 part of the paper's front page was devoted to

selections of favourable opinions about the Soviet Union written by travellers and commentators. Key phrases were placed in capital letters: "EVERYONE HAD A JOB AT TIDY ENOUGH WAGES", "EVERY WORKER FELT THAT HE WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST A PERSON WITH A SOUL AND THAT THE MACHINE WAS THERE TO HELP HIM." The item ended with the phrase: "HERE IS SOMETHING NEW. A KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH." In late 1935, the editor of the Spoken Word wrote, in defence of the paper's strong interest in Communism, that every "unbiased and unprejudiced" person must recognise in the "great human drama" unfolding in Russia "the mist of misunderstanding rolling away and revealing a Brotherhood that recognizes neither race, creed nor color."⁸¹

The Peace Mission also proved to be a firm defender of the Party against its critics and opponents. The Harlem riot of March 1935 encouraged a belief, in some powerful circles, that Communist agitators were responsible for the disturbance. This led to a bitter attack on Party organising in Harlem by the police, the Manhattan District Attorney's office and the Hearst newspapers.⁸² The Party's co-operation with the Peace Mission Movement did not pass unnoticed; and, in November 1935, city Alderman Lambert Fairchild, usually a cordial friend of the Movement, wrote to Father Divine to condemn his co-operation with the Party. His letter complained that Father Divine, whose slogan was "Peace", had seen fit to ally with the "violent, fighting advocates of revolution"; people who, he had heard, were "organizing a batallion to fight the police of New York City."

The Peace Mission's reply, written by Miss Oral Wiltshire and countersigned by Father Divine, defended their co-operation with the Party. The Movement acknowledged, Miss Wiltshire wrote, that "physical force never has and never can produce peace" but peace, in its turn, could only be achieved through recognition of certain

fundamental principles. "The Platform of the Communist Party, as we understand it," she wrote, "is the Brotherhood of Man; the abolition of war and equal opportunity" and "so long as the Communists work peaceably, they will have the support of FATHER DIVINE in the establishment of these Fundamentals."⁸³

When Alderman Fairchild subsequently sponsored a city ordinance to require all street speakers to carry documents proving their American citizenship, Carnegie Pullen used the columns of the Spoken Word to denounce this as a blow to free speech and an assault on the Communist Party's right to organise.⁸⁴ A few months later, a follower again rallied to the Party's defence. Frank J. David wrote to District Attorney William Dodge protesting at his decision to subpoena four leading Communist journalists on charges of criminal anarchy. "What this country needs," David wrote angrily, "is more Daily Workers to tell the TRUTH to the people, that they may come out from under the spell that has been cast upon them by a system built by 'Special Interests' and protected by Society."⁸⁵

There were intimations in the Peace Mission press, too, that there was scope for more politically significant forms of co-operation between the followers and the American Communists. In an October 1935 edition of the Spoken Word one of the staff writers wrote approvingly of the Party's new plan for a Farmer-Labor Party. "A United Front is essential," this believer wrote, "for all those who desire and believe in the ideal of GOD'S Righteous Government." The follower believed in the need for a party of sharecroppers and tenants to free the South of the "shackles of Jim Crow." Such a party, the writer added, was certain to succeed if its platform proved "evangelical enough" to win Father Divine's endorsement and thus the votes of all his followers.⁸⁶

A week later, on the eve of elections in New York City, the

Spoken Word included a feature item on James W. Ford's qualification for election to the New York City Board of Aldermen. Ford had proved, according to the staff writer, "very cooperative and sympathetic to FATHER DIVINE's activities in deeds and words." Like other Communist candidates in the election, he had demonstrated "consistency and practical sincerity" in serving "the exploited, oppressed and unemployed humanity in the REAL Brotherhood of Man."⁸⁷ Two weeks later, the Spoken Word reminded the followers that the Peace Mission was non-partisan and that the paper did not advise people how to vote.⁸⁸ But one follower, at least, drew different conclusions from the opinions expressed in the paper. In a letter to the editor, this follower wrote that she had been a Republican throughout her voting life. Then she had read the Spoken Word and discovered "the truth about the Platform of the Communists." She recognized in the Communists the same respect for suffering humanity and the brotherhood of man that had caused her to join the Peace Mission. "Now," she said, "this writer ... is a Communist."⁸⁹

Yet, throughout this period of close co-operation with the Party, the Peace Mission never compromised its independence. There were some uncomfortable clashes; for despite their attempts to conform to the ways of the Movement, Party workers never truly understood the nature of the Peace Mission's world view. Party workers regarded the Peace Mission, first and foremost, as a mass organization of the black poor. They assumed that its commitment to interracial life was the same as their own: that is, an expression of their dedication to brotherhood and, especially, racial justice. They believed that the followers could be alerted to 'race issues' and 'race appeals' like the other Harlem groups that they sought to draw into the "United Front." But such appeals won a frosty response from the followers. They believed in achieving justice, equity and

brotherhood not through the promotion of 'race issues' but, in their own apolitical and idiosyncratic way, by ignoring and "negating" racial divisions and race consciousness.

The difference in approach was highlighted at one banquet meeting when an I.L.D. spokesman asked for the Movement's help for Ethiopia against Italian aggression on purely racial grounds. "He referred repeatedly to what he considered his own so-called race," the Spoken Word reported, "making his appeal exclusively to them, whom he said had been kidnapped, and enslaved, but were destined to rule the world." He was rebuked by Father Divine for his race chauvinism and reminded that the name of the Party's organisation was the International Labor Defense. The Peace Mission, Father Divine added, did not recognize race but stood for the interests of "all races, creeds and colors."⁹⁰

Just as important, neither Father Divine nor the Communists relinquished or modified their own formulas for change. The Communists still sought a secular class-based political change; Father Divine still held that political transformation depended on a more vital spiritual change within each individual. Indeed, the Movement's belief in the necessity of conversion was so firm that it affected Father Divine's and the followers' practical activity in a way that must have baffled and frustrated Communist organisers.

In October 1935, for instance, Father Divine wrote to Angelo Herndon in jail to assure him that he had not been inactive on his behalf. Quickly passing over the practicalities of petitions and mass public protests, Father Divine explained that he had been busy generating the more important moral changes necessary for Herndon's release. "I AM," he wrote, "getting at the Root of Evil within the Minds of the People", namely, racial and religious prejudice, for that was the fundamental cause of "wars and rumors of war, race

riots and individual's combats and confliction."⁹¹

In Father Divine's view, there was no easy distinction between the victim and the oppressor. He implied that Herndon was as much to blame for his imprisonment as his accusers. Both had indulged in conflict, hate and resentment and, by the denial of the power of loving co-operation, they had added to the force of "negative" ideas in society and had brought disaster down on their own heads. Father Divine advised Herndon that he could only achieve true freedom by first seeking the "evangelical life" and moral reformation. "The Principle of Christ," Father Divine wrote, "is the key upon which you must stand" and he told Herndon to confess and forsake his "sins" so that "the Truth might set you Free."⁹²

So strong was the followers' faith in Father Divine that they readily abandoned conventional political activity and left the resolution of major problems in Father Divine's hands. In January 1935, the editor of the Spoken Word wrote that the paper had "a detached, yet sympathetic interest" in the efforts of the Scottsboro boys to achieve justice. "In all things," he explained, "we live in the supreme knowledge that GOD sees all and judges all with equity." The fate of the Scottsboro boys could be safely left in the hands of the "Wonderful Counsellor", Father Divine. "There is no case," the editor wrote, "too great or too complicated for HIS Spirit to handle."⁹³

The same assurance flowed through the words of the Movement's song: "The Scottsboro Boys shall Not Die." Sung to the tune of "Mary, Don't you Weep, Don't You Moan" the song railed against the sufferings of the boys "framed up in a lie", "compelled to lie in a dirty cell / For long years in a Southern hell." But, the song continued, "Alabama shall lose illegal fights / When prosecuted for human rights" for Father Divine had intervened to "acquaint the

world with GODLY right." In the chorus, the followers described how the boys could be saved - not by mass protests or legal action, the grist of the Communist Party's defence work - but by obedience to Father Divine's teachings by the boys themselves:

"If the boys will live the evangelical life
FATHER DIVINE will stop the illegal fight
FATHER has said it; and the boys shall not die." 94

This euphoria, this conviction, as Miss Oral Wiltshire explained, that Father Divine would "put through HIS issue and accomplish that for which HE came irrespective of man's opinions, beliefs, ignorance and pride"⁹⁵ thwarted the Movement's co-operation with the Communists. The Movement provided the Party with a forum for the presentation of its ideas, helpful defence from its critics and mass support for its parades and petitions, without ever fundamentally changing its own belief in the force of peace, love and co-operation and Father Divine's supreme authority. Even the most pro-Communist members of the Movement, notably the staff writers on the Spoken Word, never wavered in their ultimate commitment to Father Divine. As far as they were concerned, Father Divine was the most important person in all "United Front" campaigns. It was his interpolation of the "dynamic power of Christ" that strengthened the "United Front" and caused "all the reactionary politicians and vested interests to tremble".⁹⁶ As one journalist explained, "since WE KNOW HE IS GOD we know HE right now exercises more power and control over historical events than the Communists can do or ever can do."⁹⁷

Thus, the Communist Party's sympathetic co-operation with the Peace Mission did little to alter the followers' faith in Father Divine's political influence and their preference for spiritual solutions to the sufferings and troubles of society. Indeed, if anything, it strengthened Father Divine and the followers in their independence; and it had a result that few outside the Movement

could have anticipated. The Party's interest in the Movement and its attempts to politicize the believers encouraged Father Divine and his leading advisors to refine their own political plans. It persuaded them that the concept of the "evangelical life" could form the basis of an independent, practical political movement that, while acting within the existing political structure - much in the manner of the Communist Party - would transcend the limitations of existing parties and politicians.

Articles and editorials in the Spoken Word in late 1934 and 1935 spoke tentatively of the need for a "third party" in American politics dedicated to truth and justice; and Carnegie Pullen, in his "New Day" column, urged the followers to vote only for those candidates for office who were "seriously and wholeheartedly living the Evangelical Life."⁹⁸ The culmination of these ideas came late in 1935 when Father Divine and his Righteous Government Department decided to draft a political platform.

Arrangements were made for a convention to be held in New York City at which, it was planned, this Righteous Government Platform would be presented to the nation and the campaign officially launched.

Father Divine wrote personally to President Roosevelt, State Governors, Senators and Congressmen, as well as to members of every local political organisation, inviting them to attend the convention. As a sign that his concerns were catholic and that he saw no separation between religion and politics, Father Divine extended invitations to a number of religious groups and organisations ranging from the Bahaists, Theosophists and Anthrosophists to the Federal Council of Churches. He invited, too, a number of organisations, mainly Communist, who shared his concern for international brotherhood, justice and peace: like the A.L.W.F., the I.L.D., the

American Friends of the Chinese People and the Friends of the Soviet Union.⁹⁹ In Father Divine's eyes, his entry into the political arena was to be an initiative of unprecedented importance.

The three-day "International Righteous Government Convention" opened quietly on January 10, 1936 at the Rockland Palace ballroom at 115th Street and Eighth Avenue. Arthur M. Madison, serving as the chairman, began the proceedings at eleven o'clock before an audience of only two hundred. But, responding to a roll call, the delegates announced that they had come from Peace Mission groups in Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey and Pennsylvania and some claimed to represent European branches of the Peace Mission.

Members of the Righteous Government executive addressed the rally and outlined the goals of Righteous Government. Chairman Madison insisted that the success of their plans depended on every follower becoming a "100 per cent voter" and putting electoral support behind those politicians who endorsed Father Divine's Righteous Government plan. "It's not just fanciful," Madison insisted, "it's got to be made practical. Everybody who believes in righteous government must be organised."

Not all the followers shared his political perceptions. Even after a year of close co-operation within the Communist Party, the political thinking within the Movement was still mainly in the hands of Father Divine and his advisors in the Righteous Government Department. Many who attended the convention had come simply to join in a celebration of Father Divine. The meeting inevitably swayed between praise and politics. A reporter from the New York Times said that the meeting was full of predictions of the dawn of the day when Father Divine would be "a power behind the President of

the United States', [and] with singing, with dancing and with confessions of religious experiences."

Larger crowds gathered at the Rockland Palace during the day in anticipation of a glimpse of Father Divine; and by the time he arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon more than a thousand were packed into the auditorium. Later, still larger crowds attended the evening session.¹⁰⁰

The main work of the convention began on the next day. Under the direction of the executive board the convention divided into two groups: one, "Divine Youth-Senior Group", meeting at the Rockland Palace, and the other "Divine Youth-Junior Group" assembling at the New Star Casino at 107th Street and Lexington Avenue. Formal programmes of debate were organised for each group and, in the standard manner of conventions, resolutions were put to the vote and recorded.¹⁰¹

The high point of the convention came on the following day, January 12 1936, when the executive presented Father Divine's "International Righteous Government Platform" to the full convention. The followers transferred to St. Nicholas Palace at 69 West 66th Street, and the hall was decorated in combinations of orange and purple for the occasion. The two colours were representative, according to Father Divine, of the eastern and western hemispheres. The atmosphere was euphoric. An audience of five thousand packed into the hall, singing, clapping and cheering the speakers on the crowded platform. Father Divine opened the session from a "throne chair" covered with a cloth of silver fringed with purple. "Peace, everyone," he greeted the crowd. The time had come, he said, to spread the "recognition and realization of God's presence "into the political arena, so that all must "realize the legitimacy of God" in law and government as well as the "illegitimacy of unrighteousness,

debauchery and falsehood":

"Because of this I came and for this purpose
I stand to bring about the righteous
government, not only in the hearts and lives
but in the affairs of the children of men." 102

The focus of the proceedings came when John Lamb rose to recite the Righteous Government Platform. Divided into numerous sections and encompassing a wealth of proposals, it took Lamb an hour and a half to read.¹⁰³ It was set out in formal style: beginning with a Preamble and moving on to broad declarations of principle under the headings: "Against Our Religious Beliefs", "Constitutional Rights" and "Righteous Demands." These sections were followed by three main statements headed: "Economic", "Political" and "Educational", each with lists of "necessary legislation" that the Righteous Government executive believed to be vital to implement righteous change. It was a complicated, repetitive and incoherent document. Its form was too inflexible for contents that were part polemic, part declaration of principle, part quotation from Father Divine's speeches, and part celebration of the Movement's work and ideals.¹⁰⁴ Still, it received a rapturous reception from the followers.

The Platform was an extraordinary attempt to apply the ideals of the Movement to public life. It stated that the Movement sought the co-operation of all governments in translating into public policy and law the qualities of "RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH" upheld by the believers in obedience to Father Divine "whom twenty-million have recognized as their Savior come to Earth again in Bodily Form." It outlined the principles that guided the Movement's entry into politics. The Movement's programme, it said, rested on a belief in the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. The Movement's watchword was "Peace" and this, the believers felt,

could only be achieved by the eradication of prejudice, segregation and conflict between peoples and nations; and by a commitment to equal opportunity and the "welfare of every living creature."

The Platform confirmed that the Peace Mission's work was interracial and international in its scope and explained why the Movement restricted itself to the American political arena. This was, the Platform stated, because the Movement recognized in the radical and egalitarian principles of the American Constitution the same respect for equality, liberty and personal freedom as that upheld by the believers. It recognized in America the model foundation for a "Divinely Established Order for the Coming of the Kingdom of God on earth." Yet, the "evangelical" spirit of the Constitution was in danger: threatened by "prejudicial" and "discriminatory" laws and ordinances passed by "unjust" and "corrupt" politicians; as well as by the autocracy of certain powerful groups in society. If America perished because of unrighteousness, injustice and corruption, then the beacon of Righteous Government would be lost to the world. Only Father Divine's leadership and influence, the Platform affirmed, could avert this crisis, redeem America and lay the basis for an international utopia.

The Platform expressed the Movement's faith in the democratic process. The Peace Mission, it said, would use the ballot box to expel the "unjust" from politics; win the repeal of "prejudicial" laws and ordinances; and introduce into law and national life new policies based on Father Divine's precepts. As the Movement sought a fundamental, ethical change in politics it intended to be non-partisan in its political activity. It would seek only to promote the candidacies of those politicians and officials dedicated to righteous reform, honesty and justice. It would "vote out" of office all those who had shown themselves to be the enemies of

righteousness, justice and truth by their acts of "prejudice, bigotry or discrimination, vice, crime or opposition to the reign of CHRIST ... selfishness, graft, greed or political corruption."

The Platform outlined the proposals and laws that the Movement felt to be vital to save the nation and create Righteous Government. "We do not mean to say," the Platform declared, "that men can be made RIGHTEOUS, JUST and TRUTHFUL by Law for 'It is not by power nor by might but by My Spirit, says the LORD'." But it was time for those who tried to resist Righteous Government to be "designated as criminals" and for God, Father Divine, to rule in the affairs of men.

The proposals and laws the Platform advanced were based on the followers' commitment to peace, justice, equal opportunity, brotherhood, honesty, economic co-operation and the redistribution of wealth. Some of these proposals were familiar ideas to others in the United States concerned for liberal reform, human rights, equity and peace. Father Divine and his followers advocated free, universal public education; the abolition of capital punishment; the abolition of political patronage; appointment and promotion on the basis of merit; laws to end lynching and prevent discrimination and segregation because of race or religion; and a national commitment to pacifism and international harmony. To this extent, the Platform was unique only in seeking to combine the ideas and proposals of a variety of reform groups into one comprehensive formula for national salvation. But it went beyond these political orthodoxies to include a number of idiosyncratic, even apolitical, proposals that had meaning only for the followers.

Certain that true change depended on a change in the 'hearts and minds' of the people, the Movement proposed laws to alter popular consciousness. It suggested the introduction of a

"Universal Language" into school curricula; the elimination of all references to war and militarism in text books; and the replacement of the greeting 'Hello' with the Movement's salutation "Peace": that "a generation with Peace on its lips instead of what war has been said to be may come into being." The Platform also insisted that the attitudes to debt, credit, honesty and theft upheld within the Movement were appropriate principles to govern national financial policy and the conduct of international relations.

The Platform presented, furthermore, the "DIVINE PLAN" for "universalising prosperity": "Wealth, if it is to continue to exist in this New Day," it stated, "must be continuously used for the benefit of humanity and not for selfish gain." The Platform proposed to implement in national life the economic precepts and organisation already successful within the Movement. It envisioned: a government-sponsored system of economic co-operation geared to the creation of work; the maximisation of production; prices cut to the minimum; an end to relief and charity; the abolition of private profit; and an equitable redistribution of wealth and opportunity.

Finally, the Platform detailed the laws and ordinances that the Movement wished to repeal. With complete confidence that the interests of the Peace Mission were identical with the salvation of America, the Platform called for the repeal of those laws that caused the Movement irritation and difficulty; particularly those governing insurance protection and medical care. The Platform also insisted on the regulation of the affairs of labour unions which, in the Movement's view, unjustly interfered with the individual's right to work.

The Platform was an extraordinary blend of political orthodoxies and apolitical naiveties. But the message was clear. The Peace Mission sought to apply the principles and lifeway of the Movement

in politics and government. Father Divine expected the politicians and public officials to accept his teachings and pursue them at all levels of public life. Although the Platform spoke of working through the ballot, law and national planning, the programme was utterly divorced from conventional politics. It required nothing less than a mass conversion of the politicians to succeed. The followers' vision of Righteous Government was erratic, subjective and inspirational. The words of the Righteous Government song illustrated the Movement's isolation from conventional politics despite the executive's desire to present the Platform as a rational, political proposition.

The song described the moral changes that the Movement anticipated: the elimination of sin, graft, injustice and dishonesty and the creation of a new order guided by those "transformed Temples from which sin is washed away." Such a change could not be hindered "for GOD is in the Land":

"Righteousness, Justice and Truth shall have access
in the Land,
These together with Mercy shall govern every man,
Equity and fair dealing, exercised on every hand,
For GOD is Reigning now.

Chorus: We shall have a Righteous Government,
We shall have a Righteous Government,
We shall have a Righteous Government,
For GOD is in the Land.

No races, creeds nor colors shall be known in this
Land

We shall all be united, in one big Holy Band,
GOD Himself is Ruling, for the time is out for man,
Since GOD is Reigning now.

We shall have etc.

Sin, vice and corruption shall never more have sway,
In these transformed Temples from which Sin is washed
away,
GOD is dwelling in them, and forever He shall stay
And GOD is Reigning now.

We shall have etc.

Every unjust official shall be moved off the Bench,
No more political corruption, no more judicial stench,
No more fraud and gambling shall be practised in our
defence,
For GOD is Reigning now."

We shall have etc.

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After the convention, Father Divine released a copy of the Platform to the press and wrote personally to world leaders to call their attention to the document. In a letter to Pope Pius XI, Father Divine urged him to commend it to all under his spiritual jurisdiction in the name of international peace; and in a letter to President Roosevelt, Father Divine explained that the Movement did not seek to form another conventional political party or to "run in collision with partisan politics" but "to release to them and to all that are in authority, the higher ideals for True Partisanship."¹⁰⁶

Simultaneously, the Movement prepared for political action. In accordance with a plan endorsed at the convention, groups of believers throughout America were instructed to begin their own Righteous Government departments and to hold their own Forum meetings. They were invited to discuss municipal, county and state affairs in the light of Father Divine's Platform; select worthy candidates from those standing for local office; and support the campaigns and candidates for national office endorsed by Father Divine and the Righteous Government executive in New York City.¹⁰⁷

New York City's conventional politicians and political activists were puzzled and amazed by the Movement's initiative and by the nature of the Righteous Government Platform. The Platform defied the type of machine politics and political orthodoxies that they understood.¹⁰⁸ Two anxieties prevented them from dismissing the

Righteous Government plan as merely the work of religious fanatics. The first was the fact that the followers seemed intent on voting in the 1936 elections; the second was the Movement's special interest in local issues. Part of the second day's session of the convention had been spent, in fact, debating Harlem's needs and grievances. In militant mood, the followers had called on Mayor La Guardia to implement in full the recommendations of the Commission that he had appointed to investigate the causes of the Harlem riot of 1935; and, in two subsequent resolutions, they had asked the Mayor to institute a system of "proportional minority representation" in the municipal administration and in private employment in view of the "serious conditions of economic and social discrimination, segregation and exploitation" flourishing in Harlem and the city as a whole.¹⁰⁹ So, in the weeks following the convention, the city's principal parties sent speakers and observers to the Peace Mission to keep a cautious eye on its activities.¹¹⁰

But only the Communists took the Movement's political plans seriously enough to offer a critique of the Righteous Government Platform. In the week following the convention, James W. Ford attended a Righteous Government Forum meeting in Harlem to present a prepared statement of the Party's attitude to the Platform. Commending the Platform for its opposition to lynching, discrimination, war and fascism, Ford said that it was, "on the whole", a "progressive" step. But he criticised the Platform's attack on trade unions and warned the followers that such an attitude would create confusion and play into the hands of labour's enemies.¹¹¹

Ironically, it was the Movement's close relationship with the Communists that ultimately suffered as a result of the Peace Mission's new commitment to Righteous Government work.

With the publication of the Platform, it became increasingly

difficult for the Communists to justify co-operation with Father Divine and the followers. After more than a year of contact between the two organisations, the Platform was striking evidence of the Movement's independence.

Moreover, the Platform's criticism of the trade unions, as an autocratic group undermining American democracy, sorely embarrassed the Party. Ever since the autumn of 1935, the Communists had been trying to build a United Front alliance with New York City's Socialist Party. Late in 1935 the Socialists had finally agreed to join in a number of United Front activities.¹¹² But the Socialists suspected the Communist Party's contact with the Peace Mission and believed that Father Divine had no interest in the class struggle or labour organisation.¹¹³

In the February 8 edition of the Socialist Call, after the Righteous Government Platform had been announced, the Socialists openly denounced the Communist Party's mis-alliance with the Peace Mission. Replying in the Daily Worker the black Communist leader, Ben Davis, attempted to justify the Party's interest in the Movement. Arguing that Father Divine had rightly criticised some of the faults of the unions, notably their high dues, Davis allowed that the Movement's policy was "confused and dangerous". But he insisted that, in the United Front, each group had a right to take independent positions; and that it was better to reach out and educate the "backward masses" than abandon them "into the sea of perverted and prostituted fascism."¹¹⁴

But Father Divine refused to alter his attack upon the unions and, by the spring of 1936, this was causing the Communist Party some difficulty. New Party objectives demanded the support of the Socialists and Harlem's labour organisers in order to build a strong, local trade union movement. But the Party could not win this

support as long as it continued to co-operate with a group so determinedly anti-union as the Peace Mission. With May Day approaching, the issue came to a head. The Communists invited the Socialists to participate in a joint parade in the city. But the Socialists set, as part of the price for their co-operation, a provision that the Communists must exert strict control over the Peace Mission. The May Day Committee asked Father Divine to retract his attack upon the trade unions and to instruct his followers to carry "only appropriate May Day signs" if they wished to participate. Father Divine refused; and, as co-operation with the Socialists and organised labour was now more important to the Communists than deference to the Peace Mission Movement, the Peace Mission was excluded from the parade.¹¹⁵

This marked the end of the close association between the Communists and the Peace Mission Movement.¹¹⁶ Neither Father Divine nor the followers seemed perturbed. Following the Righteous Government Convention, they were only interested in promoting their own plans in politics. With a single-minded enthusiasm for Righteous Government, they looked for ways to influence civic and political life and to bring those in authority to an acceptance of Father Divine and his teaching.

The relationship between them and the Communists had been an exceptional one. The white, popular, political movements spawned by the Depression were, as an article of faith, anti-Communist. Possibly, the nature of the Peace Mission's membership influenced the difference. There were, within the Peace Mission, middle class liberals and radicals who, like other Americans of similar status and persuasion, were sufficiently impressed by Communist idealism and action to believe that the Communists promised the sort of political change that was needed.

And there were other, more profound, affinities between the Peace Mission and the Communists. It was the similarity of ultimate goals and immediate patterns of behaviour that made the Communists so attractive to the followers. In the Communists they found another movement that was searching for the millennium; another movement, moreover, that was characterised by self-discipline and self-sacrifice in the pursuit of equality, brotherhood and peace.

Students of millennial movements have drawn attention to the tendency of some millennial groups to challenge established patterns of political power; the predilection of such groups for radical solutions; and their association, in the modern world, with secular revolutionary movements. Scholars have also suggested that millennialism is characteristically a choice of previously politically passive or frustrated people: those with little conception of the capacity of political organisation to bring about change in their situation or those who have found the political system unresponsive to their demands.¹¹⁷

Father Divine's followers, it would appear from the steps taken to give them a political education, may have been previously politically inactive. Those followers who were articulate about politics had little faith in the present political parties; and there were followers, like Frank J. David, who were alienated from almost every social and political institution. All the followers would have accepted that great changes were necessary in order for their demands to be effected in government. Yet, for all the Communists' hopes, the Peace Mission was not an inchoate revolutionary movement.

Dividing the two movements was the Peace Mission's insistence that change must be both peaceful and spiritual. Unlike the revolutionary millennialists, who await the cataclysmic moment when God

will thrust the old order aside and usher in the new heaven, the Peace Mission retained its faith in conversion as a means of change. This was possible because of the freedoms enshrined in the American Constitution: principally, of course, religious freedom. Indeed, the Peace Mission's entry into politics was precipitated by laws which the Peace Mission believed circumscribed that freedom - laws on workingmen's compensation insurance and compulsory medical treatment. But, more than that, the Peace Mission saw American democracy as the embodiment of the desirability of conversion rather than coercion as a means of change. Democracy, the Peace Mission believed, was a means of arriving at Righteousness, Truth and Justice by argument and persuasion. It may have been subverted by self-interest, but its original promise remained untarnished and could be revitalised. Furthermore, this revitalisation was inevitable for God, himself, was at hand to accomplish it.

There was no more striking difference between the Communists and the Peace Mission than this: the pessimistic view of the Communists that the march of reaction could be halted only by discipline, organisation, mass power and, ultimately, war; and the Peace Mission's optimism that, through God and the American Constitution, the reign of Righteousness, Truth and Justice would be established world-wide, exactly as it was already established within the Peace Mission.

The difference was vividly demonstrated in August 1935 when the Peace Mission participated in a massive parade through Harlem sponsored by the American League against War and Fascism. While most of the marchers chanted the "Internationale" or shouted "Hands off Ethiopia", "Down with war and fascism", Father Divine's followers, "sparkling eyed and light-footed", cake-walked, strutted and Lindy-hopped along the route to the accompaniment of a nine-piece band.

With the "calm of those who have found true guidance," the Spoken Word's reporter wrote, they remained "blissfully aloof" from the bitter problems of fascism and unemployment, war and race prejudice that troubled their fellow marchers. They sang, "Ain't Going to Study War No More", "We Shall Have a Righteous Government" and "Take All Your Troubles to Father Divine":

"We don't have a worry,
We don't have a worry,
We don't have a worry no more.
For GOD has Come in Bodily Form
We don't have a worry no more."

Their placards declared "Father Divine is the Unseen Hand that Rules in the Affairs of Men" and bore testimonies to the converts' salvation. "While the marchers up ahead and in the rear plodded along with grim faces, turning their wrath against the gods of war," the Spoken Word reporter wrote, Father Divine's followers "flashed their teeth in benignant smiles" and received "many a smile in return" from the crowds along the route.¹¹⁸

The followers believed that the kingdom of God had already come. All that remained to be done was to convince others of this: politics was a means to this end. The Movement's political action was not an expression of frustration or anger, but one of optimism. It was not, as the Communist theorists argued, an inchoate revolutionary thrust. It was rather an affirmation that the spirit of God, Father Divine, and the principles of the Constitution would triumph.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Spoken Word 1 (11), December 29 1934.
2. Ibid. 1 (16), February 2 1935.
3. Ibid. 1 (11), December 29 1934. The 'Sideliner' column in the Spoken Word declared, "We are in the throes of that LATTER DAY ... GOD is converting the conscious mentalities of mankind causing them to act in a manner quite foreign often times to their own nature." Ibid. 1 (13), January 12 1935.
4. See, for instance, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jnr., Age of Roosevelt, vol. 3: politics of upheaval, London, 1961, 15-69.
5. New York Times November 6 1933; and New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937. O'Brien had visited the Peace Mission in the previous year's mayoralty election campaign. New York Times November 7 1932.
6. Garrett, op.cit., passim; and Mann, op.cit., passim.
7. New York Times November 6 1933; and New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937.
8. New York Times November 7 1933; and New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937.
9. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937. This is quoted in the Righteous Government Platform of 1936. But see also: Spoken Word 1 (4), November 10 1934.
10. Spoken Word 1 (28), April 27 1935; and 1 (46), August 31 1935; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 224-225, 356.
11. Spoken Word 1 (28), April 27 1935; 1 (46), August 31 1935; and 2 (9), December 14 1935; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 228, 356 and 358.
12. Spoken Word 1 (28), April 27 1935; 1 (46), August 31 1935; and 2 (18), January 28 1936; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 225-226, 356 and 358.
13. Ibid., 225.
14. Spoken Word 1 (24), March 30 1935.
15. In 1900, about half the Southern black population over ten years old was said to be illiterate. C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1951, 400. For a discussion of public school education in the Southern seaboard states from which most of New York City's black migrants hailed, see Louis R. Harlan, Separate and unequal : public school campaigns and racism in the Southern seaboard states, 1901 - 1915, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1958, passim. According to the New York City's census figures, the percentage of blacks over the age of ten in Manhattan who were illiterate was only 1.9 in 1930. This must be an underestimate. Laidlaw ed., op.cit., 308. About three

- thousand blacks were enrolled in the W.P.A.'s literacy programme in Manhattan in the autumn and winter term of 1937/1938. This near enough accounts for all those admitted to be illiterate by the 1930 census figures. Gustav A. Stumpf, Harlem tops New York W.P.A. classes, Crisis 45 (1), January 1938, 10.
16. New Day 2 (19), May 12 1938.
 17. New York Times December 8 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (28), April 27 1935; 1 (30), May 11 1935; and 2 (14), January 18 1936. Followers living in Brooklyn also attended classes. The principal of P.S. 45 described the followers taught there as "energetic, hard workers." World Herald 1 (30), June 10 1937.
 18. New York Times December 8 1935; and Spoken Word 2 (14), January 18 1936.
 19. Ibid. 1 (38), July 6 1935; 1 (46), August 31 1935; 1 (47), September 7 1935; and 2 (3), November 2 1935.
 20. New Day 2 (50), December 15 1938; Spoken Word 1 (47), September 7 1935; Harris, op.cit., 173-174; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 226-227.
 21. An adult education programme was begun in New York City by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1933. It was continued and expanded by the W.P.A. In Harlem in 1938 there were over a hundred teachers and more than thirty study centres. In November 1938 six thousand blacks were enrolled in a variety of classes: including literacy and naturalisation classes. Study centres were housed in, among others, the New York Urban League offices, the Abyssinian and Union Baptist Churches, St. Marks Methodist Episcopal Church and the Peace Mission. Stumpf, Harlem tops New York W.P.A. classes, op.cit., 10-11; and Blumberg, op.cit., 322-336. Dr. J.T. Simpson, formerly of Mound Bayou College (Mi.), was in charge of W.P.A. work at the Peace Mission. He not only arranged classes for the followers but also gave short training courses on the skills of teaching. World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937; and 1 (37), July 29 1937.
 22. New Day 1 (38), December 9 1937; 1 (39), December 16 1937; 2 (5), February 3 1938; 2 (9), March 3 1938; 2 (13), March 31 1938, 2 (15), April 14 1938; 2 (20), May 9 1938; 2 (38), September 22 1938; and World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937. There was also a Summer School in 1939; several followers attended courses in economics and political science at the Henry George School in downtown Manhattan; and some followers were keen to follow up their W.P.A. classes with College courses. New Day 1 (39), December 16 1937; 2 (13), March 31 1938; 2 (15), April 14 1938; and 3 (10), March 9 1939.
 23. The World Herald claimed that "night schools through greater New York are filled regularly with a new Student Body, inspired of GOD ..." World Herald 1 (14), February 18 1937. The aim of the followers in "qualifying themselves"

- was to make themselves greater forces for enlightened government - "to hold better public positions and even civil service and elective public offices in a mighty cause to establish Righteousness, Justice and Truth in public affairs, that is, a Righteous Government." New Day 1 (31), October 21 1937.
24. Ibid. 2 (15), April 14 1938; and 2 (26), June 30 1938. Other graduation days, exhibitions and demonstrations of school work are reported in Ibid. 1 (38), December 9 1937; 2 (5), February 3 1938; 2 (9), March 3 1938; and 2 (13), March 31 1938; and World Herald 1 (32), June 24 1937.
 25. New York Times December 8 1935.
 26. Spoken Word 1 (30), May 11 1935.
 27. Father Divine, in a letter to Rudolph Reiner, Commissioner of Immigration, explained that he had encouraged followers of foreign birth to take out citizenship papers "not for the purpose of receiving Old Age Pension, neither for Welfare Protection nor compensation but to the extreme contrary ... it is for the purpose of being eligible to Register and vote, that they might support and protect a good FEDERAL and CITY government to help elect the proper parties to office." Ibid. 1 (25), April 6 1935. See also: Ibid. 1 (38), July 6 1935; and 1 (46), August 31 1935. In April 1936, the Righteous Government Department of Citizenship claimed to have aided 794 people from fourteen different countries. A year later the Citizenship Department announced itself open to members of the general public who wanted advice. New Day 1 (39), December 16 1937; and Spoken Word 2 (38), April 7 1936.
 28. New York Post July 7 1935; and New York Times July 2 1935. It is not known why the followers wanted to register so early. It may have been sheer enthusiasm. On the other hand, they were shrewd enough to realise that they would be refused and so left enough time for the matter to be settled before the election.
 29. Ibid. July 30, July 31, October 26, November 2, November 5 and November 6 1935.
 30. The ruling was not sufficiently clear: for individual registration officials refused to accept Kingdom names again in 1936: and the Peace Mission was again forced to appeal to the State Supreme Court. New York Amsterdam News October 17 1936; and New York Times October 7, October 9 and October 10 1936. In 1937, Father Divine complicated matters by instructing his followers that if they had not registered before in their Kingdom names, they were new voters and so "you will carry your REAL name and nothing else." Election officials, and the Supreme Court, concerned about electoral fraud, insisted that such followers supply their former names and addresses, even if they were to be registered under their Kingdom names. Ibid. October 10 1937; and New Day 1 (29), October 7 1937; 1 (30), October 14 1937; 1 (31), October 21 1937; and 1 (32), October 28 1937.

31. Spoken Word 1 (28), April 27 1935.
32. Ibid. 1 (46), August 31 1935; and 2 (5), November 16 1935. There is a discussion of the Righteous Government Forums in Chapter Eight, p. 519-521, 532-533.
33. George M. Furniss, Political assimilation of Negroes in New York City, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1969, 233-237.
34. See, for instance, Louis A. Lavelle, Political butcher knife now again threatens colored populated (Central) Harlem, New York, 1926, passim. Lavelle, who was a founder member of the Harlem Lawyers Association and of the Equity Congress, one of the earliest black middle class community organisations, wrote that "the 1916 [1917] Legislative Reapportionment made the colored section of Harlem the political 'backyards' ... and at the very same time put the big 'white folks home' out in front." Ibid. 3. Lavelle ascribed a great many of Harlem's ills to this political domination - its lack of a black business community, its high rents and its use as a centre of vice and crime.
35. There had been, since the late nineteenth century, segregated black organisations within the Republican and Democratic parties in the city - the Colored Republican Club and the United Colored Democracy. These had secured some gains for blacks but at the price of total dependence. Osofsky, op.cit., 159-178, treats their efforts sympathetically. Ira Katznelson, Black men, white cities : race, politics and migration in the United States 1900-1930 and Britain 1948-1968, London, 1973, 62-84, is scathing. Furniss, op.cit., passim, argues persuasively that it was only when the black vote became concentrated, race conscious and flexible in party allegiance that significant gains either in patronage or representation could be expected. It is indicative of the dependence of the segregated political clubs that it was independent black political action that elected Harlem's first black representatives.
36. The Harlem Political Union, figureheaded by Harlem's veterans of independent political action, John M. Royall and John C. Hawkins, had endorsement from a number of black political clubs; black trade, professional and business associations; some churches; the local N.A.A.C.P. and Urban League; and some other groups, including the U.N.I.A. Both the New York Age and the Amsterdam News supported it. It made reapportionment a live issue in the 1934 elections to the State Legislature. Both the Democrats elected, James E. Stephens and William T. Andrews, were pledged to its support. New York Age December 29 1934; and New York Amsterdam News February 21, August 18, October 6, November 17, November 24, December 1, December 8 and December 16 1934.
37. Spoken Word 1 (13), January 12 1935; 1 (15), January 26 1935; 1 (17), February 9 1935; 1 (18), February 16 1935;

- 1 (19), February 23 1935; and 1 (21), March 9 1935.
38. Father Divine's words are a reference to the fact that, although the H.P.U. claimed a membership of over a hundred organisations, few of the members of these organisations ever appeared at H.P.U. meetings. Only Father Divine could be relied on to bring a large following. Father Divine was aware that many of the H.P.U.'s members would rather not have seen him there. At the second rally, he remarked that some of those present disliked his attendance: but they had ample time to leave before he spoke. New York Amsterdam News January 12 and January 19 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (18), February 16 1935; 1 (19), February 23 1935; 1 (21), March 9 1935; and 1 (22), March 16 1935.
 39. Reverend Lorenzo King, of St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church, saw in the H.P.U.: "Harlem solidified, a Harlem united, a Harlem concentrated, a Harlem making itself vocal on the question that taxation without representation is tyranny." New York Amsterdam News January 19 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (19), February 23 1935.
 40. The H.P.U.'s campaign fizzled out in late 1935. The reapportionment bills which came before the State Legislature in the spring made no concessions to black demands: and Stephens and Andrews played a part in their defeat. New York Times March 14, March 15, March 16, March 19, March 20, March 22, March 24, March 26, April 11 and April 12 1935.
 41. Spoken Word 1 (17), February 9 1935; and 1 (19), February 23 1935.
 42. Ibid. 1 (24), March 30 1935; and 1 (25), April 6 1935.
 43. Ibid. 1 (33), June 1 1935. La Guardia did, in fact, appoint Myles A. Paige to the magistracy in September 1936: and Jane G. Bolin and Hubert T. Delaney to the Domestic Relations Court in 1939 and 1943 respectively.
 44. The full story of the struggle for black Democratic leadership in the 19 A.D. in Furniss, op.cit., 290-314, 316-317, 326-327.
 45. New York Amsterdam News August 10 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (43), August 10 1935.
 46. New York Amsterdam News August 31 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (50), September 28 1935. There are discussions of Morton's career in Furniss, op.cit., 268 - 274; Katznelson, op.cit., 70 - 73; and Osofsky, op.cit., 173 - 174.
 47. Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 229.
 48. Spoken Word 1 (43), August 10 1935; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 229.
 49. Morton ran a poor third. Four years later, Daniel Burrows, Perry's black lieutenant in 1935, gained the District

- leadership. Morton's U.C.D., further undermined by the election of a black leader, Herbert Bruce, in the 21 A.D., collapsed in 1935. But La Guardia reappointed Morton as Civil Service Commissioner in 1938 on condition that he severed his Democratic affiliation. Furniss, op.cit., 274, 290, 314, 326 - 327; and Osofsky, op.cit., 173-174.
50. Furniss, op.cit., 306-317; and Garrett, op.cit., passim.
 51. Spoken Word 2 (5), November 16 1935; and Furniss, op.cit., 290-291. The 115th Street extension was in the 17 A.D.
 52. Cold war studies of the American Communist Party's relationship with black Americans emphasise the alien and manipulative nature of Communist Party ideology: William A. Nolan, Communism versus the Negro, Chicago, 1951; and Wilson Record, Race and radicalism : the N.A.A.C.P. and the Communist Party in conflict, Ithaca, New York, 1964. More sympathetic, but not sycophantic, is: Dan T. Carter, Scottsboro : a tragedy of the American South, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1969. Less critical is Mark D. Naison, Communist Party in Harlem 1928 - 1936, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1975.
 53. Nolan, op.cit., 8 - 13, has a useful summary of Communist strategy: but it should be realised that Communist Party work on a local basis often did not strictly follow Comintern dictates. Naison, op.cit., 7 - 233.
 54. James W. Ford, United front in the field of Negro work, Communist 14 (2), February 1935, 158-172. James W. Ford was appointed Harlem Organiser in 1933. The Central Committee felt that previous organisers, notably Cyril Briggs and Richard B. Moore, former black nationalists, had been too independent in their approach and too nationalistic in their appeal. Naison, op.cit., 184-233.
 55. New York Amsterdam News August 11 1934.
 56. Harlem Liberator August 12 1933. The followers, presumably, blamed themselves rather than the landlord for their plight and refused the way of confrontation.
 57. Communist 13 (10), October 1934, ? In Father Divine Scrapbook, vol. 2, Schomburg Collection.
 58. Quoted in New York Amsterdam News August 11 1934. In the following April, Oakley Johnson, in a study at Harlem organisations, described the Peace Mission as a "apiritual racket" akin to the numbers racket. Ford rejected this view. Daily Worker April 9 1935; and New Militant April 20 1935.
 59. Spoken Word 1 (10), December 22 1934. Carnegie Pullen wrote in October 1935: "Communists come nearer than anybody except followers of FATHER DIVINE to practising what they preach ..." Ibid. 2 (2), 26 October 1935. He reinforced this position the following month: "The Communist movement is the only political party offering anything righteous for the masses, regardless

of claims to the opposite ... We have failed to find any genuine desire to benefit the masses in any legislation sponsored by either of the major parties in the United States. If you can find anything that would mean non-segregation, equal rights for all, equal distribution of wealth, a desire to share and share alike in any of the parties in this country, we shall be glad to know about it." Ibid. 2 (5), November 16 1935; see also Ibid. 1 (32), May 25 1935; and 2 (3), November 2 1935.

60. Father Divine shared these views. Again and again, he answered critics of his association with the Communists: "They say, 'Why, they are Radicals, they don't believe in God and they don't believe in the Government;'. . . I said, 'Well, if they are, they can't do anything, they are not in Power - the Democrats and the Republicans are in power; now let the Democrats and the Republicans do for the masses what the Communists offer, and I will endorse them.'" Ibid. 2 (5), November 16 1935. See also Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 229 - 230; and Hoshor, op.cit., 251.

61. Nothing more is known of this remarkable man, not even whether he was white or black. He mentioned his time at U.S. Steel in an Iconoclast column. Spoken Word 2 (28), March 3 1936.

62. "The Iconoclast,
Knows not the past,
He smashes all convention,
Breaks images of clay and brass,
All ritual you mention.

To build anew,
This you must do
For form keeps you in prison,
When you are free from falsity,
You will be truly risen."

Ibid.

63. Frank J. David, Into the light : the sin against the Holy Ghost, Philadelphia, [n.d.] 1 - 6.

64. Ibid., 7 - 12.

65. Ibid., 45 - 46.

66. Ibid., 37 - 39.

67. Ibid., 43 - 44.

68. Among the other groups and practises which attracted David's ire were: politicians, etiquette, smoking, advertising, doctors, lawyers, sex, the press and the New Deal. He promised judgement and redress in the new kingdom.

"The great common masses,
Bilked by the classes,
HE'll get them in line,
OUR FATHER DIVINE.
Though steeped in sin,
They'll enter in,

While the holier than thou,
Will flounder and how."

Ibid., 92.

69. Harris, op.cit., 167; and Parker, op.cit., 242.
70. Spoken Word 1 (44), August 17 1935; 2 (2), October 26 1935; and 2 (10), December 21 1935.
71. Ibid., 1 (29), May 4 1935; and 1 (44), August 17 1935.
72. New York Herald Tribune May 2 1935; New York Times May 2 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (29), May 4 1935; and 1 (31), May 18 1935.
73. New Militant May 4 1935 described Father Divine's participation in the May Day parade as "a hilarious novelty."
74. The most conspicuous co-operation between the Communists and the nationalists was in defence of Ethiopia. The Communist Party had some success in convincing the U.N.I.A. of the advantages of an inter-racial United Front but could not persuade the volatile street nationalists of the African Patriotic League. Naison, op.cit., 303 - 310, 363 - 374 and 386 - 396. Even within the U.N.I.A., Captain A.L. King's association with the Communists led to an attempt to purge him from the ranks. Martin, op.cit., 256. The antagonism between the nationalists and the Communists and the role of the Peace Mission was illustrated by a demonstration called by the United Aid for Ethiopia in May 1936. Ira Kemp of the African Patriotic League objected to whites marching in the parade and set up a rival street meeting. According to James W. Ford, the United Aid Committee decided to go ahead regardless; and many of Kemp's followers subsequently joined the march. According to the Spoken Word, however, the police allowed the demonstration to proceed only when the white Communists had been hustled into the middle of the Peace Mission contingent where, said a police officer, "they would be safe." Spoken Word 2 (50), May 19 1936; and James W. Ford, Build the People's Labor Party : speech delivered to an emergency membership meeting of the Harlem Division of the Communist Party, May 25 1936 (In Ford, Communists and the struggle for Negro liberation : their position on problems of Africa, of war, of Ethiopian independence and the struggle for peace, New York, 1936?, 56 - 67) 63 - 64.
75. Spoken Word 1 (26), April 13 1935; 1 (47), September 7 1935; 1 (52), October 12 1935; and 2 (3), November 2 1935; and New Day 3 (32), August 10 1939. The history of the Scottsboro case is in Carter, op.cit., passim.
76. See Angelo Herndon, Let me live, New York, 1937, passim.
77. Daily Worker October 19 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (52), October 12 1935; and 2 (3), November 2 1935.

78. Negro Liberator May 15 1935; Party Organizer 8 (7), July 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (13), January 12 1935. HR 2827 was the Frazier-Lundeen social security bill which was introduced into Congress as an alternative to the Administration's social security bill. The Administration's bill, which became law, proposed a system of unemployment insurance, covering only about half the country's workforce, funded by a payroll tax and paying benefits of about half a claimant's normal wage for twelve weeks only. The Frazier-Lundeen bill covered all the gainfully employed: it proposed that unemployment insurance be financed by taxes on inheritances, gifts and high personal incomes and that benefits be paid that were equivalent to prevailing wages and linked to the cost of living. It was supported by the Communists and a group of radical congressmen, including New York's Vito Marcantonio. Alan Schaffer, Vito Marcantonio: radical in Congress, Syracuse, New York, 1966, 32 - 33.
79. See, for instance, Spoken Word 2 (1), October 19 1935; 2 (2), October 26 1935; 2 (4), November 9 1935; 2 (5), November 16 1935; 2 (6), November 23 1935; and 2 (7), November 30 1935.
80. Ibid. 2 (5), November 16 1935.
81. Ibid. 2 (1), October 19 1935; 2 (3), November 2 1935; 2 (5), November 16 1935; 2 (7), November 30 1935; and 2 (8), December 7 1935. This infatuation with the Soviet Union was, of course, quite widespread among liberals and radicals; and had been since the 'twenties. Progressive churchmen had also been impressed by the U.S.S.R's collectivism. Ekirch, op.cit., 59 - 62; and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jnr., Age of Roosevelt, vol. 1 : the crisis of the old order, London, 1957, 216 - 221; and, op.cit., vol. 3, 182 - 184.
82. Naison, op.cit., 318 - 321.
83. Spoken Word 2 (3), November 2 1935.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid. 2 (18), January 28 1936.
86. Ibid. 2 (2), October 26 1935.
87. Ibid. 2 (3), November 2 1935.
88. In an editorial on the Spoken Word's attitudes towards Communism, A. Honaael Meriditas wrote: "We shall continue to present the principles embodied in Communism, but this is not in support of any Party, because we are non-partisan, as all FATHER's followers are until the Divine Party shall have been established." Ibid., 2 (5), November 16 1935.
89. Ibid. 2 (4), November 9 1935.
90. Ibid. 1 (44), August 17 1935.
91. Ibid. 1 (52), October 12 1935.

92. Ibid. See also: New Day 3 (32), August 10 1939.
93. Spoken Word 1 (15), January 26 1935.
94. "FATHER DIVINE just took the case in time / To prevent the nine Scottsboro boys from dying." Ibid., 1 (24), March 30 1935.
95. Ibid. 2 (3), November 2 1935.
96. Ibid. 2 (2), October 26 1935; and 2 (3), November 2 1935.
97. Ibid. 2 (11), December 28 1935.
98. Ibid. 1 (11), December 29 1934; 1 (25), April 6 1935; 1 (45), August 24 1935; and 2 (2), October 26 1935.
99. Conspicuous among the invitations were those to Southern Governors and Senators: Ibid. 2 (7), November 30 1935; 2 (17), January 25 1936; 2 (18), January 28 1936; 2 (19), February 1 1936; and 2 (20), February 4 1936.
100. New York Times January 11 1936.
101. Ibid. January 12 1936. The resolutions called for, among other things: an end to production of armaments, the elimination of child labour; the abolition of capital punishment; the appointment of judges and policemen by merit rather than influence; an end to political patronage; the disuse of the word 'Negro'; a system of minority representation in municipal government; the passage of an anti-lynching bill; and an end to segregation in private and public employment. Spoken Word 2 (22), February 11 1936.
102. Harris, op.cit., 164-165.
103. New York Times January 13 1936.
104. The text of the Platform was reprinted frequently in the Peace Mission press. It is set out in full as an Appendix. The following discussion is based on this version as in World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
105. New Day 1 (8), July 8 1936.
106. Mayor La Guardia was also sent a copy. Father Divine concluded his letter to Pope Pius XI with his belief that when, with the co-operation of the Pope and other religious and political leaders, Righteous Government had become a reality then - "the Kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and his Christ,' and the Universal Brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God will be a Reality even as it is with those that are connected with ME." Spoken Word 2 (17), January 28 1936; and Hoshor, op.cit., 248 - 251.
107. From the resolutions adopted at the meetings on January 11 1936. Spoken Word 2 (22), February 11 1936.

108. New York Times January 19 1936.
109. Spoken Word 2 (22), February 11 1936.
110. Observers from the major political parties attended the Convention for the reading of the Righteous Government Platform. New York Times January 13 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (16), January 21 1936; 2 (24), February 18 1936; and 2 (44), April 28 1936.
111. New York Amsterdam News January 18 1936; and Sunday Worker January 19 1936.
112. This was a result of the decision by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern to seek 'Democratic', 'Popular' or 'Peoples' fronts with Socialists and liberals against the threat of fascism. Naison, op.cit., 382-383. The Socialists were very suspicious of Communist motives and veteral black Socialist, Frank Crosswaith, advised the unions associated with the Negro Labor Center in Harlem not to support the Communist-backed National Negro Congress when it held its first convention in February 1936. Ibid., 409-410.
113. Frank R. Crosswaith and Alfred Baker Lewis, True freedom for Negro and white labor, New York, 1936, 36. See also below, Chapter Nine, p. 615, 619-620. When Father Divine wrote to the Socialist Party, inviting it to send representatives to the Righteous Government Convention, the letter was returned to the Peace Mission with its 'Peace' stamp obliterated by the word, 'War': perhaps both a reference to class war and an indication of the Party's uncompromising attitude to the Peace Mission. Spoken Word 2 (20), February 4 1936.
114. Daily Worker February 11 and March 31 1936.
115. Crusader News Agency April 13 1936; and Moon, Thank you Father, so sweet, op.cit., 147-150.
116. Communists continued to attend Righteous Government Forums and the Peace Mission continued to take part in 'Peoples Front' activities. But there was less expression of pro-Communist sentiment in the Peace Mission press; and the Communists were more interested in cultivating black trade unionists, progressive churchmen and middle-class black opinion, to whom the Peace Mission was, at best, a shameful joke and, at worst, a shameful racket. Significantly, the Peace Mission was not invited to participate in the Communists' most recent venture - the National Negro Congress. Naison, op.cit., 382-423 describes the developing Communist strategy in Harlem.
117. Talmon, Millenarian movements (In Potter and Sarre, eds. op.cit.) 427-428, 437-438.
118. Spoken Word 1 (43), August 10 1935.

CHAPTER EIGHT: EVANGELICAL POLITICS AND RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT:
PART II.

Father Divine and his followers embarked on independent political action with a millennial faith in American democracy. A revitalised American democracy was to be the means by which Righteous Government would cover the earth. This faith, however, was to be sorely tried.

The Movement found itself wholly at odds with the conventional conduct of politics. Since Father Divine and his followers held that Righteous Government was the absolute God-given solution to the world's problems, they could never easily compromise. Father Divine could not be seen to bargain or negotiate his support: for such would be unseemly in God. Nor could he allow the politicians to ignore him: for they could not be above God. When the politicians and voters proved indifferent to Righteous Government, the Movement was reduced to two, equally futile, courses of action. The first course, taken during the 1936 election campaign, was to abstain from polling - which made a mockery of all the Movement's exhaustive political education and voter registration work. The second, taken a year later, was to try to "vote out" those who were heedless of the Movement's Righteous Government plan: which, even had it been successful, was a wasted effort in the absence of any politician actively supporting it.

The Peace Mission was caught between its desire to be politically active and its refusal to follow the conventional political strategies that might have won it influence. Father Divine resisted pragmatism and was quick to control the Movement's political work and ensure that it remained within set lines. To the disappointment of some of the educated political activists, Father Divine ruled that spiritual conversion still remained the

most important means of spreading the Movement's influence. The Peace Mission entered the political arena not to collaborate but to convert.

Events proved, too, that even when Father Divine was tempted into co-operation and compromise for the sake of a political lobby, his influence was scant. His claims to divinity ensured that he was an embarrassment to those he sought to help and a laughing stock in the eyes of his opponents.

By entering politics, Father Divine exposed his omnipotence to severe trial. He was powerless to protect himself from the inevitable set-backs of political life; and he was reduced to threatening unspecified disaster upon his opponents and claiming supernatural credit for developments with which he had no obvious connection. So it was that with the Movement's failure to convert the politicians, combined with other assaults on Father Divine's prestige and the deterioration in international politics, the Peace Mission eventually abandoned the ambitious vistas of the Righteous Government Platform to espouse, instead, its own version of American isolationism.

The followers still paid due reverence to their democratic faith by continuing voter education and registration throughout the late 'thirties, but the greater aspirations of the educated believers, that the Movement be a radical political force, were disappointed. Father Divine took control of what little remained of Righteous Government work at the end of the decade and it was blind faith in his supernatural power that remained the only recourse of those followers interested in political change.

None of these problems, of course, were apparent to Father Divine and his followers at the beginning of 1936. The Righteous Government Platform was launched with the Peace Mission in an optimistic mood. The followers believed, despite the idiosyncrasy of their proposals and their refusal to follow the ways of politicians, that they would have an impact on party politics in the coming year. The conversion of the corrupt was imminent.

The directors of the Righteous Government campaign acquired a status and authority within the Movement that has been accorded, previously, to lower-class black followers, like Faithful Mary, on the basis of their conversion experiences. New skills were needed to direct political work: and Father Divine was seen, increasingly, in the company of a smart group of educated, socially accomplished advisors, some of whom were white.¹

It seems that the knowledge, skill and organising ability of these leading followers at first discouraged the less confident and articulate believers from helping in the work of Righteous Government. In November 1936 Miss Fineness Fidelity complained that the work of naturalising foreign-born followers had been left to just a few to do.² The committee members themselves were probably largely at fault due to their well-intentioned, competent but dominant control. The mass of the believers, especially in New York City, where the influence of the Righteous Government executive was over-riding, tended to be the recipients rather than the architects of the Movement's Righteous Government work. Still, the Political committee set about organising and educating them with earnestness and enthusiasm.

Members of the Speakers Bureau arranged classes and prepared essays on aspects of Righteous Government work for the benefit of the believers. Small columns of instruction called "Political class

lessons" were produced for publication in the Peace Mission press and the chairwoman of the Political committee, Miss Fineness Fidelity, approached individuals and organisations to arrange speakers for the Movement's Forum meetings.³ New Righteous Government Forums were opened in the Movement's main city extensions and, by early 1937, there were regular Forums meeting at 20 West 115th Street; 126 West 129th Street; 160 West 126th Street; 204 West 63rd Street and the extension at 123rd Street and Lenox Avenue.⁴ They were chaired by trusted members of the Movement, closely associated with the Righteous Government executive and sometimes chosen personally by Father Divine.⁵

Attendance at the Forums was voluntary and the chairleaders were allowed to plan their own programmes. But it was understood that at least part of the Forum meeting was to be devoted to political education. "This necessary feature of every Righteous Government Forum," a follower wrote in the New Day, "acquaints prospective voters of the why and wherefore of voting, etc., and is given in anticipation of what will be a very important step in disposing of corrupt politicians who make it their business to exploit the poorer class and impose upon the constitutional rights of the citizens of this great land."⁶

Each Forum included lessons on the mechanics of voting; instruction on the functions of the federal government; study of the United States Constitution and discussion of the Righteous Government Platform.⁷ Considerable importance was placed on drilling the followers in the planks of the Platform itself. At one meeting at 20 West 115th Street, for instance, the chairwoman, Miss Star, called for someone to recite the Preamble to the Platform:

"Whereupon a tiny angel, Wonderful Love, responded,

and walking to the rostrum rail in a business like way she recited the Preamble ... pronouncing the long words without hesitation, following this with the Preamble to the Constitution, an amazing performance for one so young (about six years of age)." 8

Righteous Government committee members were called upon to give reports of their work, outline national political developments and present useful information to the group. The chairleader presented the topic planned for discussion and then guest speakers were invited to address the followers on subjects of their own choice.⁹ In a published list of invited guests visiting the 63rd Street Righteous Government Forum between May 1935 and May 1936 there were, among others, spokesmen from the City Fusion Party, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, the Communist Party, the Citizens Union, the League of Nations Association, the Federal Housing Authority, the National Flag Committee, the Foreign Policy Association, the Army and Navy Club and the Anti-Nazi League.¹⁰

Such a programme, at its best, offered the followers a broad political education. In May 1936 Miss Oral Freedom reported that attendance and interest at the 63rd Street Forum had gradually expanded over the year since its opening. "Those whose education, both politically and in general, has been neglected or limited," she wrote, "have been noticeably blessed by the opportunities presented by and at these meetings."¹¹ There was a chance to argue, discuss and question in an informal atmosphere; to learn the mechanics of the political system and to study the ideas of other groups. Indeed, at times, visiting speakers drew the believers into energetic debate. At one meeting devoted to the municipal ownership of power and light plants, "groups were seen in heated discussion throughout the auditorium" until "they were persuaded to depart and allow the electric lights turned off, the use of

which was enriching the power monopoly right on."¹²

Still, the Forums were far from being conventional political schools. Many of the believers found it hard to adjust their conduct to suit the style of rational instruction usually favoured by the chairleaders. Followers used the opportunity to sing and testify, disrupting the proceedings and turning the Forums into rambling praise sessions. At one meeting of the chairleaders in New York City in late 1936, it was brought out that the Forum meetings were sometimes disrupted by followers who took "no practical part but feel they must testify." According to the disgruntled political activists, these converts interrupted the guest speakers and told them "what they like to hear them speak about."

"How," the chairleaders complained, "should we as future voters, learn whether these political leaders are worthy of our vote unless we give them a chance to express themselves freely ... There is a time for singing and shouting, a time to testify and a time to learn and respect the chairman's requests as they are FATHER's Chosen Vessels ... Where there is strife, GOD is not expressed."¹³

A similar note of annoyance crept into one of Miss Oral Freedom's reports of events at the 63rd Street Forum when she found that the followers were unable to recite Plank nine of the Righteous Government Platform. "The failure to do so showed how few had learnt the planks by heart," she complained, "and should put us on our mettle to do so, especially when FATHER has called for this."¹⁴

Alongside the Forum meetings, the Political committee also began an organisation of the Peace Mission vote. Members of the committee canvassed the Assembly Districts where the followers lived, collecting and indexing the names of all new and regular Peace Mission voters. The Assembly District captains appointed

supervisors who, in turn, selected election district workers much in the manner of the regular political parties; and observers were sent to the city's political clubs to monitor their work.¹⁵ There was every indication that the followers intended to make a decisive impact on the state and national elections at the end of the year.

Father Divine and his followers, however, were still undecided about how they should act. The Platform laid down some guidelines on political action. It averred that the followers belonged to no one party and that they would co-operate with any in the cause of "Righteousness, Truth and Justice". It placed importance on the calibre of individual politicians and officials and it stated that the followers would use the principles and proposals of the Platform as the yardstick to determine the candidate "best fitted to fill the Office regardless of his Political Affiliation."¹⁶ Yet, it also affirmed that the believers would "move as a unit at HIS Slightest Command or upon His Endorsement of a Candidate" to vote the "right man INTO Office and the wrong man OUT."¹⁷

This was, at most, a statement of principle and left a variety of courses open to the followers. They might vote for any politician whom they thought suitable, regardless of party; they might support the party that came closest to their idea of Righteous Government; they might even launch an independent political campaign of their own. Oddly, and characteristically enough, Father Divine and his followers, rather than deciding on any single direction, appeared to pursue every route simultaneously.

The followers listened, if somewhat impatiently, to the politicians who addressed the Forums; judging how far they measured up to the standards of Righteous Government. Occasionally, Father Divine himself found individual politicians who measured up to his criteria. In August 1936 he was impressed by Judge Jonah Goldstein

who came to the Peace Mission in search of support for his nomination on the Democratic ticket in the November primaries in defiance of Tammany Hall. Father Divine commended Goldstein as a man of unquestioned integrity.¹⁸ At the very same time, Father Divine and several of his followers took a prominent part in launching a local independent party, the All Peoples Party (A.P.P.) in the summer of 1936.

Sponsored by a group of left-wing activists, the A.P.P. arose from the sense of frustration felt in Harlem following the public hearings into the 1935 Harlem riot. Harlem's acute needs, expressed in the hearings; the persistent neglect and indifference of the City's principal political parties; and suspicions that La Guardia would not act upon the report of the Riot Commission that he had appointed to conduct the public hearings, created the mood for independent political action to promote Harlem's interests. The A.P.P.'s inaugural convention in June 1936 drew delegates from local social, political, civil and religious groups. Its Platform, presented two months later, proposed extensive community reforms aimed at eliminating discrimination and segregation in housing, jobs, education, health care and the allocation of relief. It called for political reapportionment; an end to police brutality and a youth opportunities programme for Harlem. The A.P.P. also supported a number of national measures, including legislation to outlaw lynching, and it announced its intention to run a slate of candidates for State Assembly and Congressional offices in Harlem's Seventeenth, Nineteenth and Twenty-first Assembly Districts and East Harlem's Twentieth Congressional District in the approaching November 1936 elections.¹⁹

As an independent political movement drawing support from a wide range of community groups and pledged to fight against

political expediency and for major reforms, the A.P.P. approached Father Divine's vision of a righteous political movement. He sent Arthur M. Madison and A. Honazel Meriditas to represent him at the A.P.P.'s inaugural session; and other believers joined the audience. He arrived, personally, at the end of the meeting to talk and shake hands with the newly elected executive.²⁰

He was reluctant, at first, to be identified with a party so tightly restricted to local issues and, particularly, to matters of race; and it was partly due to the insistence of Father Divine and his spokesmen that the A.P.P. settled on its final choice of name - All Peoples Party. At the inaugural convention Madison requested, on Father Divine's behalf, that all words referring to race should be dropped from the discussion, and Meriditas added, "I want no other appellation to my name except 'an American citizen' ... we should go on record as being a no-race group, or an all-race organisation." Father Divine told the A.P.P.'s sponsors that they must choose a name for the party that "could reach all parts of the country." He was, he said, nationally known and "I feel it would be limiting us in our future advancement to designate ourselves to Harlem alone."

Some of the other delegates were less concerned with Father Divine's national leadership than with finding a party name that could embrace and unite Puerto Ricans, West Indians and American blacks in Harlem. The final choice of name happily pleased all.²¹

In the following months, several believers became active workers for the A.P.P. and Father Divine continued to support the A.P.P.'s cause. Late in September 1936 Father Divine invited his Harlem followers to put the A.P.P. "on record" at New York City's Board of Elections and, duly, a number of followers, using their spiritual names, signed the nominating petitions for six A.P.P. candidates

for office. One of these candidates, Abraham Unger, who was standing for a judgeship in the Court of Special Sessions, was, in fact, one of Father Divine's legal advisors and a member of the I.L.D.²² However, Father Divine did not commit the Movement to definite action on election day.

As far as the impending Presidential election was concerned, Father Divine expressed no preference for any of the major candidates. But it appeared from the posters displayed in the windows of the Peace Mission's shops and extensions, that some of his followers had already concluded, from their study of the political scene, that, despite the Righteous Government Platform's criticism of the New Deal, President Roosevelt approached their idea of a righteous politician and a vote for him and the Democrats was the best choice.²³

But, in truth, all this political education and organisation amounted to naught. The followers' energetic activity had been based on the assumption that they would vote that year. Some had evidently made their own decisions on whom to support. Yet, as early as the summer of 1936, Father Divine had made it impossible for them to act; firstly, by announcing that only a complete endorsement of his Righteous Government Platform would ensure a party or a politician Peace Mission support at the polls and, secondly, by affirming that the Peace Mission must act collectively, if at all. The followers must wait for his command.

He had already entertained the possibility that the Movement would not act that year. If, as seemed likely, none of the politicians accepted Righteous Government, the Movement would be obliged either to abstain on polling day which, he said, "must mean that there will be millions in this Country who will not vote at this Presidential election"; or the Movement would vote "merely

in a way whereby it may be an appearance of losing": that is, for a candidate who could not win or who did not endorse the Platform. As he knew full well, that was no alternative at all; and from the summer of 1936, he had steadily and deliberately closed the avenues of possible political compromise so that the Movement aimed for a substantial acceptance of Righteous Government: and nothing less.²⁴

He qualified his support for individual politicians. Even as he praised Judge Goldstein, so he told the followers that the sincerity of individual politicians was not enough:

"One man may be good, and may be honest and true, may be just, as a Representative of RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE among you, but if all the others are corrupt it is a matter of impossibility for the one individual to do just what we, yea, even what HE would desire to do." 25

Even as he supported the A.P.P., so he told the followers that they should not "confine" themselves to its cause but to "continue to lift up the Standard" of Righteous Government and to serve as personal examples of that "perfect piece of legislation." He told them to be registered and prepared to vote; to submit all office seekers to rigorous scrutiny but to wait for his instructions. "It is possible," Father Divine said, "[that] we may get a wholehearted endorsement of one of the major parties at the last moment, or by one of the minor parties." Only their complete acceptance of the Righteous Government Platform would persuade him to let the Movement act on polling day.²⁶

Even as he said this, though, he knew that a vast gulf existed between him and the major political parties. Earlier, in May 1936, in an office talk to a Republican political aspirant, Father Divine had spoken of each party's glaring failings. In the Democratic-controlled South, he said, "you are mistreated, and have to ride in Jim Crow cars and smoky hollows, just because of your color." The Republican Party's record was no better. "They claim,"

Father Divine said, "to be the ones who endorsed the Emancipation of the slaves." But for all the years that the Republicans had been in power, "how much segregation," he asked, "have they eradicated among us?"²⁷

As the 1936 elections drew nearer, Father Divine repeated these criticisms. Anxious that the followers should not, either from a desire for political action; misplaced confidence in the goodwill of politicians; or traditional loyalty, aid and foster parties that had not "come on across" to Righteousness Government, he reminded the faithful:

"Where is the Party that has given you and all people the real Emancipation and given them the privilege and access they should have under RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE and under the Constitution of our great Country?"

He called on both parties to take up the cause of Righteous Government. Then, and then only, would he endorse them.²⁸

Obediently, Father Divine's followers waited on his command. They did not doubt that his campaign promised something new and qualitatively different in politics and their own political experience. "Heretofore," Miss Virginia Allen testified, "we would go from club to club, Democratic and Republican, selling our vote for as small a sum as \$2.50; today we would not sell our votes for \$1,000,000."²⁹

But the political parties were indifferent to Father Divine's stand and, increasingly, his speeches became tinged with threats to use his supernatural power against the selfish and unjust. "If we cannot put you out by the BALLOT without the Bullet," he warned, "we will put you out by WILLING you out."³⁰ He reminded his followers that Righteous Government was no ordinary campaign, but the fulfillment of the prophecy of David and John in Revelation for the kingdom of God on earth. He had come, he said, to make America into a

"real utopia" from which his influence would spread throughout the universe. Ultimately, he promised:

"We shall have ONE LANGUAGE, [we] shall have ONE FLAG, and we shall have ONE MONEY, and we shall be universally ONE PEOPLE. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end." 31

At a Peace Mission meeting in upstate New York, Father Divine said that his teachings transcended the ten Commandments of Moses on which all governments were founded. He asked:

"Do you not see that the law has truly come that the Constitution of our great Country must be refounded upon? Do you not see that all other countries must be founded upon the Law of the Spirit of Life that was in CHRIST JESUS?" 32

In a final major bid for political attention before the elections, Father Divine led five thousand followers on a five mile parade from Harlem to downtown New York. It was the first time that the Movement had gone, en masse, into the lower precincts of the city and several police details were sent to accompany the marchers. Leading the parade, Father Divine sat high on the back of his chauffeur-driven car to attract the attention of the sidewalk crowds. Thirty disciples, mounted on horses and wearing vivid green sashes which declared "Father Divine is God," led the faithful who followed on foot.

At Madison Square, the march halted for a three hour rally. A number of office-seekers and spokesmen for the minor political parties appeared on the platform.³³ But the occasion was dominated by Father Divine. He told the rally that his campaign would usher in the utopia in America if not by the ballot, then, "we will move you [the corrupt] out by the Spirit":

"We shall have Righteous Judges! We shall have Righteous People! We shall have Righteous Officials, from the lowest to the Chief Executives of our Country."

Righteousness, truth and justice would permeate the hearts of

men:

"It will no longer be the Judge as a man,
but it will be CHRIST ruling on the Throne
of his mind, judging the people with equity."

His work could not be stopped. "My spirit," Father said, "is
omnipotent."³⁴

Finally, on November 3 1936, Harlem went to the polls to vote
for its choice for state and local office as well as for the
Presidency of the United States. From his headquarters at 20 West
115th Street, Father Divine sent out a directive to all his
followers: not to vote. "I say the time has come: we must stay
our hands" for neither major party "has come to me and accepted of
me my righteous government platform." A hundred followers were
despatched to the local polling stations to enforce the ban, and
Father Divine's staff telegraphed groups of believers across the
nation advising them of Father's command.³⁵

Next day, the New York Times carried a dramatic report of the
ban. Quoting Meriditas's claim that the ban had stopped the casting
of fifty thousand votes in Harlem, the New York Times attributed
the unusually quiet polling day scene in Harlem to the followers'
action. C.B. Powell, the director of publicity for the Harlem
division of the Democratic Party campaign committee, retorted, in
a letter to the paper, that Father Divine controlled no more than
two thousand votes. Lester B. Granger of the Urban League complained
that the paper's suggestion that Father Divine commanded the support
of so many Harlemites was "a libel upon the intelligence of the
community."

The election returns settled the issue. Voting higher than the
city as a whole, Harlem's two main electoral districts returned
eighty-six per-cent of the registered 65,523 votes, sweeping the

board for the Democrats, Roosevelt and the New Deal.³⁶

The fate of the minor parties at the polls was indicative of the mood of the electors. Despite a year in which interest in independent political action and community reform had been high, the A.P.P., the Communists and the Socialists were all swamped at the polls by the Democratic landslide. In the Nineteenth Assembly District, for instance, the Democratic candidate for the Assembly, Robert W. Justice, polled 18,557 votes against Republican Jane Bolin's tally of 4,572. The A.P.P.'s candidate, Horace I. Gordon, a militant young lawyer who was popular with labour, relief and civil rights activists, polled only a few hundred votes. His Communist and Socialist opponents, Angelo Herndon and Victor Gaspar, attracted much the same support.³⁷

If Harlem's electors were not interested in fringe political parties at the polls, they were even less interested in Father Divine's abstract notions of non-partisan action in the name of righteousness, truth and justice. The electors were interested in the way that the major parties translated these ideals into practical programmes guaranteed to meet people's needs for improvement and security in their lives. Alongside the achievements of the New Deal relief and recovery programmes, neither the fringe political parties nor the Republicans had anything to offer; while Father Divine's concept of Righteous Government was nebulous, impractical and irrelevant.

Only the A.P.P. regretted the Movement's decision not to vote. Members of the Peace Mission had been active in support of Vito Marcantonio's campaign for re-election to Congress from New York's Twentieth Congressional District and, following the election, the left-wing Crusader News Agency attributed Marcantonio's defeat to the followers' refusal to act on election day.³⁸ It is doubtful

that the Movement was to blame. Even Marcantonio, a popular and militant champion of labour and the poor, could not stop the tide that swept his Tammany rival, James Lanzetta, to office on the Democratic ticket.³⁹

Ever since the summer of 1936, Father Divine had anticipated the fate of Righteous Government. By forbidding the followers to vote he, at least, saved himself the embarrassment of supporting party politicians who showed no interest in his campaign. It allowed him to stand aloof; to preserve his moral integrity; and to decry the corruption and failings of the politicians. All was not lost either: for he could still promise his followers a supernatural resolution to man's affairs.

In December 1936 he told the believers that while he wished them to seek change through their efforts, should they fail, "MY Spirit and MY Mind will move on and accomplish MY Endeavor with or without your endorsement."⁴⁰ Again, in March 1937, he told another group at the 63rd Street Forum that it was "absolutely immaterial" to him whether people did or did not vote:

"... the Spirit of MY Presence and the Presence of MY Spirit shall go forth conquering and to conquer continually; until every nation, language, tongue and all peoples, shall bow at the recognition of GOD's Presence." 41

Yet it was not only Father Divine's concern to protect his prestige that caused him to forbid the followers from voting in 1936. There was also a question of principle at stake. He knew that to vote would be to compromise the spirit of Righteous Government. In this first earnest year of Righteous Government work there could be no truck with corruption.

His attitude toward the conduct of the Movement's Righteous Government work throughout 1936 suggested that he would take this position. Although he was pleased with the way in which the

politically astute within the Movement led the followers through all the labyrinths of political education and preparation, he had constantly expressed reservations about the secular tone that they brought to the campaign: reservations that showed that he would not be amenable to pragmatic political action, bargain and compromise on election day.

He disapproved of the discipline and formality that some of the Righteous Government Forum leaders brought to the conduct of their meetings. He reprimanded Miss Oral Freedom, the chairwoman of the 63rd Street Forum, for instance, for seeking to follow the "ordinary methods of the world" by running her Forum on committee lines.⁴² He opposed all attempts to discipline the less sophisticated believers who brought religious enthusiasm to the meetings. In his view, righteous change sprang from such inner emotion: so, he regarded song, testimony and outbursts of ecstasy as an integral part of the meetings. He revelled, too, in the excitement his appearance sparked at the Forums and he ignored the disruption he caused in the more conventional political exercises.⁴³

In obedience to Father Divine, Miss Oral Freedom subsequently opened up her Forum to followers to express themselves "as led by the Spirit" and she encouraged the believers to "loosen up" by singing, clapping and "real enthusiasm";⁴⁴ and other chairleaders were obliged to tolerate more informality than they may have felt compatible with the serious matter of preparing for political action. At most Forums, visiting groups from other extensions were welcomed with musical selections; and younger followers often entertained the adults before the main work of the meeting began.⁴⁵ Yet the split between the 'inspirational' and the 'secular' approach to political action still persisted. According to the Peace Mission press, the Speakers Bureau meeting hall on 129th Street offered a

more sombre alternative for those "politically minded followers" who were "ambitious to learn all they can about politics."⁴⁶

Of course, the Movement was never sharply divided between those who favoured conventional political action and those who pursued an inspirational approach. The Righteous Government Platform was never a conventional political document and Righteous Government inspired a crusading zeal that affected the politically astute as much as the less sophisticated. At one Forum meeting at 20 West 115th Street, for instance, the chairwoman of the Research committee reported, with satisfaction, that fifteen saloons had been closed in Harlem, a boot-leggers' house had been burnt, and two police officers who had indulged in a fight had lost their badges and were under departmental investigation.⁴⁷

Indeed, the Forum chairleaders themselves, at times, encouraged the believers to feel that small, personal stands for Righteous Government were just as vital as preparing to vote. These chairleaders and committee members, in fact, set the tone by describing their work in testifying style. On one occasion, Miss Fineness Fidelity rose to describe how she had destroyed a counterfeit bill in a butcher's shop in accordance with Father Divine's rulings.⁴⁸ At another Forum, a member of the Research committee reported that the committee's investigators were watching how much time the police and road repairmen wasted in smoking and "entering people's homes." She said:

"They may think they are unobserved but their deeds are being recorded by the Secretary of Heaven and in that day of reckoning they must give an account of their Stewardship." ⁴⁹

Father Divine was ever anxious that this spirit should not be lost. He was always ready to initiate and endorse Righteous Government campaigns that were, by no means, conventional or strictly politically pertinent.

The followers, for instance, lobbied the New York City Motor Vehicle Bureau's Department of Licences to cease its use of "segregated words" designating a person's race on driving licence application forms.⁵⁰ They also supported Father Divine's boycott of the "prejudicial" press for its use of "segregated expressions."⁵¹ In August 1936, follower Bronwen C. Pleasanton wrote to the Nation magazine to ask it to drop the term 'Negro' in its reports. "You would not use an article that referred to Huns, Frogs, Dagos or Kikes," she wrote, "so it is with the word 'Negro'." If the magazine refused, she added, she would reluctantly cancel her subscription to a journal that had proved "such a reliable source of truthful information" to Righteous Government workers.⁵²

The followers gave their support to the American League for the Abolition of Capital Punishment in its effort to obtain commutations of the death sentences on condemned prisoners in the state's jails;⁵³ and they signed petitions, circulated by the Harlem Parent Teachers Association, for better facilities for the children of Harlem.⁵⁴

They registered, too, a number of triumphs. Governor Lehman commuted the sentences of six condemned men in early 1937;⁵⁵ and, to her delight, Miss Quiet Devotion was allowed to substitute "Olive" for "Negro" on her driving licence application form. She rejoiced: "Another Victory for FATHER DIVINE! Praise HIS SWEET HOLY NAME!"⁵⁶

Father Divine believed that such assaults on corruption and unrighteousness were just as valid as voting. If voting in the 1936 elections meant that he had to compromise the fundamental tenets of Righteous Government and deny the moral stance of the Platform, he was not, at this point, prepared to sanction it.

As for the followers, if they were disappointed by Father Divine's ban they did not show it. Ever since the start of their

Righteous Government work they had shared a supreme optimism: a conviction that Father Divine's influence would spread irrespective of their action at the polls. He would change the hearts and minds of the politicians - whether these politicians wished it or not.

Repeatedly, they had attributed progressive change to Father Divine's subtle power. In June 1936, for instance, the editor of the New Day had seen in Eleanor Roosevelt's controversial decision to invite a racially mixed group of delinquent girls to the White House, evidence of Father Divine's influence:

"To well-thinking people, especially those acquainted with the Work and Teaching of FATHER DIVINE, this should not be surprising. A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED! This is the Day when the revelation of John on the Isle of Patmos is coming to pass. The old things have passed away and ALL things have become new ... FATHER has called for Righteousness, Truth and Justice in everyone from the President down to the street cleaner and in the NEW DAY we see HIS Spirit and HIS Mind working daily throughout the length and breadth of the world." 57

Such faith served them in good stead during the 1936 elections. They found reassurance, too, in Roosevelt's words on the occasion of his inauguration to the Presidency in January 1937. Roosevelt told Americans that they were witnessing a change in the "moral climate of America". He said:

"We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal, and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power for the establishment of a morally better world ... [the people] will demand a nation uncorrupted by the cancers of injustice and, therefore, strong among the nations in its example of the will to peace. Today we reconsecrate our country to the long cherished ideals in a suddenly changing civilisation."

He ended his address on the word "Peace".⁵⁸

And it was not only national politics that filled the followers with optimism. A writer in the World Herald saw in the work of

state governments evidence of a "marvellous change" in political life. Although elected under different party labels, the editor wrote, state Governors were promoting progressive policies designed to wipe out economic ills, protect civil rights and secure social reforms.⁵⁹

"The long hoped-for millennium has already dawned for those who have eyes to see," wrote the editor of the World Herald in January 1937; and, in May 1937, Miss Oral Freedom insisted: "HE is now establishing the Righteous Government." She added:

"When this Platform was constructed fifteen months ago it was then that this great army began to move forward ... when we think what has been accomplished during that time, we know man could not have done it ... FATHER, I see YOU covering the whole world with YOUR Love." 60

The believers did not, as yet, abjure politics. Despite the disappointment of 1936, they swung immediately into fresh Righteous Government work following the elections and, for at least a year, maintained a high level of political instruction and voter preparation work. The Righteous Government Forums continued to attract a medley of sightseers and students; and still others came to seek the followers' help. A lawyer, Mr. Lewis, appealed to them to support his petition to President Roosevelt asking him to grant land to the Cherokee Indians. Guest speakers addressed the followers on topics including: peace, economic re-organisation, psychology and consumer protection. But after the frustration of the Movement's hopes in 1936, the Righteous Government activists became more and more reliant on faith and inspiration.⁶¹

Their attitude toward the standard conduct of politics became stridently critical. Black insurgents, once more, were organising campaigns to win the Democratic leadership in the Nineteenth A.D. and oust the white incumbent, Harry Perry. One of the insurgents,

Fred R. Dickens, actively sought the Peace Mission's support.⁶² But the followers' contact with district leadership elections did not dispose some of them to give their favours lightly. One Speakers Bureau meeting in May 1937, devoted to a discussion of the county committee men and district leadership system in party politics, ended with the followers noting how party members were "always led into the land of empty promises" by their leaders. Brother Guileless, a political worker, told the 63rd Street Righteous Government Forum in August how he had witnessed the "insincerity" of the politicians in their club meetings, and their "deceptive tactics" in using "race and segregation issues" to win votes at elections in contempt of the "fundamentals of good government."⁶³

Then, as the election season opened in the city in late summer, spokesmen for the Movement were quick to comment on the predictable resurgence of interest in the Movement. "Politicians," a reporter observed caustically, "are coming to Father Divine, seeking His Endorsement, as they do, only when these times arise." These candidates, the editor of the New Day noted, repeatedly exposed themselves by "assuming that FATHER DIVINE does not mean what HE Says any more than they do." The followers would be ready to vote, he added, "but we shall unanimously stay our hands until FATHER DIVINE gives the word to vote, and it is not probable that HE will do that until some candidate definitely endorses the Righteous Government Platform."⁶⁴

There was little to disguise the fact that, by this time, the Movement's political fortunes were at a low ebb. While none of the politicians had endorsed Righteous Government in 1936, they had, at least, kept a watchful eye on the Movement and had attended the Forum meetings. But since Father Divine's election day voting ban, Fred. R. Dickens had been almost alone in taking an interest in

Righteous Government. The A.P.P. was virtually defunct; and Father Divine, himself, seemed increasingly ambivalent about further political action. He spoke frequently of his power to succeed regardless of the politicians:

"GOD can and will accomplish that for which HE has endeavored, with or without a person and yet it shall be accomplished by persons ... none can hinder ME! None can ever retard the advancement of MY Spirit, MY Mission and MY Work and MY Activities." 65

Yet Father Divine was still hungry for political recognition and respect, perhaps more so now than ever before. 1937 had proved a difficult year for the Movement and for him, in particular. Controversy and defections had split the Peace Mission; and Father Divine had been forced into a series of embarrassing court cases where his integrity had been held up to criticism and ridicule. A number of leading followers, including his most famous convert, Faithful Mary, had left the Movement amid a blaze of publicity and bitter recriminations.⁶⁶ By late 1937, Father Divine was badly in need of a triumph; of the respect and deference of those in power, to help him restore his battered authority and re-unite the Movement.

1937 was also a mayoralty election year in New York City and, with the hope that this might provide the boost to his own and the Movement's fortunes that he so badly needed, Father Divine returned to the political arena. Late in October 1937, Father Divine announced plans for a mammoth parade through downtown New York to be followed by a rally at the Rockland Palace to draw the politicians, once more, to a consideration of Righteous Government.⁶⁷ He told the followers:

"We want to tell the politicians just what we stand for ... for we want those who are in Office who are Just and Honest, we want to try and keep them in Office ... and if there happens to be anyone who is not honest, we are going to show them that we are going to put them out of Office." 68

Father Divine gambled on the belated conversion and support of one politician in particular: Fiorello H. La Guardia. La Guardia was standing for re-election as Mayor with the backing of the City Fusion Party and the support of the local, newly-formed, American Labor Party.⁶⁹ Ever since La Guardia's visit to the Peace Mission during the 1933 mayoralty election campaign, Father Divine had sought La Guardia's approval. He had proffered advice to the Mayor; he had petitioned him; and he had watched, with interest La Guardia's management of city polity. La Guardia had taken little interest in Father Divine but, that year, Father Divine had found some grounds to hope that, at last, La Guardia cared.

In April 1937, Father Divine had invited La Guardia to join the Movement's Easter rally in Harlem. La Guardia had courteously declined; but he had sent both Ben Howe, the leader of the City Fusion Party, and a black appointee of his administration, Judge Myles T. Paige, to speak at the rally on his behalf. With blatant flattery Howe had told the followers that it was "significant" that Father Divine and La Guardia had "come on the scene" at the same time; and he had commended Arthur M. Madison as the type of public-spirited and righteous-minded citizen New York City needed on its newly chartered City Council. Paige had added, deferentially, that when "Righteous Government" was adopted in the future, he and other judges would be redundant for there would be no crime.⁷⁰

Of course, La Guardia's act of courtesy was largely tactical. He knew that there was a groundswell of support within the Movement for his liberal reform-minded administration and he hoped to capitalise on it at the polls that year. In due course, Ben Howe appeared regularly at the Movement's Forum meetings: a rare political leader among the sightseers and private petitioners who visited the Movement in 1937.⁷¹ But this was enough to raise

Father Divine's hopes for La Guardia's acceptance of Righteous Government. Indeed, it was principally to provide an occasion for La Guardia to come forward with a public endorsement that Father Divine arranged his grand October parade and political rally in New York City on the eve of the 1937 elections.

According to the Peace Mission press, between ten and twelve thousand followers, led by Father Divine, paraded through the Lower East Side on October 24 1937. Riders on horseback, grouped standards and flags and a sea of placards proclaimed the followers' support for Father Divine and Righteous Government. "FATHER DIVINE Rules in Politics" said one sign; another declared: "Since GOD has come in Bodily Form Man Must Accept HIS Platform" and "Accept of FATHER DIVINE and HIS Righteousness Before the Greatest Crash in History Overtakes YOU. The Wicked Shall Be Cut Off."⁷²

The Rockland Palace was decorated for the occasion. A large picture of Father Divine, surrounded by lights, dominated the stage. From the balcony hung two huge banners. One read: "NOT A TRUE FOLLOWER ON RELIEF - OVER \$20,000,000 SAVED THE CITY OF NEW YORK SINCE 1932 BY FATHER DIVINE." On the other was written: "FATHER DIVINE - MILLIONS READY TO VOTE AT HIS WORD."⁷³

Twenty-five political aspirants standing for a variety of city and minor offices arrived to pay their respects to Father Divine, hoping to cull a few votes from the believers for themselves. Flattered by their arrival, Father Divine warmly welcomed them and invited them to address the rally. His believers, he said, wished to decide whom to support on election day: "We want to hear just what you have in your heart and just what you have in your mind that we might pass our decision with an equitable adjustment and with the Spirit of EQUITY." He cautioned that the followers would not be fooled by fine words: "those of whom we shall select, will be

the ones of who we expect to elect, not by flowery speeches, but by what we believe will be the best for the common good of all the people." He turned to the followers and said, " My Followers, ninety-nine per cent of them, will vote, will you not? " and, according to the New Day "'Yes FATHER DEAR!' was the unanimous sanctioning of the multitude."⁷⁴

But when Father Divine rose, four and a half hours later, to make his concluding speech, his tone was strikingly different; for none of the candidates had endorsed the Righteous Government Platform and most had left after only a token appearance. Most galling of all, neither La Guardia nor his Democratic rival in the mayoralty contest, Judge Jeremiah T. Mahoney, had attended the rally although La Guardia had sent Myles T. Paige, Ben Howe and black Tax Commissioner, Hubert T. Delaney, to speak on his behalf. When Delaney had urged the followers to vote for La Guardia, the New Day's reporter wrote that Delaney "overplayed his hand" by claiming that La Guardia stood, like Father Divine, for righteousness, truth and justice. "NO," had shouted the disgruntled believers.⁷⁵

In his speech, Father Divine berated what he saw as the politicians' incomprehensible indifference to Righteous Government; and their readiness to forego the support of his army of believers ready to vote for any candidate who endorsed the Righteous Government Platform. "I AM waiting for I have something to offer," he said. The politicians wanted votes. "HERE I AM," Father Divine said, and pointing to the audience, "there My Votes are."

He insisted on the significance of his Righteous Government campaign:

"ACCEPT of My RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT PLATFORM and live and deal justly between man and man and put the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the Spirit of the Constitution into action, and express it in all

of your dealings. If you do, we shall have a RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT, and all of the RIGHTEOUSNESS of our RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT PLATFORM will be enacted ... and legalized by the politicians in this very city."

If God was not meant to be in politics, he argued, then "it would not have to be so ordained that man would be sworn into office by the Bible and by the Name of GOD, of whom you say I AM." The way of Righteous Government was the way of radical change. In New York City, alone, Father Divine ventured to claim, it would take people off the relief rolls and save the tax payers twenty million dollars within five or six years. More than this:

"Our city will be cleansed - cleansed of all its vice and crime and corruption of every kind, and men and women will learn to live soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present world. When this is accomplished there will be no more divisions, segregation and discrimination among the so-called races, nationalities and people, but all will be united as One Man at Jerusalem."

"I have sought diligently to find some politician whom I could justifiably endorse wholeheartedly," Father Divine said. But there were none.

Angrily, Father Divine criticised La Guardia's disregard for his work. Four years earlier, he reminded the followers, La Guardia had stood on the same platform on the eve of the 1933 elections and pledged to support Father Divine in all his activities. But instead, he had ignored the Movement and its work. What was more, Father Divide said crisply, La Guardia's administration had been responsible for increasing tax valuations on Harlem property and for rises in the water rates: policies that directly damaged the Movement's financial interests. Describing the possibilities conversion offered to all, Father Divine demanded the respect of the politicians. "If I AM not worthy," he said, directing his remarks to the absent La Guardia, "saving the city millions, to be reckoned with those whom you will speak publicly ... then I AM not worthy to endorse

you." With his pledge in mind to vote out the corrupt, Father Divine said, "if I would do anything I would merely vote ... to put you out of Office; that is what I AM going to do."⁷⁶

Taking their cue from Father Divine, followers at the 63rd Street Forum three days later reviewed the "broken promises" of the "arrogant, unfaithful and forgetful Mayor." They noted:

"We have carefully followed the program of the Mayor during his administration and we find that everyone of his promises made ... has been broken. His statement of his desire to co-operate with FATHER for the purpose of cleaning up the city was the 'Hood' in which he disguised himself."

With the bitterness of a group that felt itself betrayed, the followers sang:

"For many years you have kept us fooled,
Had us sitting around on that old dunce stool,
But you can't pull the wool over our eyes.

THANK YOU, FATHER, for taking the wool from over our eyes,
We THANK YOU for redeeming us from mortality's lies.

For many years they have had us fooled
Kept us sitting around on that old dunce stool,
But you can't pull the wool over our eyes."

Now, determined, as never before, to demonstrate his power to "vote out every crooked and perverse politician" from office and to vote in the "just and honest ones", Father Divine compiled a list of candidates for election to the New York City Council, to whom he gave his "Personal Endorsement". In his zeal, he abandoned his earlier insistence that they must endorse the Righteous Government Platform, justifying his action on the grounds that those whom he chose were selected for their personal merit on a non-partisan basis. All had attended the October 24 Rockland Palace rally.⁷⁷

Yet Father Divine's bitter criticism of La Guardia was but the

bile of disappointment. He continued to hope for the endorsement of the politician closest to his heart. He waited a few days more before announcing his choice of candidate in the mayoralty contest. Speaking to the followers at a Forum meeting on October 26 Father Divine said that before they voted for La Guardia, "there must be some getting together done - and that is he must come across and satisfy ME Personally," Bending over backwards to make it easier for La Guardia to oblige, Father Divine said that it would be enough if he just visited the Movement and pledged his support - just as he had in 1933. The hollowness of that 1933 pledge was now conveniently forgotten.⁷⁸

Father Divine held the door wide open to La Guardia but La Guardia did not come. Demanding that "the politicians observe the significance of HIS work, even if they only continued to observe the insignificance of HIM as a person," Father Divine endorsed Mahoney for Mayor.⁷⁹

When the votes were counted, the extent of La Guardia's victory was clear. For the first time in the city's history, an anti-Tammany administration was returned for a second term; and, in Harlem's Nineteenth and Twenty-first Districts, La Guardia polled 30,861 votes, double Mahoney's 14,803 return.⁸⁰

The result was greeted with stunned disbelief by the believers. The New Day made no editorial comment and Father Divine was reluctant to discuss the re-election. On November 3 he gave a terse statement at the Righteous Government Forum at 63rd Street. The Movement, he said, would be watching the newly elected officials to see if they fulfilled their pre-election promises. If they betrayed the trust and confidence of the people, he warned, "they shall experience fatality in their next political campaign."⁸¹

The 1937 elections were a major blow to Father Divine's political

pretensions and brought to a close the most important part of the Movement's Righteous Government campaign. By instructing the followers to vote for Mahoney Father Divine not only supported the losing side, but also, largely for reasons of wounded personal pride, instructed the followers to vote against a Mayor who had initiated reforms worthy of the Peace Mission's electoral support.

Already, by 1937, La Guardia had won a reputation as a reform Mayor by his assault on political graft and patronage in the city's administration and by his insistence that appointments to the Civil Service be made on the basis of merit rather than influence. He had confirmed Ferdinand Q. Morton's appointment as Civil Service Commissioner so that there was a black appointee in a position to discourage discrimination in the Civil Service;⁸² and he had supported the replacement of the Board of Aldermen by a City Council elected by proportional representation: a policy that destroyed a bastion of Tammany influence and ought to have commended itself to a group like the Peace Mission that sought an end to political partisanship.⁸³ The New York City Housing Authority, in association with the federal government and as part of a city programme of housing projects, had erected a new, low-rent housing project in Harlem: the Harlem River Houses, opened for occupancy in 1937.⁸⁴

On the other hand, La Guardia had failed to implement the recommendations of his own Riot Commission; he had supported administrators criticised by the Commission; and he had refused to appoint blacks to administrative positions merely to serve as minority representation.⁸⁵

Yet Father Divine took less time weighing up the pros and cons of La Guardia's policies than he did in grieving that, since 1933, the Mayor had never mentioned his work or visited the Peace Mission. Pathetically, all the hard work, enthusiasm and righteous

indignation of the Righteous Government campaigners was sacrificed in an act of pique that to the followers, of course, signified the wrath of God.

There was to be yet more ignominy. Late in 1937 Father Divine decided, in a last-ditch bid for public acceptance and in support of a cause close to his heart, to give his support to the national lobby then underway for federal anti-lynching legislation. But his new willingness to co-operate in the political campaigns of others brought him no more rewards than his former intransigence. Indeed, it brought him only a painful and public humiliation that, coming so soon after the 1937 election fiasco, strengthened his inclination to retreat from the arena of active politics.

For many years, the N.A.A.C.P. had organised a national lobby in favour of a federal law against lynching. It had supported the passage of the unsuccessful 1922 Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill and had backed Senators Wagner of New York and Costigan of Colorado in their attempts to secure anti-lynching legislation in 1934 and again in the following Congressional session. The fate of these two bills was almost to be predicted. On the first occasion, Congress adjourned before the bill could come to a vote; on the second, the bill was lost in the Senate at the hands of a filibuster led by Southern conservatives. With the loss of these bills, the N.A.A.C.P. resumed its publicity campaign and, in 1936, lobbied against Senator Borah's attempt to secure nomination as the Republican Party's candidate for the United States Presidency in the forthcoming national elections. Borah had been prominent in the Senate filibuster against the anti-lynching bill.⁸⁶

Throughout 1935 and 1936, Father Divine's followers monitored

the course of the national anti-lynching campaign with keen interest. Yet, predictably at this stage of their Righteous Government work, they found the Costigan-Wagner bills far too weak for the task at hand. There were hints that Father Divine would draft a stronger, more effective measure:⁸⁷ an idea that received encouragement in March 1936 when Hamilton Fish Jnr., Republican Congressman from New York, visited the Peace Mission to seek Father Divine's support for Borah's Republican Party nomination bid. Father Divine gave Fish a curt reception and speedily framed an anti-lynching bill of his own, complete with a savage penalty clause to punish and deter lynchers.⁸⁸ Late in May 1936 Miss Oral Wiltshire wrote to President Roosevelt to remind him of the number of lynch deaths that had occurred since his inauguration to the Presidency and to urge him to support a federal law against lynching. She enclosed a copy of Father Divine's bill which she described as the only effective legislative answer.⁸⁹

The "Divine Anti-Lynching Bill", presented in Congress in the following month, was designed to strike at the very roots of lynch law. Lynching was condoned at all levels of Southern life. It was justified in the name of Southern womanhood; it was defended by the region's politicians as one of the informal institutions of the South and it was tolerated by police and justices alike. Father Divine's bill sought to eradicate the scourge of lynching by making its occurrence too expensive a liberty for both the citizens and the authorities of the county concerned. His bill proposed to make each member of a lynch-mob culpable of first-degree murder; and it sought to impose a fine of between ten and twenty thousand dollars on the county in which the lynching occurred, to be paid to the estate of the victim.⁹⁰

Like most of the Peace Mission's political thinking in this early period of Righteous Government, the Movement's anti-lynching

bill was striking in its political naivete. The far less stringent Costigan-Wagner bills failed in the Congress not because they were any less righteous or because they were too weak, but because they were too controversial and threatening to a wide spectrum of political interests. Southern conservatives were not prepared to tolerate anti-lynching legislation and, as the N.A.A.C.P. learnt, President Roosevelt was not willing to take the lead in support of such a law for fear of alienating Southern Democrats who held power to paralyze vital New Deal legislation by their authority on crucial Senate committees.⁹¹ The Peace Mission's bill was doomed from the start: doomed because the Movement pursued an exceedingly just, but totally unrealistic, course of action. Father Divine and his followers put righteousness before political realities.

Thus it was a quite extraordinary development that, when the N.A.A.C.P. resumed its anti-lynching campaign in 1937, Father Divine decided to forego his independence and give his support to a bill that he did not have confidence in but could claim influential national support.?

New York Democratic Congressman J.A. Gavagan took the lead in this fresh campaign. With the horrific stimulus of the "blow torch lynchings" in Mississippi, Gavagan succeeded in piloting an anti-lynching bill through the House of Representatives. But as soon as the bill passed to the consideration of the Senate in late 1937, and Senators Wagner and Van Nuys opened the debate in favour of the measure, Southern conservative opinion mobilised and a filibuster began.⁹² From his headquarters in New York City in November 1937, Father Divine announced that though the bill was not as stringent as his own proposal, he was ready to fight for its passage in the Senate and abandon his own measure. For the first time, the followers joined the national lobby.⁹³

Father Divine's reasons were not hard to find. A firm believer in the power of righteous legislation he felt that to leave outrages beyond the pale of the law was tantamount to giving them public sanction. Appalled by the unwillingness of "Americans and the Chief Executives" to take a stand against lynching, he was convinced of the need for immediate action. In a letter to Governor Bibb D. Graves of Alabama Father Divine warned that if lynching was allowed to continue, "this Government would fall as many other Governments have fallen, and the civilisation would be a failure as far as North America is concerned."⁹⁴ Anxious to preserve America as a model for all nations and, more anxious still, by 1937, for political acceptance, Father Divine decided to forgo his earlier independence and to give his support to a bill which had, at least, a chance of success in the Congress.

Father Divine and his followers anticipated the wholehearted approval of their fellow lobbyists. Thus they were shocked and distressed when Senator Wagner not only failed to thank them, but also omitted the Peace Mission's name from the list of organisations backing the bill that was read into the Congressional Record during the debate. John Lamb contacted Gavagan to urge him to prompt Wagner to a public acknowledgement of the Movement's support. Many far smaller Harlem organisations had been thanked, Lamb noted sourly, and he warned:

"FATHER DIVINE's Followers and HIS millions of friends and sympathisers will not act as long as He is ignored. They stand for RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE and they know that if such is not recognized and inculcated in a measure it is bound to fail. However, with the proper recognition of HIM they will do much, and at a word from HIM they would flood Washington with such a flood of letters as never before." 95

Wagner's failure to acknowledge the Peace Mission's support was probably a deliberate attempt to forestall ridicule of the bill

and its advocates. But if this was his aim, he was unsuccessful. His Senate opponents used the Peace Mission's association with the anti-lynching campaign as a heaven-sent opportunity to lambast the bill. In a twenty-seven hour and forty-five minute filibuster against it in January 1938, Senator Allen J. Ellender of Louisiana mocked Father Divine's association with the advocates of the bill as an ample reason, in itself, to kill the measure.

Reading aloud magazine and newspaper reports of the Peace Mission to demonstrate to the members of the Senate the "barbaric fanaticism" of the Movement, Ellender argued that if the Senate allowed the bill to become law the South would be doomed to utter collapse. It would give Father Divine "more latitude ... [to] go to Louisiana and Georgia and Alabama by the aid of the Federal government" and agitate the black population. They would begin to demand the "power of the ballot" and "social equality"; and soon the "racial mongrelization" and "voodism" flourishing in Harlem would soon spread like a pestilence across the Southland. "I venture to say," Ellender proclaimed, "that if Father Divine were permitted to go unrestrained, the chances are that this civilised country might revert to the barbaric lunacy which is practised in darkest Africa."⁹⁶

Appalled by Ellender's remarks and upset that his name had been used to inflame opinion in the Senate against the bill, Father Divine roundly denounced the Senator's remarks in speech after speech at the banquet table throughout February 1938.

Replying to Ellender's charge that blacks were inherently criminal and base Father Divine held that, even if this were true, the cause lay in the injustices perpetrated on them by racists like Ellender:

"Men are obliged at times ... to have two or three families in one little apartment, to bring up their children (girls and boys) all collected

together in one little apartment! ... because they have not the means to meet their obligations, to meet the high cost of living ... Men have been through the mistreatment of those of his type and others - placed in cattle stalls to live, to live among the beasts ... to be tempted and tortured with the temptations of the animalistic Kingdom."

As for Ellender's preoccupation with the "mongrelisation" of the white race, Father Divine accused "him and his class" of creating the inter-mixture of the races in the South that they so violently condemned:

"Why is it men of his kind did not stay separate? THEY are the ones who committed such crimes, by creating such an atmosphere in the land and by committing adultery with whom they considered not to be of their own kind!" 97

It was the ignorance of men like Ellender, Father Divine said, that forced the oppressed to resort to bloodshed. The slave Nat Turner had rebelled against the slaveholders. Now there were others ready to follow Nat Turner's example. While Ellender mocked and hated, he, Father Divine, was the only one able to redeem the nation from this burden of mutual resentment, prejudice and violence.⁹⁸

With his venture into pragmatic politics an utter disaster and with his hopes for public acceptance crumbling fast, Father Divine lapsed into his more usual rhetoric. Declaring that he would eliminate all racial bigotry regardless of Ellender and his ilk, Father Divine cast his glance around the banquet room:

"Just look at the beautiful faces! Just look at the appearance of the so-called nations and the appearance of the so-called races ... I shall unify them together as it was in the beginning of the creation of the world."

Even if the anti-lynching bill failed, his mission would never be defeated. He would liberate the South from its dreadful weight of oppression and ignorance:

"You know those poor creatures in the South - I mean those who think they are in authority; the

poor creatures bound down with prejudice and hate and debauchery of every kind - when GOD shall have reached out HIS long arms ... I AM reaching them now, I shall cause the nations of the earth to love one another even as they love themselves, and when this is accomplished, there shall be no more division, there shall be no more strife ... no more sickness, there shall be no more sorrow; there shall be no more pain and there shall be no more death; for the TABERNACLE of GOD is with Men, and He shall dwell with them." 99

Despite this defiance, Father Divine and his followers were still disappointed when, after a seven week filibuster, the anti-lynching bill was lost in the Senate; displaced by a bill to allocate emergency relief funds to the unemployed.¹⁰⁰

After this, Father Divine and his followers tacitly dropped their hope for Righteous Government sweeping through the political institutions of the nation; and cut back on much of their former political activity and instruction. Forums continued to meet in New York City and the followers pursued their interest in current affairs, but in March 1938 Miss Oral Freedom announced that since the politicians had apparently lost interest in Righteous Government, she intended to invite businessmen to her Forum instead.¹⁰¹

The Movement was at an impasse. John Adorable, addressing a Speakers Bureau meeting in May 1938 about his recent trip to the Southern states, insisted that the "underprivileged people in the South need FATHER badly." But, to a group which had been at the forefront of the Peace Mission's political work, the hope he offered was not politics but faith. "FATHER always rises in some unconscious individual and HIS Work is spreading," he said.¹⁰²

Father Divine, himself, tried to avoid admission of failure. Legislation, he reminded his followers, even the most righteous legislation, could not "change the hearts and lives of men unless they are born again." He would prove this to the bigots and critics in a dramatic way: "I will let them see and know, definitely, they

will be failures; but I will be successful and prosperous."¹⁰³

The intervention of "God" in politics had proved to be absurd. Logically, it could not have been otherwise. Yet the Peace Mission had been borne on the swell of its own confidence and swept along by the pull of its faith in American democracy. Perhaps, in another situation, the frustration of such hopes would have led to violence: to an attempt to punish the opposers and force the world into the Peace Mission mould. But Father Divine knew the limits of folly. Political failure led not to noisy retribution but to quiet withdrawal.

Even as the Peace Mission withdrew, battered, from the political arena; bruised and shaken from internal controversy and outside criticism; so, too, the international political scene appeared increasingly inhospitable to the idea of universal Righteous Government. America, itself, the homeland of democracy, the cherished foundation stone of the international utopia, seemed threatened by the rising tide of war and fascism in Europe. With the defeat of Ethiopia at the hands of the Italians, the Peace Mission, demoralised and pessimistic, turned to its own version of the campaign 'to save the world for democracy' by advocating the preservation of America by unilateral isolationism. Like a snail, the Peace Mission withdrew from its expansive campaigns for international salvation into the safety of its own shell.

The Peace Mission's espousal of isolationism marked a major retreat. Up until this point, Father Divine and his followers had felt, unequivocally, that their cause - the progress of world peace, prosperity and democracy - went hand in hand with internationalism. This trust was rooted in the faith that all the peoples of the

world were linked together in God's universal human family. Love, harmony and brotherhood were the fundamental principles of life. Peace was the natural and right condition of human affairs, flowing from goodwill, co-operation and fair dealing between nations and individuals. The Movement attributed war and violence to the machinations of evil and immoral men who, rejecting God, were blinded by greed, ignorance and ambition. Articles and editorials in the Peace Mission press denounced the brands of patriotism that glorified military might;¹⁰⁴ and, the Righteous Government Platform, by stating that "the true Followers of FATHER DIVINE will refuse to fight their fellow man for any cause whatsoever", made explicit the Movement's dedication to pacifism.¹⁰⁵ As one follower said, they looked forward to the day when:

"nations scrap their navies; disband their armies; convert their air fleets into commercial airlines; beat their guns into plow shares and turn minds and attention into PRAISING and THANKING GOD, for the privilege of being alive in a body on earth where the abundance of all GOOD things abounds." 106

In general terms, the Peace Mission's pacifism was in tune with a wider pacifist sentiment in American society that flowed from disillusionment with the outcome of the First World War and was fuelled by a series of sensational revelations about arms profiteering: particularly those made during a United States Commerce Committee investigation into the role of the munitions industry conducted, from 1934 to 1936, under the chairmanship of Senator Nye of North Dakota. The aggressive claims of fascist totalitarianism, however, had caused a split in American pacifist ranks. Opinion was divided over whether the nation should seek to preserve peace by giving support to the League of Nations and aid to the victims of fascist aggression; or whether to keep out of Europe and Asia altogether. There was a strong, perhaps, unalloyed isolationist

sentiment in America which wished to avoid any international commitments in case they should draw America into war.¹⁰⁷ But, in the nation's black ghettos, a militant interventionist stance was taken with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

If the Spanish Civil War was to be the conflict that alerted most white liberals to the dangers of fascism; it was the assault on Ethiopia that aroused blacks. Ethiopia, the last black kingdom in Africa, was the symbol of African independence and potential power. When Italy declared war, blacks across the United States, as well as in Africa and the Caribbean, rallied to Ethiopia's side: they formed defence committees; collected funds and petitioned the League of Nations.¹⁰⁸ In New York, committees were organised; and parades, demonstrations and public meetings were called.¹⁰⁹ Father Divine's followers, attracted by the rhetoric of "peace" and, at this time, certain that the work of spreading the international utopia called for resistance to fascism, swelled the protest meetings; marched with the Communists against "war and fascism"; and joined others in the ghetto "for the defense of Ethiopia."¹¹⁰

In February 1936, the Righteous Government Convention sent two resolutions to President Roosevelt that perfectly expressed its internationalist pacifism in the context of the Ethiopian war. One resolution, referring to the Nye Commission, called on the United States Congress to "make every possible effort to prevent this country from entering into the [Italo-Ethiopian] War, and that the United States shall neither manufacture nor sell war materials nor lend money to any warring nation." But the second resolution demanded support for the sanctions policy of the League of Nations and, further, that the Congress and the President should "stop all shipments of essential commodities, especially oil, iron and vital secondary war materials so that America will not continue to supply

Italy tanks, planes and motorised army fuel and supplies for bombing, shooting and killing Ethiopian people as we are now doing."¹¹¹

Always, in the street demonstrations, the Peace Mission's banners and placards proclaimed its more particular beliefs: that, beyond the short-term need to resist fascism's advance, peace and justice ultimately depended on the international acceptance of Righteous Government. Father Divine's way was the only way to world peace and release from injustice and oppression.

Yet, with the defeat of Ethiopia and the persistent deterioration in international affairs, as well as the Movement's own declining political fortunes, the internationalist element in the Peace Mission's pacifism died. An editorial in the New Day urging isolation and appeasement demonstrated the change in attitude:

"To keep a large part of the North American continent isolated from the present widespread contagion of war is as difficult, heroic and positive a contribution to the future as can well be conceived. At all possible costs keep out of war. A dishonorable peace is better at any time than an honorable war. There is no such thing as winning in a modern war. Victory for civilisation is too complex an achievement to be won by drilling soldiers and dropping aerial bombs." ¹¹²

The theme was taken up by Righteous Government workers at a special Peace Mission "Peace Convention" in January 1938. Perceiving a common bond with others in America, the Movement invited fifty pacifist organisations to send delegates. None did so; although the Convention endorsed an idea that was a traditional part of pacifist thought - the need for a new Cabinet post, the Secretary of Peace - and subsequently sent this request to President Roosevelt.¹¹³

Throughout 1938, the discussions at the Movement's Forum meetings turned frequently to matters of peace and neutrality. The followers' remarks were tinged with despair that Father Divine's

counsel had been ignored and that the prospect of an international utopia was fading fast. Britain was blamed for failing to take the lead in Europe by returning its "stolen colonies" in accordance with Father Divine's teachings.¹¹⁴ Later, during the Movement's commemoration of World Peace Day on the anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, Miss Oral Freedom said ruefully:

"The Righteous Government Platform is a treaty given to the world by the Prince of Peace. This needed no pen to sign it; but must be signed in the hearts and the lives of the people as they live it. FATHER alone could have given everlasting Peace." 115

In the autumn of 1938, as the leading European heads of state met to attempt to adjust Germany's territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe, Father Divine cabled Daladier, Hitler and Chamberlain with his own suggestion for international amity:

"Why not propose purchase of coveted Czechoslovakian territory with Sudetans helping to pay for annexation, substituting co-operation and peace for terrible inhuman warfare consequences?" 116

There was a growing note of despair in his words. Two years earlier, the Righteous Government Platform had emphatically protested the persecution of the Jews throughout Europe. In late 1938, Father Divine told the followers that the Jews were responsible for their own predicament. They were suffering, as all Europe was suffering, because they had shunned Righteous Government and had ignored the "Commandments of the ALMIGHTY!" Only their conversion could yet save them.¹¹⁷

With fascism apparently triumphant in Europe, the Peace Mission proposed to preserve America from contamination. The Righteous Government campaign had been based on the assumption that America would become a Peace Mission utopia and serve as a beacon of righteousness, truth and justice to all the world. How better to preserve the hope for a future international utopia than by

preserving America from war and invigorating in its citizens those vital qualities of "true Americanism" necessary for human salvation? Thus, the Movement shifted from internationalism to its own brand of nationalism.

As Roosevelt searched for a foreign policy by which America could aid the Allies as a silent partner against the Axis powers, Father Divine cabled Roosevelt urging him to re-affirm American neutrality and to ban all war supplies to the European combatants, to "save the youth of our democracy and to prevent another inhuman world war by which our democracy and even civilisation is now threatened."¹¹⁸

Simultaneously, the followers set out to proselytize the qualities necessary for "true Americanism". In a play performed by a group of young followers, called True Americanism, they tried to show through the ideas and actions of the characters, "how they as individuals can be of Service, to this Country, during a war." The four characters were depicted entering the War Office to enlist for military service, only to be told by the clerk that the greater war was against the "undesirable characteristics" in their own personalities. "Yes," the clerk said, "such as hate, prejudice, resentment, anger and jealousy which are within ourselves." The war against these characteristics was "more essential than butchering physical bodies." Mary Jones was told to control her "malicious hate"; Mrs. Smith was asked to stop her "gossip and slothfulness"; Mrs. Quincy was told to "eradicate and abolish all prejudice of any kind"; and Miss Alfred was told not "to get angry at anything." The clerk explained how this could help America: "in this way a Righteous Government will be established by first getting righteous ourselves."

True Americanism and obedience to Father Divine's teachings

were one and the same; and the final promise of the play was that Americanism would spread "until this world will be devoid of all undesirableness and GOD in Righteousness, Truth and Justice will be the Ruler."¹¹⁹

The idea was captured in a drawing which appeared in the New Day in December 1939. Entitled "The Sower" it depicted Uncle Sam striding across the land casting the "Good Seed" on the ground - "The Constitution and its Amendments"; "The Declaration of Independence"; and "Father Divine's Righteous Government Platform". As the seed fell, the "New Day A.D.F.D." dawned, casting rays of Peace, Union, Justice, Tranquillity, Defense, Welfare and Liberty. At the bottom of the drawing the caption declared:

"'Americanism Will Be The True Evangelism
Going Forth Into All Lands and
Countries Wheresoever They Are' -
Father Divine." 120

Public interest in the idea of continental security then gave Father Divine and his leading followers a novel and saving inspiration. The war in Europe had aroused fears, in some quarters, that America might be left to face the military might of the fascist powers alone should the European democracies collapse. Interest had grown in the concept of hemispheric defence. The idea caught Father Divine's imagination. Here was a way to fulfil his dream of international Righteous Government irrespective of the ravages in Europe. Hurriedly, he sent telegrams to the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of State, the Speaker of the House of Representatives as well as to the heads of state in all the countries sharing the continent suggesting:

"Why not unite the three Americas as a national and international defense for Peace? Let there be a United Countries of America; if not I propose that the United States purchase Central and South America and make all the Americas one Democracy." 121

On December 10 1939, at the Peace Mission's first major rally

at the Rockland Palace that winter, Father Divine announced his new initiative and, in a play, The Uniting of the Three Americas, a group of believers elaborated and dramatised the plan.

Enthusiastically, the cast described how unification would fulfil Father Divine's campaign for Righteous Government. National boundaries and human divisions would be eliminated as all the people of Central, South and North America came to recognize their common bond and purpose. Poverty and want would end as the new nation harnessed the vast natural resources and skills of the entire continent, planning the nation as one self-sufficient economic unit.

In North America, the problem of finding a stimulant for business would be resolved as industrialists manufactured the raw materials of South and Central America into cheap goods for the benefit of the continents' populace. As a character in the play said: "the wheels of production will turn freely. Business will boom! Factories will re-open! We will have markets for surplus!"

Simultaneously, unification would perpetually guarantee peace. The holdings of foreign nations in Central and South America would be purchased, removing any possible reason for a European invasion of the Americas. The continent would then stand as a formidable unit; completely self-sufficient; enjoying unmeasured prosperity; and protected from military threat by its physical isolation and collective strength. Under Father Divine's leadership, there would be peace, abundance and co-operation; the beginning of a utopia that would soon spread across the world. As one character said:

"Now that the Americas have unified the benefits derived will be seen by our European, African, Asiatic and Australian sisters and brothers. Why, all creation will see the light! They, too, will desire to copy after this fashion so they might enjoy the splendors and luxuries offered to all." 122

Articles on the history and cultures of the countries sharing

the continent now appeared in the New Day;¹²³ and Father Divine's major messages on unification were printed in Spanish as well as English.¹²⁴ "A.P.A." contributed a poem North, Central and South America part of which read:

"All is struggle, blindly striving -
Our towns are dead that should be thriving,
Over which, like tombstones, rise
Homes beset with listless eyes.
Three Americas, why mark time.
Paralysed by debt and crime!
Has that symbol bit the dust,
Stamped on coins: 'In God We Trust'?" 125

The American motto "E PLURIBUS UNUM" acquired dramatic new significance; and a special song was composed for the Movement's rallies:

"Unite the three Americas
For in union there is strength;
If the LORD your GOD is for you,
Who can be against?
So unify, unify!
On FATHER'S PLATFORM take your stand,
And democracy will be strengthened
Into one gigantic band." 126

Thus, Father Divine and his followers found a new way to express their old hopes for peace and international Righteous Government. The Communist Crusader News Agency responded to the idea of unification by purchase with the caustic rejoinder: "evidently Father Divine has not heard of the widely known antipathy of the Latin American people to Wall Street's brand of democracy."¹²⁷

But some West Indian ex-patriates, living in New York and anxious about the fate of the Caribbean islands now that defeat seemed imminent for France and England, were sufficiently intrigued by Father Divine's proposals to call on him and seek clarification. They were interested in securing self-determination for the islands and a pan-American guarantee of protection from European influence. So, they asked Father Divine whether his plan meant the political domination of the other countries by the United States. Father

Divine replied that it did not: for "the Republics of these three great Americas will not accept of MY proposal unless they are guaranteed their real independence."¹²⁸

He agreed, moreover, that unification could never succeed as long as racial discrimination flourished in the United States. He was bitterly aware that many Americans were ready to protest fascism abroad yet tolerate lynch mobs at home; and he was sickened by the knowledge that groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Black Legion, as well as many Southern conservative politicians, all claimed to be true American patriots. If "Americanism", Father Divine believed, was to mean more than mob violence to the other people sharing the continent, then America must be forced to "enact the Bill of Rights" in every aspect of national life. "Latin America", he observed, "does not wish to be enslaved, neither brought under the Spirit of barbarism by the savages of North America."¹²⁹

When in June 1940, a West Indian National Emergency Committee was formed to lobby the conference of South American ministers called, by the United States Secretary of State, to meet in Cuba,¹³⁰ its representatives left for Havana with the Peace Mission's blessing. On the group's return to New York, it reported back to the Peace Mission on the proceedings.¹³¹

Absorbed by the idea of unification and preoccupied by the obstacles that stood in its path, Father Divine was drawn back into active politics in 1939 and 1940 to protect and advance the cause of civil rights in America. A new anti-lynching bill, again promoted by Congressman Gavagan, had passed the House of Representatives to be stalled by yet another conservative filibuster in the Senate.¹³² Despairing of America's shabby democratic record, Father Divine called on his followers to rise to the occasion and

make America redeem its democratic pledges. He urged on them a dual campaign: to support the passage of the anti-lynching bill and to promote the passage of a law that would ban the use of the Senate filibuster against bills that had already passed the House of Representatives.¹³³

Throughout the spring and summer of 1940 the Peace Mission organized a massive lobby. It inundated Washington D.C. with letters. In a typical one Miss Bobbie Sweet told Senator Wagner that they viewed the use of the filibuster as a "distortion of JUSTICE" popular with those politicians who were "prejudiced towards certain people because of their race, their color or their creed." Father Divine wrote personally to President Roosevelt, asking him to outlaw lynching and the filibuster since, he said, these "outrages against our Constitution and its Amendments ... would eventually overthrow our democratic form of government and establish the spirit and character of a dictatorship."¹³⁴

Convinced that the crisis in Europe made the need for America to "manifest its greatness" hourly more urgent, Father Divine drafted a petition calling on the United States government to act immediately on two fronts:

- "1. Unite the Three Americas as a National and International Defense for the Preservation of Everlasting Peace in the Western Hemisphere.
2. Pass the Anti-Lynching Bill as the First Step in our National Defense." 135

Hundreds of petition blanks were printed by the Peace Mission and, in New York, the followers were sent out on to the streets to collect signatures. In July 1940 Father Divine took five boxes of completed petitions to Washington D.C., returning to start yet another petition drive. With the 1940 Presidential elections approaching, he wrote to Roosevelt and his Republican challenger,

Wendell Wilkie, asking for their personal commitments on anti-lynching and unification as a pre-requisite of Peace Mission support at the polls.¹³⁶ Peace Mission journalists, in turn, insisted that Father Divine's advice must be heeded at such a critical juncture in man's affairs:

"We should listen to the Voice of GOD. His Precepts have proved dependable - they instill confidence, and offer lasting happiness to a troubled world. This is real Truth, real Righteousness, real Happiness. Such attributes heal the nation and remove all undesirable conditions. At no time more than today do people need to accept FATHER DIVINE ... His Principles are Righteousness, Justice and Truth. These only can trample selfish Totalitarian ambitions and make democracy safe." 137

Father Divine was ready, too, with accusations to level against those who refused to sign his petition. At a rally in July 1940 he told the canvassers that they should watch those who refused to sign, "and see if they are not FIFTH COLUMNISTS! See if they are not ALIENS that are in opposition to the government, who desire to undermine it and bring division and strife."¹³⁸

In contrast to Father Divine's previous efforts, this campaign won some respectful consideration. Walter White of the N.A.A.C.P. wrote to the Peace Mission to commend it for its stand against lynching and its criticism of the use of the filibuster. One hundred and thirty-seven politicians and public figures replied to the believers' letters canvassing their views on lynching and the filibuster; and, according to the Peace Mission press, two hundred and fifty thousand people signed the petitions left in Washington D.C. in July 1940.¹³⁹

Yet there was still an air of futility about the Movement's work. On the issue of the use of the filibuster, for instance, the followers took their most righteous and intransigent stand. But

it was not a stand shared by many of the public figures who wrote to the Movement. Only fourteen of the one hundred and thirty-seven respondents endorsed the Movement's idea; and it failed to attract the approval of those who favoured anti-lynching legislation and were well aware of the damaging use of the filibuster in the Senate. Both Eleanor Roosevelt and New York Congressman Bruce Barton, for instance, wrote that a ban on the use of the filibuster would be unconstitutional; while Senator A.H. Vandenburg advised the believers that the filibuster was a valuable defence for any minority group.¹⁴⁰

There was a similar air of unreality about the support given to the Movement's unification and anti-lynching petition. It was obvious from the canvassers' reports, published in the Peace Mission press, that some New Yorkers agreed with the dual campaign. But there were criticisms, too, of Father Divine's hemispheric plans. A minister at the Catholic Church at 130th Street and Fifth Avenue in Harlem probably spoke for others who refused to sign when he told the canvasser that the unification plan was unintelligent and impractical.¹⁴¹

It seems certain that signatures were often collected on the strength of the anti-lynching plank in the petition alone. One resourceful follower, for instance, obtained two hundred signatures at one time by standing outside Harlem's Mount Olivet Baptist Church after a service. The pastor had refused to allow her to address the worshippers during the service, but signatures were readily and, no doubt, casually gained as the congregation spilled out of the church on their way home. The members of the church were already active in support of anti-lynching legislation and it was this item on the petition that, undoubtedly, led many to sign.¹⁴²

Indeed, another canvasser's report showed conclusively that

some people were inclined to sign without bothering to study the petition because they saw, at first glance, that it called for anti-lynching legislation. One canvasser, Brother Humble Love, described an incident at Columbia University in detail. He had gone to collect the signature of Clarence V. Howell, a member of the Quaker pacifist organisation, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and, at one time a regular visitor to the Movement. To Humble Love's delight, Howell had greeted him with "Peace"; remarked that he had just finished reading a copy of the New Day; and signed Humble Love's petition. But then he had suddenly changed his mind. As Humble Love reported:

"After he signed his name, he asked, 'What do you mean by "unification"?' I said, 'I thought you had just read it.' He said, 'Oh, no I am not in favour of it - I think it is the most horrible thing anyone can do. I am against it,' and I tried to explain it to him. Then he got very angry and said, 'I thought I was signing for the Anti-Lynching Bill'. He took the petition out of my hand and tore his name off ... Dr. Howell said it was deception - that it was not decency to go around and claim to stand for Christ and induce people to sign away their birthright ... He further said, 'The law is going to stop this - this is the reason Father is always in so much trouble, because he gets into political affairs.'" 143

The followers refused to consider the implications of these criticisms. The Peace Mission press preferred to believe that Father Divine's influence was at work in the proceedings of the 1940 Pan-American conference in Havana and in the decision by the United States and Canadian governments to meet to discuss joint hemispheric defence plans.¹⁴⁴

But by September 1940, the anti-lynching bill was again lost; and that month, the first peacetime conscription bill became law in the United States and the country moved closer to active involvement in the European war. When Father Divine wrote to Senator Barkley,

the majority leader of the Senate, urging him to bring the anti-lynching bill to a vote, the Senator wrote back to inform the Peace Mission of an amendment he was putting forward to the conscription bill that would permit black troops to serve in every branch of the armed services.¹⁴⁵ It was a reply designed, presumably, to appease criticism of the politicians' record on matters of racial justice. But a writer in the New Day noted with bitter irony:

"Americans, regardless of race, creed or color, must register - forced to be patriotic in time of war, yet their patriotism is not considered, in time of Peace, at least not for minorities. 146

Father Divine reacted to the news by advising those followers who were eligible for conscription to register their status as conscientious objectors.¹⁴⁷ A spirit of betrayal suffused the Movement; a feeling that Americans had forfeited their only chance, through Father Divine, to redeem America and save mankind.

This bitterness, in fact, provoked a rumpus at one New York draft board office when two believers went to register as conscientious objectors. To the horror of the officer-in-charge, Harry L. Osterweiss, the followers insisted on adding to their statements the declaration that if they were forced to fight they would rather fight against America than for it. America's record of discrimination and segregation, they said, did not merit their patriotism. Osterweiss hurriedly contacted Father Divine to ensure that the Peace Mission was not a hot-bed of subversive ideas.¹⁴⁸

The followers criticized Roosevelt's decision to permit segregation in the United States armed forces,¹⁴⁹ but their criticisms and disillusionment never took a more pragmatic course. Although there were potential areas of agreement and co-operation with others outside the Movement, the Peace Mission did not participate in the vociferous "Double V" campaign - "Victory at Home and Abroad"

that now began to consume the attention of black organisations and the black press as they demanded equal treatment for black servicemen and fair employment practices in industry as it began to re-tool for wartime production.¹⁵⁰

The Movement shut itself off from reference to the wartime situation. As it was still mainly a group of middle-aged women, conscription never disrupted its detachment. A deadening spirit of withdrawal came over the Righteous Government campaign. Although the New Day accepted political advertisements for the Wendell Wilkie campaign during the 1940 Presidential election period, Father Divine made no attempt to fulfil his 1936 pledge that he would be "a factor" in the 1940 elections. In fact, the Movement took little interest in the campaign and, on election day, the followers did not vote.¹⁵¹

The Righteous Government campaign was over. With war ravaging Europe and with America no closer to the anticipated spiritual renaissance than before, the vision of utopian peace, harmony, justice and brotherhood faded for the members of the Peace Mission Movement. The loss, however, involved no criticism of Father Divine for those remaining in the Movement. In their eyes, Father Divine had amply proved his power to change the world if only the corrupt and unjust would acknowledge him. As the editor of the New Day wrote in August 1940:

"Looking at the record of the past years, the followers of FATHER DIVINE can confidently declare we fear no criticism from anyone, because FATHER has successfully made HIS Principles effective throughout the entire world. This assertion is proved in the ideals HE has built up, and the concrete achievements to which the Peace Mission can point." 152

In a poem another follower, with simple sincerity, described Father Divine as still far more important, more compassionate and more significant in the affairs of men than any of the arrogant

leaders on the world stage who held people in awe and dread. To this believer, none could compare with the "Server of Meals in the halls of FATHER DIVINE":

"I saw an aeroplane cleave the air,
And the sunshine gleamed on its pinions white,
While the watchers' eyes were uplift;
And they cried, 'All hail to the great inventor,
His fame shall last throughout all time',
But the Real Inventor Served the meals,
In the halls of FATHER DIVINE!

I saw great cars in a grand parade,
Carry men on the avenue wide,
Self-conscious they were of houses and lands
And their hearts swelled high with pride.
They thought, 'We are something for one to behold,
See our wealth and our service fine',
But the Owner of All Wealth Served the meals
In the halls of FATHER DIVINE!

I saw a king in glory and fame,
Sail over the bounding sea,
And the banners waved and the thousands cheered,
As they bent the suppliant knee;
And he made a speech while the world gave ear,
To list to his utterance fine;
But the King of All Kings Served the meals
In the halls of FATHER DIVINE!

I heard the dictators small and great,
Threaten a timorous world,
As they murdered and stole in ego and hate,
And words of arrogance hurled.
Visions they had of power and state,
With crowns on their heads to shine;
But their crimes were known by the Server of meals,
In the halls of FATHER DIVINE!

I saw at last black clouds of war
Blast life and hope and peace,
As it slew and wrecked in fury and hate,
Till the GOD of Love cried, 'Cease!'
And they that had mocked at HIS Sovereign advice,
While yet for peace there was time,
Lo, they looked for help to the Server of meals,
In the halls of FATHER DIVINE!

Oh, Server of meals with YOUR Jaspar Brow,
And YOUR Starlit eyes of Love,
While YOUR Fingers small the teacups press,
And YOUR Thoughts for our blessing rove;
We may not know, we cannot tell,
What Glories around YOU Shine,
But this we do, we acclaim YOU, GOD,
In the halls of FATHER DIVINE!" 153

This poem was a fitting epitaph to Righteous Government. This follower believed, from her perception of the world beyond the Peace

Mission, that Father Divine was still her saviour and mankind's assurance of ultimate salvation. Despite war and human arrogance, Father Divine knew all man's secrets, possessed all man's wisdom and held the key to redemption: for he was God. Nothing could stop his ultimate triumph. It was this faith that had suffused the entire Righteous Government campaign: had justified, sustained, foiled and eventually displaced its political work.

The Movement's phenomenal success in the early 'thirties convinced leading followers and Father Divine, himself, that the triumphant spread of his influence in the nation, indeed, the world was at hand. Largely due to the powerful influence of the educated and politically-minded followers, the Movement came to feel that the spread of the kingdom of heaven on earth could be realized not only through the slow process of individual conversion, but also, more dramatically, through the mass conversion of the politicians. It was a novel but not an entirely perverse idea. The Depression created a demand for and expectation of major change in America. Politicians and pressure groups alike were discussing new ideas and strategies for national recovery. The type of society Americans wanted was under review. The Peace Mission was not alone in its sense of urgency: its perception that man's affairs were at a turning-point.

It was not entirely ridiculous, either, that the leading members of the Movement should feel that their millennial dreams could be fulfilled through the democratic political process and that America could, in turn, become a herald to the other nations of the world. The followers were simply linking their hopes and beliefs to an older, deep-rooted American dream: a dream that

shaped the American Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights and sustained the boisterous, pervasive sense of national destiny that, in the context of nineteenth century revivalism, led many Christian perfectionists to believe that God's hand was at work, setting up His kingdom of heaven on earth in America.

The Movement set out to bring the fulfilment of the kingdom of heaven on earth through the democratic process and, with its emphasis on political education and voter preparation, it succeeded in convincing commentators and politicians alike that it intended to take a pragmatic interest in conventional politics. Yet this impression was always belied by the Platform itself; by the conduct of the followers; and by the religious enthusiasm that informed all their activities.

The effort was not entirely futile. Possibly for the first time, a large number of middle-aged blacks - predominantly women - were given the chance to become politically informed and active. They tried to make the secular decision-making process more responsive to their needs and ideas for a better life. The issues that they raised, moreover, were never ridiculous: the need for peace, justice, brotherhood, economic redistribution; and the call for new standards of ethics in public life. These were universal issues especially pertinent in an America preoccupied with national recovery and the spectre of war and fascism. The criticism they made that the politicians were betraying the American ideal, was also manifestly just. But the political process was never open to unequivocal spiritual conversion.

For all its faith in the American political system, the Movement failed to understand that political change did not follow from moral suasion or appeals to notions of justice and equity, but depended on the operation of power blocs and the tactics of pressure

and compromise. The Righteous Government campaign was never a true political campaign, but an act of faith. It was an expression of the Peace Mission's dedication to the millennial myth of America as a land of peace and brotherhood and Father Divine and the Peace Mission as its embodiment. Despite the interest of the Communists; the efforts of the politically sophisticated followers; and the frustration that Righteous Government met in conventional politics, the Peace Mission was drawn neither to the compromise of reform nor to the apocalypse of revolution. It withdrew, instead, into the comfort of its own righteousness, leaving the rest of the world to destroy itself.

Failure exposed Father Divine to ridicule and sapped his optimistic expectation of public acceptance. But, even as his national and international dreams faded, so the faith that supported the Movement's optimistic evangelism, closed in to cosset its withdrawal. From the all-conquering God at whose command Presidents would shudder, Father Divine metamorphosed into the humble redeemer who, though ignored and despised by the mighty, yet held the answer to all man's problems: he was still GOD. The Peace Mission was far smaller and more inward-looking by the end of the 'thirties; but it was, as it had always been, a group of "true believers."

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Among the architects of the Righteous Government campaign were John Lamb, Arthur Madison, A. Honaeel Meriditas and Miss Oral Freedom, a British white "angel." The racial identity of the other political activists is not known. See also: Cantril and Sherif, Kingdom of Father Divine (In Nelsen et al., op.cit.) 177.
2. World Herald 1 (2), November 26 1936.
3. Spoken Word 2 (5), November 16 1935; and World Herald 1 (2), November 26 1936. "Political class lessons" published in the World Herald in 1937 included: the machinery of elections; the work of the Court of Claims and the Surrogate Court; the work of the New York State Assembly and Senate; the work of New York City's Board of Estimate; and the New York City County Committee system and New York State political party conventions. There were also explanations of the meaning of such terms as: conservative, direct tax, democracy, delegated power, republic, separation of powers and senatorial courtesy. Ibid. 1 (10), January 21 1937; 1 (20), April 1 1937; 1 (21), April 8 1937; 1 (22), April 15 1937; 1 (23), April 22 1937; 1 (32), June 24 1937; 1 (37), July 29 1937.
4. Ibid. 1 (14), February 18 1937; and 1 (22), April 15 1937.
5. At the two most important Forums, Miss Oral Freedom was the regular chairwoman at 63rd Street; and Arthur Madison and Miss Fineness Fidelity were most often chairleaders at 115th Street. See, for instance, New Day 1 (2), May 28 1936; Spoken Word 2 (53), May 30 1936; and World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937; 1 (22), April 15 1937; and 1 (30), June 10 1937.
6. New Day 1 (2), May 28 1936.
7. See, for instance, World Herald 1 (3), December 3 1936; 1 (14), February 18 1937; and 1 (22), April 15 1937.
8. Ibid. 1 (23), April 22 1937; see also Spoken Word 2 (82), September 8 1936; and World Herald 1 (3), December 3 1936; 1 (10), January 21 1937; 1 (14), February 18 1937; and 1 (20), April 1 1937.
9. At one, fairly typical, meeting of the 115th Street Forum, Miss Heavenly Bride spoke on the work of the Speakers Bureau; the anti-lynching campaign was the main topic of discussion; and the followers were addressed by Dr. Willis N. Huggins, Professor John Eccles and Mr. Lewis, a lawyer. Ibid. 1 (23), April 22 1937.
10. There were forty-nine names on the list. Spoken Word 2 (53), May 30 1936.
11. Ibid.
12. The guest speakers on this occasion were "a member of the Citizens Committee on municipal Power Plant, an Alderman and

- a representative of the Communist Party." Ibid. 2(2), October 26 1935.
13. World Herald 1 (3), December 3 1936. An example of such disruption was a testimony at a Righteous Government Forum at 115th Street. A follower described how he had seen in a vision that the next President, in 1940, would be called "God's Engineer." This President would dispense with lawyers, courts, judges, wars and would institute equal opportunity for all. Arthur Madison quickly remarked, "He said, 'No more lawyers' - I don't know what FATHER is going to do with us.'" Ibid. 1 (23), April 22 1937.
 14. Ibid. 1 (14), February 18 1937.
 15. Spoken Word 1 (46), August 31 1935; and World Herald 1 (2), November 26 1936.
 16. The Righteous Government Platform further affirmed that if a political candidate's "public or private life have ever shown prejudice, bigotry or discrimination, vice, crime or opposition to the Reign of CHRIST; if his record shows tendencies of selfishness, graft, greed or Political Corruption, they don't want him in Office regardless of his promises." Ibid. 1 (10), January 21 1937.
 17. Ibid.
 18. Spoken Word 2 (82), September 8 1936.
 19. New York Amsterdam News August 8 1936; New York Sun June 22 1936; and New Day 1 (6), June 25 1936. The A.P.P. was first mooted by the Joint Conference Against Discriminatory Practises. This was an alliance of Communist organisations formed in December 1934 on the initiative of the Communist Party to protest discrimination in the administration of home relief. After the 1935 riot, the J.C.D.P. revived, broadened its aims, widened its constituency and began a campaign protesting all instances of discrimination. New York Amsterdam News April 4, April 11 and May 2 1936; Ford, Build the peoples labor party (In James W. Ford, op.cit., 56-67) 65-67; and Naison, op.cit., 257-261.
 20. New Day 1 (6), June 25 1936.
 21. The Communist Party favoured All-Harlem Peoples Party as a name. Ibid.; Ford, Build the peoples labor party (In James W. Ford, op.cit., 56-67) 66; and Parker, op.cit., 254-255.
 22. New York Times October 8 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (91), October 10 1936.
 23. New York Times November 4 1936. There is some evidence to suggest that followers were active in Democratic Party politics in New York City, especially in the 19 A.D. Spoken Word 2 (5), November 16 1935; World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937; and 1 (37), July 29 1937.
 24. Father Divine told the followers, "you may be ready for voting ...

- but you will not vote a ballot until you get notice from headquarters." New Day 1 (11), July 30 1936.
25. Spoken Word 2 (82), September 8 1936.
 26. "In reference to endorsing the candidates who endorse our platform, Father Divine said, 'if they did organizationally, in other words, partisanly endorse our Righteous Government Platform as a party, by embodying the Planks in their platform in its entirety, as resolutions to be established, made law and order, such an endorsement would be endorseable'". Ibid. 2 (78), August 25 1936.
 27. New Day 1 (11), July 30 1936.
 28. Spoken Word 2 (84), September 15 1936.
 29. Ibid. 2 (77), August 22 1936.
 30. Ibid. 2 (82), September 8 1936.
 31. "FEAR GOD and give GLORY to Him who Liveth forever, for the Kingdoms of this world are become to be the Kingdoms of our GOD and His CHRIST." Ibid. 2 (88), September 29 1936.
 32. Ibid. 2 (83), September 12 1936.
 33. New York Times September 14 1936.
 34. Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936.
 35. New York Times November 4 1936.
 36. Ibid. November 4 and November 8 1936. Across the urban North blacks shed their traditional allegiance to the party of Lincoln the Emancipator, to give their votes to Roosevelt and the Democrats in this election. It marked the beginning of a major shift in black voting patterns. Meier and Rudwick, op.cit., 240.
 37. New York Amsterdam News November 7 1936; and Charles B. McMillan, Introduction to an era : a study of the political development of the Negro in New York City, 1917 - 1936, unpublished bachelor's thesis, Princeton University, 1967, 83-84, 86-89.
 38. Crusader News Agency, November 9 1936.
 39. Schaffer, op.cit., 52-55.
 40. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
 41. Ibid. 1 (20), April 1 1937.
 42. Spoken Word 2 (53), May 30 1936.
 43. At a meeting of the 115th Street Forum in April 1937, Arthur Madison suggested that the followers who were present should

"sing FATHER down" to the Forum; "and as always his entrance caused such enthusiasm it is difficult to get down to the business of the Forum again as no one really wants to do anything but look at FATHER and hear HIM speak. After waiting for everyone to express who wished to, FATHER spoke long and powerfully." World Herald 1 (23), April 22 1937.

44. A World Herald report of a 63rd Street Forum in April 1937 reported that, "the first symptoms of getting into the spirit of the place ... [were] to 'loosen up.'" Ibid. 1 (14), February 18 1937; and 1 (21), April 8 1937.
45. See, for instance, the Forums reported in Spoken Word 2 (2), October 26 1935; and World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937; 1 (21), April 8 1937; 1 (22), April 15 1937; 1 (23), April 22 1937; 1 (37), July 29 1937; and 1 (42), August 19 1937.
46. Ibid. 1 (28), May 27 1937.
47. Spoken Word 2 (44), April 28 1936.
48. World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937.
49. Spoken Word 2 (9), December 14 1935.
50. In July 1936, Father Divine wrote to the Commissioner of the Bonding Division of the Motor Vehicle Bureau protesting the Bureau's refusal to grant licences to followers who insisted on describing their complexion rather than their race on application forms. New Day 1 (12), August 6 1936. No such problem arose over citizenship papers since the government department concerned accepted the designation "human" as an adequate answer to the question of race. Ibid. 2 (21), May 26 1938.
51. In July 1936, Father Divine announced that he would grant no more interviews, information or photographs to newspapers who continued to make "prejudicial expressions in words, deeds or actions." In September 1936 a reporter from the New York World Telegram was told by John Lamb that he would be granted an interview only "if he will agree not to use segregated words in his paper." New York World Telegram September 11 1936; and New Day 1 (11), July 30 1936.
52. Nation CXLIII (3711), August 22 1936.
53. Father Divine told the followers, "when you destroy the man who commits a crime, you are merely destroying the body in which he committed the crime, that the spirit of murder and unrighteousness may enter into another ... capital punishment does not pay. It does not lessen the murderers in our Land and Country, neither does it lessen the fear that is imposed on us for fear of such men committing such crimes. For all you know, when they are destroyed in body still you fear another will ... rise in his place ... when mankind shall realize GOD in the midst of them as a Living Factor in their hearts and in their Lives, then and there, the spirit of murder and debauchery will be dispelled." World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.

54. Spoken Word 2 (5), November 16 1935.
55. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
56. New Day 1 (15), August 27 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (76), August 18 1936.
57. New Day 1 (4), June 11 1936.
58. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid. 1 (10), January 21 1937; and 1 (25), May 6 1937.
61. People attracted by the press reports of the Peace Mission and the court cases in which it was embroiled in 1936 and 1937 swelled the numbers at Righteous Government Forums so that they became less a means of educating and organising the followers than a means to impress curious outsiders; among them a group of French Boy Scouts en route to a Jamboree. Father Divine, himself, made more frequent visits to the Forums in 1937, presumably to address the visitors and keep Righteous Government work under close supervision. Ibid. 1 (10), January 21 1937; 1 (21), April 8 1937; 1 (22), April 15 1937; 1 (23), April 22 1937; 1 (28), May 6 1937; 1 (32), June 24 1937; and 1 (37), July 29 1937.
62. New Day 1 (22), August 19 1937; World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937; and 1 (37), July 29 1937; and Furniss, op.cit., 290.
63. New Day 1 (23), August 26 1937; and World Herald 1 (25), May 6 1937. The Peace Mission did not take part in the contest in the 19 A.D. Harry Perry won again and Dickens was a long way behind in third place. New York Amsterdam News September 25 1937; and Furniss, op.cit., 290.
64. New Day 1 (22), August 19 1937; and 1 (29), October 7 1937.
65. Further, Father Divine said, "why should you spend a dollar trying to qualify, or anything else, for registering and voting ... YOU HAVE ELECTED THE ONE YOU WANT ... It is a matter of impossibility for such a one to be dethroned." Ibid. 1 (31), October 21 1937.
66. See Chapter Ten.
67. The New Day treated Father Divine's monster election parade in October 1937 as a vindication and an answer to "the slander and malicious persecution of the press"; "the gossip and lies" of "so-called Disciples"; and the machinations of "the legal profession, the courts of law, and even the radio," which had "been brought in to play to destroy FATHER's influence throughout the world." Ibid. 1 (33), November 4 1937.
68. Ibid. 1 (31), October 21 1937.
69. Garrett, op.cit., 259.

70. World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937.
71. In an interview with a reporter from the Federal Writers Project in 1939, Ben Howe said: "The City Party is permanently organised to obtain for the City of New York a government for all its people and not for any political party and its favored friends ... [it] will be hospitable to other groups and individuals aiming at the city's redemption." Of Father Divine, himself, Howe said that he had done "more for the Negro than any other individual," and that the Fusion Party took careful consideration of the Peace Mission's complaints and suggestions. Alyse Abrams, Attitude of the City Fusion Party toward Negroes, September 21 1939 (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 5. Schomburg Collection). See also Capecci, op.cit., 8.
72. New Day 1 (32), October 28 1937.
73. Ibid; and 1 (33), November 4 1937.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid. 1 (32), October 28 1937.
76. Ibid. 1 (33), November 4 1937.
77. Ibid. 1 (32), October 28 1937. As the six council members from Manhattan Borough were elected by a transferable vote system, it was important in what order of preference the voters placed them. Father Divine set down an order of preference and the New Day published a specimen ballot paper so that the followers could familiarise themselves with it. The New Day added, "FATHER has stated that HE wished each person to make his or her own decision on the order in which he or she prefers to number the candidates HE has endorsed. However, we know the choice of most Followers and sympathisers will be that which FATHER has indicated." Ibid.
78. Ibid.; and 1 (33), November 4 1937.
79. Ibid.
80. McMillan, op.cit., 87. The Peace Mission was not alone in backing a loser. The Amsterdam News owned by Democrats C.B. Powell and P.M.H. Savory, also supported Mahoney. New York Amsterdam News October 23 and November 6 1937.
81. New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937.
82. Furniss, op.cit., 336 - 339; and Hedgeman, op.cit., 68. The second of the Righteous Government Platform demands in the "Political" section of the Platform was the "immediate abandonment of the political patronage system and appointment of all Civil Service employees strictly according to their qualifications and service and their standing on the list, without regard to party, race, creed or color, and without the intervention of Political leaders." The Platform also demanded "Legislation making

- it a violation of the Law, to withhold any kind of classification of work from any Civil Service employee on account of race, creed or color - provided he or she is qualified to do such work." World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
83. Garrett, op.cit., 322 - 323. An article in the World Herald in December 1936 argued: "Through the open gateway of proportional representation, the principles of Father Divine's platform can find expression in the New York halls of legislation." World Herald 1 (3), December 3 1936. See also: New Day 1 (40), December 22 1937; 2 (1), January 6 1938; 2 (12), March 24 1938; and 2 (35), September 1 1938.
84. United States Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Harlem River Houses, New York, 1937, passim. Miss Ann Perry, of the Educational Division, at the 63rd Street Forum on the eve of the elections, dismissed the Harlem River Houses as a segregated housing project - "If I want an apartment on Park Avenue, I want to be able to have it," she said. New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937.
85. Capeci, op.cit., 5 - 7. On the question of minority representation, the Righteous Government Platform was ambiguous. On the one hand, it demanded no discrimination in the Civil Service: but, on the other hand, it called, in supplementary resolutions, "for proportional minority representation in all government affairs and also in municipal and public employment." The ambiguity was succinctly expressed in a resolution to La Guardia which called for "a system of proportionate employment [to] be inaugurated in all offices and categories of employment, without discrimination as to race, creed or color." Spoken Word 2 (22), February 11 1936.
86. Ralph Bunche, Programs, ideologies, tactics and achievements of Negro betterment and interracial organisations, a research memorandum, Carnegie-Myrdal study, 1940, Schomburg Collection, 81; Robert L. Zangrando, N.A.A.C.P. and a federal anti-lynching bill 1934-1940, Journal of Negro History L (2), April 1965, 106-111; Walter White, A man called White, London, 1949, 167-172.
87. An editorial in the Spoken Word in 1935, urged "Support the Costigan-Wagner Bill"; and a resolution at the Righteous Government Convention in January 1936 called for a "drastic anti-lynch bill." Spoken Word 1 (15), January 26 1935; and 2 (22), February 11 1936.
88. Ibid. 2 (31), March 14 1936.
89. Ibid. 2 (53), May 30 1936.
90. The main difference between the Divine bill and the Costigan-Wagner bill was that the Divine bill made every member of a lynch mob culpable while the Costigan-Wagner bill concentrated on state and local officials who aided a lynching, neglected to prevent it, or failed to prosecute the lynchers. New Day 1 (2), May 28 1936; and 1 (4), June 11 1936; and Zangrando, N.A.A.C.P. and a federal anti-lynching bill, op.cit., 107.

91. Walter White, op.cit., 169-170.
92. Bunche, Programs, ideologies ..., 82. Zangrando, N.A.A.C.P. and a federal anti-lynching bill, op.cit., 111-113; and Walter White, op.cit., 172-173.
93. New Day 1 (36), November 25 1937.
94. Father Divine wrote to Governor Bibb Graves to commend him for dismissing a sheriff who had taken part in a lynching. World Herald 1 (14), February 18 1937.
95. New Day 1 (36), November 25 1937. See also: Ibid. 2 (2), January 13 1938.
96. New York Times January 20 and January 21 1938; and New Day 2 (5), February 3 1938; and 2 (6), February 10 1938.
97. Ibid. 2 (9), March 3 1938.
98. Ibid. 2 (8), February 24 1938; and 2 (9), March 3 1938. Father Divine and the followers were as much hurt as angry at Senator Ellender's attack. John Lamb wrote a long letter answering the Senator's remarks, as if the Senator would take the matter seriously and might yet be convinced. Ibid. 4 (9), February 29 1940.
99. Ibid. 2 (6), February 10 1938.
100. Zangrando, N.A.A.C.P. and a federal anti-lynching bill, op.cit., 113; and Walter White, op.cit., 173.
101. New Day 2 (9), March 3 1938. Politics, of course, continued to be discussed at the Forums despite the lack of interest of the politicians. Some City Council members still appeared and, in November 1938, the Peace Mission endorsed two American Labor Party candidates in the elections for Congress and the State Supreme Court. A.L.P. candidates also visited the Peace Mission in 1939. Ibid. 2 (14), April 17 1938; 2 (42), October 20 1938; 2 (44), November 3 1938; 2 (45), November 10 1938; 3 (43), October 26 1939; 3 (44), November 2 1939, and 3 (45), November 9 1939.
102. Ibid. 2 (18), May 5 1938.
103. Ibid. 2 (26), June 30 1938.
104. "Take the profit out of war," urged the Spoken Word, "and war will stand stripped of every vestige of its glamor. It will be exposed in its true light as the greatest of human follies." Spoken Word 1 (17), February 9 1935. Stephen Bliss, editor of the World Herald told a Righteous Government Forum that people were at last realizing that it was "the war profiteers, the money lenders, who brought about wars, hatred and ill-feeling." World Herald 1 (22), April 15 1937. The Spoken Word criticised the participation of the churches in Armistice Day parades. "Those are not PEACE parades, they are a great deception; they are War

- Parades, endeavoring to inspire the militaristic instinct in the breasts of the population from school children to decrepit veterans." Spoken Word 1 (16), February 2 1935. See also: Ibid. 2 (2), October 26 1935; and 2 (5), November 16 1935; and Hoshor, op.cit., 222-223.
105. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
106. Ibid.
107. Ekirch, op.cit., 213-244.
108. Red Ross, Black Americans and Italo-Ethiopian relief, 1935-1936, Ethiopian Observer 15 (2), February 1972, 122-131; Robert G. Weisbord, Black America and the Italo-Ethiopian crisis, Historian 34 (2), February 1972, 230-241; and Robert G. Weisbord, British West Indian reaction to the Italo-Ethiopian War : an episode in Pan-Africanism, Caribbean Studies 10 (1), April 1970, 34-41.
109. Ross, Black Americans and Italo-Ethiopian relief, op.cit., 122-123, 125, 127-128; and Naison, op.cit., 303-310, 363-373, 391-396.
110. New York Amsterdam News November 2 1935; Spoken Word 1 (42), August 3 1935; 1 (43), August 10 1935; 2 (3), November 2 1935; and 2 (50), May 19 1936.
111. Ibid. 2 (22), February 11 1936. See also Ibid. 2 (19), February 1 1936 and 2 (24), February 18 1936. In February 1935, the Spoken Word had argued against American participation in the Court of the League of Nations because it was "but another maze of political manipulation". But in October and November it argued that America could not be neutral in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and must support the League. Ibid. 1 (16), February 2 1935; 1 (51), October 5 1935; and 2 (7), November 30 1935. President Roosevelt and his administration favoured an embargo on essential supplies to both Italy and Ethiopia, realising that this would affect Italy alone, since American trade with Ethiopia was negligible. But his attempt to effect this policy was defeated by the isolationist Congress. If implemented, this policy would have enabled the League of Nations sanctions, which were applied only on munitions and war materials, credit facilities and Italian exports, to be extended. Brice Harris, United States and the Italo-Ethiopian crisis, Stanford, California, 1964, passim.
112. New Day 1 (36), November 25 1937.
113. Ibid. 2 (1), January 6 1938; and 2 (4), January 27 1938. Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, proposed the appointment of a Secretary of Peace in 1798. Peter Mayer, ed., Pacifist conscience, London, 1966, 19.
114. New Day 2 (11), March 17 1938.
115. Ibid. 2 (35), September 1 1938. On this occasion, Mr. K. Das Gupta, representing the World Fellowship of Faith and

described as Gandhi's representative in America, addressed the Peace Mission.

116. New York Sun September 20 1938; and New Day 2 (40), October 6 1938. The idea of purchase of disputed territory rather than conquest by force was first mooted in the Peace Mission press in November 1936 when the World Herald suggested the establishment of an "International Real Estate Office." World Herald 1 (2), November 26 1936.
117. New Day 2 (51), December 22 1938. However, Father Divine urged that Congress ear-mark two hundred and fifty million dollars to settle refugees from fascist persecution in the U.S.A. New Day 3 (5), February 2 1939.
118. New York Times September 25 1939.
119. New Day 3 (46), November 16 1939.
120. Ibid. 3 (49), December 7 1939.
121. New York Times December 11 1939; and New Day 3 (50), December 14 1939.
122. Ibid. 4 (6), February 8 1940.
123. Ibid. 4 (1), January 4 1940.
124. Ibid. 4 (4), January 25 1940; 4 (7), February 15 1940; 4 (8), February 22 1940; 4 (9), February 29 1940; 4 (20), May 16 1940; and 4 (21), May 23 1940.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid. 4 (20), May 16 1940.
127. Crusader News Agency December 19 1940.
128. New Day 4 (5), February 1 1940. There was fervent activity among West Indians in New York at this time: in protest against various bills before Congress to control and restrict the freedom of aliens living in the United States; to prevent the annexation of the European colonies in the Caribbean by the U.S.A.; and to seek self-determination for the islands. New York Amsterdam News July 1 1939 and November 4 1939; Crusader News Agency May 1, May 22, June 12 and October 30 1939 and September 2 1940; Voice of Ethiopia April 29, October 28 and December 30 1939; and Caribbean Review 1 (1), April 1940; and 1 (2), May 1940.
129. New Day 4 (5), February 1 1940.
130. Sydney H. French, Interview with W.A. Domingo, August 10 1940 (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 3, Schomburg Collection).
131. New Day 4 (20), May 16 1940; 4 (29), July 18 1940; 4 (31), August 1 1940; and 4 (33), August 15 1940. Father Divine's association with the West Indian National Emergency Conference

did not prevent him from urging on President Roosevelt the very course of action that the Committee feared: the United States annexation of the allied colonies in the Western hemisphere as repayment for allied war debts from the First World War. Ibid. 4 (25), June 20 1940. See also: Caribbean Review 1 (2), May 1940.

132. Zangrando. N.A.A.C.P. and a federal anti-lynching bill, op.cit., 114.
133. New Day 3 (31), August 3 1939; 3 (34), August 24 1939; 3 (35), August 31 1939; 4 (2), January 11 1940; 4 (3), January 18 1940; and 4 (7), February 15 1940.
134. Ibid. 4 (7), February 15 1940; and 4 (8), February 22 1940. Miss Bobbie Sweet wrote: "We not only consider filibustering to be a crime, but we further conclude that any person or persons who do such, they are merely prejudiced towards certain people because of their race, their color or their creed. Such should not be tolerated, but every representative of Congress who will continue to filibuster against bills passed by a majority vote, should not be allowed to represent the taxpayers - their constituents." Ibid. 4 (7), February 15 1940. See also: Ibid. 4 (9), February 29 1940; 4 (10), March 7 1940; 4 (11), March 14 1940; 4 (12), March 21 1940. 4 (13), March 28 1940; 4 (14), April 4 1940; 4 (15), April 11 1940; 4 (19), May 9 1940; 4 (20), May 16 1940; 4 (21), May 23 1940; 4 (25), June 13 1940; 4 (27), July 4 1940.
135. Ibid. 4 (25), June 13 1940.
136. New York Post July 8 1940; New York Times July 15 1940; New Day 4 (28), July 11 1940; 4 (29), July 18 1940; 4 (31), August 1 1940; 4 (36), September 5 1940; and 4 (37), September 12 1940.
137. Ibid. 4 (36), September 5 1940.
138. Ibid. 4 (30), July 25 1940.
139. New York Times July 15 1940; New Day 4 (12), March 21 1940; and 4 (17), April 25 1940.
140. Ibid. 4 (9), February 29 1940; 4 (10), March 7 1940; and 4 (17), April 25 1940.
141. Ibid. 4 (28), July 11 1940; and 4 (29), July 18 1940.
142. Ibid. 4 (28), July 11 1940.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid. 4 (33), August 15 1940; and 4 (34), August 22 1940.
145. Ibid. 4 (38), September 19 1940.
146. Ibid. 4 (39), September 26 1940. When the conscription bill

was first introduced, Happy Devotion wrote to President Roosevelt asking, "will such a law and order apply to the Afro-Americans too? ... After the conflict is over the filibusterers will begin to filibuster again against the anti-lynching bill and the lynch-mob violencers will begin their lynching just like was done after the last war. Why, some were lynched and mobbed before they could get out of their uniforms! It seems to me that the Afro-Americans should be exempted from all military service according to how they are segregated, discriminated and hated in time of peace." Ibid. 4 (25), June 20 1940. See also: Ibid. 4 (38), September 19 1940.

147. Ibid. 4 (37), September 12 1940; and 4 (41), October 10 1940.
148. Ibid. 4 (48), November 28 1940. Some black nationalist movements in other cities, impelled by like arguments, advocated, not conscientious objection, but resistance to the draft. Bontemps and Conroy, op.cit., 183-185.
149. New Day 4 (43), October 24 1940.
150. Harvard Sitkoff, Race militancy and interracial violence in the Second World War, Journal of American History LVIII (3), December 1971, 661-667; and Neil A. Wynn, Impact of the Second World War on the American Negro, Journal of Contemporary History 6 (2), 1971, 42-51.
151. New York Times November 4 1936; and New Day 4 (41), October 10 1940; 4 (42), October 17 1940; 4 (43), October 24 1940; and 4 (46), November 14 1940. At the Righteous Government Convention in 1936 it was resolved that the next Convention be in 1940 but, although such a Convention was promised in April 1940, it was not organised. Ibid. 4 (15), April 11 1940; and Spoken Word 2 (22), February 11 1936. In 1939 Arthur Madison said that he had wondered what Father Divine had meant when he said that he would be involved in naming the President in 1940 but he had come to realise that "it was the principle which was to be carried out, with or without the followers casting a vote." New Day 3 (10), March 19 1939.
152. Ibid. 4 (33), August 15 1940.
153. Ibid. 3 (30), July 27 1939.

CHAPTER NINE: "HARMONIOUS CO-OPERATION": FATHER DIVINE'S
'NEW DEAL'.

In its political activity, the Peace Mission showed a single-minded faith in its own solutions. Its activity defied political labels. It was both radical, in that it sought drastic social and economic change - and conservative, in that it reaffirmed a fundamental morality which it identified with Americanism. In its attitudes to changes in American economic life, the Peace Mission was just as idiosyncratic.

The New Deal era was a time of unprecedented government interference and control in the American economy and, for the most part, the Peace Mission applauded the role of federal and state government in the regulation of working conditions and the provision of work relief. Indeed, the Peace Mission wished to extend government work relief so that it was available to all the able-bodied unemployed. The Righteous Government Platform¹ demanded that the government take over all idle plant and machinery and restore them to full capacity; that a massive programme of public work be instituted; and that "Laws ... be altered so that EQUAL OPPORTUNITY is allowed to all; [and] that every worker is allowed access to the land, to the materials needed for the carrying out of his individual talent, for the welfare of himself and of society." The economic planks of the Righteous Government Platform were founded on the implicit belief that it was the government's proper business to guarantee its citizens work and prosperity.

This belief did not arise from any recognizable theory of economic behaviour or organisation. Rather, it was an expression of the faith that God had provided an abundance for man's enjoyment; and that this abundance could be readily tapped by following certain

fundamental principles. Government, like the private citizen, must follow the Peace Mission's example. Prosperity waited on "co-operation, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, and the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of GOD"; and on an economic order geared, like the Peace Mission, to "work and MORE WORK, with PRICES of Commodities reduced to a minimum."

The Peace Mission disagreed with the protection of special interests where this conflicted with the needs of the majority, whether at home or abroad. It thus favoured free trade between nations; and, in American life, the Movement demanded an end to crop control and its replacement with an "efficient and equitable distribution system" - not because the Movement favoured an unfettered market economy, but because it wanted the nation's wealth to reach and benefit all the hungry. It found "the spectacle of hungry people in a land of plenty ... worse than uncivilised."

With the needs of the people in mind, the Righteous Government Platform also demanded laws restricting profits and dividends, so that producers and businessmen would be encouraged to sell their goods and services for as little (instead of as much) as possible. It called for a law to prevent individuals from hoarding wealth; and it quoted Father Divine's claim to endorse "the Communistic idea, making all things common; claiming nothing for yourself as an individual." This did not mean that the Peace Mission was anti-pathetic to private property. Rather, the Peace Mission sought, in the economic planks of the Righteous Government Platform, to encourage the unselfish use of wealth; and, intensely suspicious of the creation of wealth that had no obvious connection with "labor performed or practical service rendered", demanded the abolition of credit and interest; the redemption of the national debt; the destruction of counterfeit money; and government control of the

financial system.

The economic planks of the Righteous Government Platform, although inspired by the extension of the government's economic responsibility in the New Deal, were thus based, not on any economic theory, but on the Peace Mission's ideals of honesty and unselfishness; and on the belief that everyone had a right to share in God's abundance. Its belief in each person's right to work and its faith in God's promise of prosperity, in fact, caused it to fiercely oppose those aspects of the New Deal - notably the provision of home relief and the enactment of social security legislation - that it saw as a denial of God's promise of prosperity and of the individual self-reliance necessary to redeem that promise.

In its attitude to trade unionism, the Peace Mission pursued an ambivalent approach. It applauded trade unions for seeking better pay and hours for their members, but it also saw the trade unions as expressions of destructive self-interest which subverted fundamental ideals of freedom, co-operation and brotherhood. Because the trade unions attempted, through closed shop agreements and other devices, to control the supply of labour, the Peace Mission regarded them as both interfering with freedom of work and coveting its benefits. Then, because the trade unions were willing to strike to achieve their ends, they affronted the Peace Mission's faith in peaceful co-operation.

So, the Peace Mission applauded those aspects of the New Deal that affirmed the right to work in dignity; but rejected other aspects that it regarded as contrary to America's fundamental values of individual liberty, human brotherhood and the promise of prosperity. Likewise, the Peace Mission opposed unrestrained free enterprise and a competitive capitalist economy; but it also opposed government welfare schemes and the organisation of workers

as a powerful interest group. It sought a world governed by God's laws, where individuals would, through their faith, work for the greater good of all.

The Peace Mission made no attempt, however, to press for the acceptance of its economic policies at a national level. Nor did it join the N.A.A.C.P. and Urban League lobby to ensure that blacks were accorded a proper share of federal and state relief and recovery programmes.² Indeed, the economic planks of the Righteous Government Platform played hardly any part in the Peace Mission's political activity. They are interesting chiefly as the only extensive statement of the Peace Mission's economic objectives. It was on a local level - and in response to particular problems, rather than as part of any coherent strategy - that the Peace Mission's economic attitudes were tested and modified.

In Harlem, during the Depression, many blacks - including some of the middle class - came to see themselves as sharing the problems common to all working people. This consciousness arose out of poverty and exploitation and was encouraged by the relief and labour legislation of the New Deal. It first appeared as a racial sensitivity to the exploitative relationships between white and black in Harlem: especially in the relationship between white merchants and black consumers in the Harlem marketplace. Yet it quickly found broader expression in common cause with whites; as part of city-wide organisations of tenants and the unemployed, and in trade union organisation campaigns. As a result of their realisation of the conflict of interest between landlord and tenant, merchant and consumer, and capital and labour, blacks went beyond their traditional means of protest - polite petition and resort to the law - to force change in their economic status. They turned, moreover, to the weapons of direct action: picket,

boycott and strike.³

The Peace Mission, in its belief in racial and economic justice and equality of opportunity, had ideals in common with those in Harlem who sought economic change through organisation and direct action. But Father Divine claimed that he had already solved the problems of poverty and dependency for those who followed his teachings: and economic salvation, he believed, could never be achieved by conflict and appeals to racial or class solidarity. He offered, instead, the vision of a future organic society of dedicated, disciplined and co-operative individuals, where all sectional interests would be forgotten and in which all grievances would be adjusted by "harmonious co-operation." The Peace Mission, he said, was the model of such a society.

Some people were prepared to accept that Father Divine had solved, within the Peace Mission, many of the economic difficulties that troubled poor blacks in Harlem. The system of economic co-operation; the taboos on debt, welfare and credit, as well as Father Divine's attempt to regulate the working conditions of the followers in the outside society were, in their own way, innovatory. But strategies which were based on a depressed ghetto economy and that had meaning only for those to whom the Peace Mission's disciplines were an attraction, failed to impress those who saw government regulation and protection; working class organisation; and vociferous protest as a means to economic advancement. Indeed, some trade unionists regarded the Peace Mission itself as an acutely exploitative form of economic organisation.

The Peace Mission's beliefs meant that it took no part in the campaigns of groups formed, during the Depression, to advance the interests of home and work relief clients. These groups, the Unemployed Councils and the Workers Alliance, the first formed by

the Communists and the second by the Socialists, which combined in 1936, campaigned at both local and national levels. They sought improved home relief allocations, both for individual cases and generally; campaigned for the enlargement of work relief and the payment of trade union wages on relief projects; and fought against discrimination in home and work relief.⁴ While the Peace Mission had no quarrel with the work relief aims of these groups, its antipathy to home relief ensured that it shunned their marches and lobbies.

Often, too, Father Divine's teachings and his advice to the followers challenged and even sabotaged the work of those campaigning for jobs and trade union organisation for blacks. Local white merchants and employers were quick to notice Father Divine's conservative influence and to encourage it. He, in turn, was sufficiently gratified by the employers' attention to forgo many of the Peace Mission's criticisms of their discriminatory policies. By the end of the decade, the Peace Mission had become ostentatiously wealthy and newly interested in investing in residential property in Harlem and upstate New York. Cocooned by its wealth, it inveighed less and less against discrimination and segregation in the outside society; and chose to concentrate increasingly on its own prosperity and consolidation. Self-interest replaced its former zeal to transform the outside world.

In Harlem, as in other ghettos in the larger cities of the United States, economic grievances were forced into the forefront by the Depression. The scale of the crisis emphasised the economic marginality of blacks in the city; and, as the pattern of discrimination in the jobs and housing markets became more obvious

so militant attitudes were formed among blacks. The economic collapse affected all sections of black society: not just the unskilled or manual workers but also the black professional and businessman who depended on the patronage and prosperity of the community for his own well-being. Just as the nineteen-twenties was a time when blacks first began to look upon themselves as a community in Harlem; so the Depression forced all sections of black society to recognise their common plight, their mutual dependence.

The Depression underlined the racial economics of the ghetto. The landlords, the storekeepers, and even the sales assistants in the larger ghetto stores were white. Their tenants and shoppers were black. Thus there grew up an acute consciousness of racial exploitation and, from this, a determination to organise and use the collective strength of the black community to secure fundamental improvements in the conditions of life. Denied full access to more conventional channels of power, many blacks took up the weapons of mass picket and boycott: and, while fighting for entry into the mainstream of American society, used their own community, the black ghetto, as their lever.

The most dramatic popular movement precipitated by the Depression was the wave of "Jobs for Negroes" campaigns begun by blacks in cities as geographically scattered as Washington D.C., Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Columbus (Ohio), Indianapolis, St. Louis and New York City.⁵ In Harlem the Jobs Campaign was waged from 1932 to 1934 and from 1938 to 1943 by a number of different, but overlapping organisations. Cleavages of class, colour and generation were expressed in the competing groups and opinion was divided over policy and tactics. But, raising the slogan "Don't buy where you can't work" and wielding the weapons of picket and boycott, Harlemites launched themselves first against

white-owned stores and firms in the ghetto and then against the public utilities and transportation companies, supplying services to Harlem, which refused to hire blacks in white collar jobs.⁶

The initial objective of the Jobs Campaigns was to secure positions for blacks as sales assistants in the white-owned stores of the ghettos. These positions were entirely held by whites at the beginning of the nineteen-thirties and discrimination against blacks in employment was so pervasive that these jobs were highly coveted, even by the black bourgeoisie, as a means of social and economic mobility. As the Depression threw more and more blacks out of work, the discrimination against the employment of blacks in white-owned ghetto stores was a source of continual irritation to the black community - a constant reminder of its status in the job market. But this was also an area of employment discrimination most vulnerable to black pressure.⁷

Although there were polite overtures to white merchants by the black middle class in 1929 and 1930, the catalyst in the first phase of Harlem's Jobs Campaign was a flamboyant street agitator, Sufi Abdul Hamid. Credited, under the name of Bishop Conshankin, with pioneering the outdoor speaking campaigns against white merchants in Chicago's South Side ghetto,⁸ the Sufi came to Harlem in 1932. Resplendently dressed in cape and turban, and using both the Koran and the streamlined argot of the ghetto, he harangued passing shoppers on street corners, urging them to boycott local white merchants who refused to hire black sales assistants. He quickly attracted a following among the young unemployed; and his organization, the Negro Industrial and Clerical Alliance (N.I.C.A.) began its work by canvassing and picketing the smaller white-owned businesses in the district. Then, in 1934, he transferred his attention to the chain and department stores of 125th Street - the

symbols of white economic power in Harlem - where, each night, he spoke from a stepladder, taunting black shoppers for their lack of race consciousness.⁹

The Sufi's appeal to direct action and the sight of pickets excited attention and Harlem's conventional middle-class leadership became alarmed lest the campaign should get out of hand. Sharing a belief in the justice of the Sufi's cause, if not the wisdom of his behaviour, a cross-section of Harlem's church, business, professional and social leadership formed an umbrella group, the Citizens League for Fair Play (C.L.F.P.), and began negotiations with L.M. Blumstein's department store on 125th Street to secure the employment of black sales assistants. These negotiations, however, quickly collapsed and, reluctantly, the C.L.F.P. formed a picketing committee, led by the League's younger and more aggressive members. The pickets were effective and, in late July 1934, Blumstein's capitulated.¹⁰

With this victory, however, the C.L.F.P. collapsed in dissension. The picketing committee complained that only a handful of carefully selected girls from Harlem's bourgeoisie benefited from the job settlement, and it detached itself from the parent organisation to pursue a more aggressive strategy. Street action escalated in the hands of both the ex-picketing committee and the Sufi's N.I.C.A. until, in November 1934, the New York State Supreme Court, petitioned by the A.S. Beck Shoe Company, issued an injunction banning all jobs picketing in Harlem on the grounds that it was not part of any bona-fide labour dispute.¹¹ The decision, which was paralleled by the rulings of courts in other states, was not reversed until four years later. In 1938, the United States Supreme Court, hearing an appeal of the New Negro Alliance, which was leading a Jobs Campaign in Washington D.C., ruled that, after all, picketing

for jobs for blacks did fall within the provisions of the law.¹²

Still, between 1934 and 1938 the Jobs Campaign in Harlem was in virtual abeyance, although the ex-picketing committee reconstituted itself as the Harlem Labor Union and continued its agitation.¹³ The Sufi, after a forlorn attempt to create an Afro-American Federation of Labor, bowed out of Street protest in 1935 under a storm of criticism about his alleged anti-semitism.¹⁴ Yet, although the first phase of the Jobs Campaign had been short-lived, it nevertheless so demonstrated the strength of feeling within Harlem against the discriminatory hiring policies of the white-owned stores, that many white merchants, especially the owners of the smaller stores, were, after 1934, impelled to hire blacks, even without the inducement of pickets.¹⁵

The Peace Mission press did not begin publication until late 1934 and then its editorial offices were initially outside New York. Little appeared in the Spoken Word about the campaigns that were inflaming passions in Harlem. The Peace Mission was not involved in the boycott campaign and, only once, in October 1934, was there any suggestion that the Movement's help was canvassed. In that month, Father Divine and his followers agreed to co-operate with Sufi Abdul Hamid in a parade and mass rally in Harlem.¹⁶

The Peace Mission was certainly interested in the issues raised by the boycott campaign. It was as opposed to racial discrimination - in Father Divine's words, to the actions of "race prejudiced, bigoted people"¹⁷ - as any of the activists in the local campaigns. Yet Father Divine rejected, with equal vehemence, the strategies and rhetoric of the early "Don't buy" movement.

Father Divine and his followers recoiled from direct action and confrontation. In their eyes, grievances could not be adjusted by conflicts that only hardened the attitudes of the antagonists.

Progress and prosperity, they believed, followed only from "harmonious co-operation"; from the sense of common interest and mutual respect that came once people understood their brotherhood before God.

The Movement's trust in peaceable co-operation was rudely affronted, in particular, by the quickening of racial antagonisms in Harlem. The Jobs Campaign raised questions about the place of white-owned business in the black community that were couched, in explicit race terms. Traditional community leadership, epitomised in the sponsors of the C.L.F.P., still believed that there was a place for white business in Harlem, provided that the merchants respected the community by guaranteeing blacks jobs and fair treatment. This leadership preferred to seek adjustment by negotiation and appeals to the merchants' goodwill and sense of civic responsibility. But more powerful at street level were the younger activists, who drew their support from a variety of nationalist organisations in Harlem. Rejecting negotiation and moral suasion as futile, these men projected the ghetto as a black power base to be mobilised in a fight against the oppressive, white society. They appealed to a sense of Harlem as an area of black settlement that should be under black control and they called for the demolition of white economic power in Harlem. Their ideas were crucial; for these were the people the conventional leadership was obliged to co-opt to conduct the confrontation tactics of the campaign once diplomacy had failed. They were adepts at street-speaking; at the cajoling, repartee and exhortation essential to direct action. In this way, a vitriolic, nationalist element was added to the "Don't buy" movement in Harlem. When the C.L.F.P. fell apart, it was these men who continued the struggle in Harlem in the mid-'thirties.¹⁸

It was impossible for Father Divine and his followers to accept campaigns waged on these terms. As their entry into politics showed,

the Movement rejected the idea of using race power and race consciousness to achieve change. Father Divine not only denied race but, more fundamentally, the whole concept of black territoriality or, as he called it, "localisation."¹⁹ As he said, "I am not a race, I am not a creed, and I am not a color ... As long as you live in your limited selves, thinking you and I belong up here in Harlem ... Why then you are limiting yourselves and many of our so-called people."²⁰ Thus he could never accept the validity of campaigns that, in his view, ensured the persistence of inequality by perpetuating race consciousness.

To some extent, some of Harlem's conventional leadership, worried by the excesses of the nationalist rhetoric, would have agreed with him. They would have found little fault, in principle, either, with the attitude of one writer in the Spoken Word who said, "when people co-operate and act together peaceably in unison in one great harmonious mass, ²¹ THEY CAN GET ANYTHING THEY WANT". But they did not cling to such faith at all costs. They were prepared, if reluctantly, to accept the need for direct action against merchants who were deaf to conciliation and mutual understanding. Similarly, they were ready to see Harlem's plight as one of racial powerlessness.

If Father Divine rejected and ignored the street campaigns of others, he was not content to let them have the last word. He was ambitious to prove that his philosophy of harmonious co-operation was the only effective answer. Single-mindedly, he began his own campaign against discriminatory employers. He chose, as his targets, a number of city firms patronised by the followers; he chose, as his strategy polite petition rather than direct action.

In September 1933 he wrote to two city bus lines that the Peace Mission hired regularly, the Twentieth Century Bus Company and the

Rialto Bus Company, to ask them to employ "chauffeurs, mechanics and other common or skilled labor in your concern of each race, and of all nationalities, creeds and colors." His letters were brief and cordial. When Mr. R. Peck, the manager of the Rialto Bus Company replied, advising Father Divine that they were well pleased with their black employees, Father Divine politely reproached Peck for being dishonest. "I note in travelling," he wrote to Peck, "we have had an occasion for somewhat criticisms on the part of the bus drivers, as they appear to be one nationality or race and especially of one color. I have endeavored to try to veil any thought of criticism yet I know there is an occasion for same." He urged Peck to rectify the situation "before it becomes publically discerned."²²

When the companies ignored his complaint Father Divine retaliated - not with direct action - but by setting up his own fleet for the followers' use with "MY own chauffeurs, some of whom look like ... Myself, and some who look like others and this is what I Stand for." Father Divine made his point, but by withdrawing from confrontation, he made no impact on either company's job policies.²³

For eighteen months the Movement stood on the sidelines of the job agitation in Harlem. Then, in March 1935, the rumour that a boy had been murdered for shoplifting in S.H. Kress's department store on 125th Street sparked the riot in which angry crowds wreaked their vengeance on the white-owned stores in the community. The Spoken Word condemned the "spirit of destruction" and the bitter toll in damage and personal injury left by the riot. But, most of all, it deplored the greater damage done to the relationship between the merchants and the people of Harlem. "MISUNDERSTANDING AND LACK OF RESPECT," wrote one journalist in the Spoken Word, "is an intangible loss of incalculable extent."²⁴

The Movement's moral position: the premium it placed on mutual respect and co-operation, was irrelevant to many Harlemites. The violence against the stores during the riot was fed by an acute sense of frustration in Harlem; by the conviction that the merchants had no concern for conciliation and mutual understanding. But the turn of events refreshed Father Divine's sense of mission and, in mid-May 1935, he launched another campaign against discriminatory employers to show the power of his own formulas for change.

This time he petitioned the Borden's Farm Products Company and the Sheffield Farms Company of New York City. Both companies supplied milk in Harlem and had become targets for local criticism because of their refusal to employ black drivers or mechanics. On May 10 1935 Father Divine wrote to the companies to urge them to employ workers of "every race, creed, nationality and color." M.T. Daly, the sales manager at Borden's replied to assure Father Divine that they already employed men of every race and creed and invited him to inspect their premises on 128th Street. C.E. Audebach, on behalf of Sheffield's, insisted that his firm had operated a fair employment policy since 1922; that it employed blacks in more than twelve distributive branches and advertised in the Harlem press.²⁵

As a result of these assurances, Father Divine sent a committee of followers to inspect the two firms' premises. The committee found blatant discrimination. Blacks were employed but they were restricted to the menial and lower paid categories of work. In late May 1935, Father Divine sent curt letters to both firms. He informed C.E. Audebach of Sheffield Farms that the Movement expected an immediate change in its allocation of drivers' jobs. At least half of the drivers, he wrote, should be "of a different color than what you have now" and, with an unexpected sympathy for racial sensitivity in Harlem, he insisted that the change of drivers must

be made "especially in Harlem." More characteristically, he told Audebach that the company would be blessed with success once "we understand each other better and work unselfishly for the common good of humanity." He warned that if the company ignored this demand, the Peace Mission would discourage the "continuous friendship and respect by the public for your concern."²⁶

In his dealings with the two firms, Father Divine attacked the firms' denial of better paid, more responsible positions to blacks in New York City. But his strategy was based on the same trust in petition and moral suasion that Harlem's traditional community leadership had already found wanting. In his letters to the firms he hinted that the Peace Mission would bring pressure to bear against them if they refused to co-operate. But, unwilling to press the issue with pickets or mass action, the threat was meaningless. By itself, the threat was not enough to force the firms to flout convention.

The Peace Mission was only saved from the embarrassment of failure by the action of another dairy company, Riviera Farms Inc., the distributors of "Blue Bell" milk, which decided to employ blacks as van drivers in Harlem. Celebrating this as a victory for Father Divine, the followers gave the company a contract to supply the Peace Mission's extensions in New York City. The policies of Sheffield's and Borden's remained unchanged, however.²⁷

The same problems beset the Peace Mission's dealings with the Horton Ice Cream Company. In November 1936 Mr. J. Weiss, a company representative, approached Father Divine to request permission to advertise in the Spoken Word. By this tactic, Horton's hoped to win a contract to supply the Peace Mission and recover some of its lost markets in Harlem. Father Divine relished the chance to use the value of a contract as a lever to force the firm to cease job

discrimination. Subjecting Weiss to a gruelling interview, Father Divine questioned him on Horton's hiring policies. Under pressure, Weiss conceded that Horton's had no black employees on its sales staff, adding, hastily, that other firms servicing Harlem were more open to criticism than his own. But such arguments did not satisfy Father Divine. It was time, he said, that all forms of segregation, prejudice and discrimination "should be driven back in the old Colonial Days ... We should get above the ignorance of those who were back in those days, four or five thousand years back."

Anxious to appease Father Divine, Weiss spoke of the evils of "anachronistic" conditions in the American South. But Father Divine was determined to press his case. In New York City, itself, he retorted, those of "a different hue" were not hired as sales staff in the stores, regardless of their qualifications. Such discrimination, he warned, "tends to raise the indignation of the people." Only by accepting the Movement's offer of negotiated adjustment, he said, could firms hope to avoid "violence" by those "who are not of ME." He could show people how to "live together" in peace and justice. "We want to see the concerns recognize their employees and consumers of the merchandise", Father Divine said, "and consider they have a right to the opportunities of Life, the same as everyone else."

Weiss invited Father Divine to inspect the firm's premises and asked, judiciously, if the Movement could, perhaps, supply a couple of "suitable employees" for Horton's sales staff. He promised to consult his superiors and keep in touch. But a committee of followers who subsequently visited the firm's plant, reported that "people of a certain expression are merely used as porters." Weiss, himself, never returned.²⁸

This case was characteristic of the Movement's approach to the

problem of job discrimination and economic exploitation. Father Divine's sincerity was unquestioned. He was alert and antipathetic to all forms of job discrimination. But the philosophy of harmonious co-operation was inadequate for the task of change. The Jobs Campaign, by contrast, grew from the sharper, more realistic understanding that employers did not respond to conciliatory appeals but to the harsher language of harrassment and loss of trade. Even on its own terms, the Movement never fully exploited its own approach. It did not pursue its complaints; it did not galvanize public opinion in support of its campaigns; it did not even organise mass petitions among the followers. The Peace Mission's purchasing power was the only inducement Father Divine offered to business to cease discrimination in employment.

After 1936, Father Divine made few personal appeals to either local or national firms; and the followers, themselves, did not initiate their own campaigns. But open admission of failure was impossible. The followers were not prepared to criticize Father Divine. The economic organisation of the Peace Mission, with its business and job-finding services, freed the followers from the pressures that kept emotions running high in Harlem. The believers had proof, in their own experience, that Father Divine's teachings offered an answer to their previous insecurities and hardship. Their sense of security and harmony prevented them from sharing the mood of urgency in Harlem or reappraising their ideas. Blithely, the issue of job discrimination was absorbed into the campaign for Righteous Government. Laws to abolish racial discrimination and segregation in all areas of economic life were prominent in the legislative proposals of the Righteous Government Platform.²⁹ It was assumed that the election and appointment of "righteous" public officials would bring, quite naturally, the necessary reforms.

The followers' faith in Father Divine's powers buttressed their detachment. Just as they retreated from the grist of political action to leave the resolution of major issues to supernatural forces, so they believed that disaster would befall unjust and unrighteous employers. In 1937 Father Divine spoke of the business difficulties that had troubled the Rialto and Twentieth Century 'bus companies since ignoring his advice.³⁰ The suggestion of divine retribution was accepted by the believers.

Probably few people in Harlem, beyond the followers, were aware of Father Divine's brief forays against job discrimination. They achieved little and attracted little attention. Still, Father Divine was certain that he was right; and when the leaders of a new tenants group in Harlem approached Father Divine to seek his support, he seized the chance to once again proffer his ideas and leadership.

The interest in tenant organisation was, like the Jobs Campaign, spurred by the Depression. The men and women who promoted the idea were not the poor and deprived of Harlem, but members of the black bourgeoisie who were anxious to cling on to their expensive homes in the better quality property in the ghetto. But the realization that housing was a critical community-wide problem led, in September 1934, to the formation of the Consolidated Tenants League (C.T.L.) from the union of two smaller tenants' groups.³¹

The League set out to fight the abuses surrounding eviction; to force landlords to reduce rents and to require them to maintain the statutory minimum standards of housing repair and basic facilities. It sought the passage of rigorous housing legislation "protecting and guaranteeing the rights, safety and comfort of tenants against

the voracity and inhumanity of certain landlords"; and it aimed to secure radical improvements in Harlem by promoting slum clearance and housing modernisation schemes. But it was also prepared to take more aggressive action by prosecuting landlords for housing violations and by wielding the weapons of public protest, picket and rent strike against those "greed maddened landlords and others who fatten themselves on the life's blood of a defenceless people."³²

The League launched its first major campaign in the spring of 1935. Crucial housing reform proposals had been lost in the New York State Legislature and housing needs seemed to be at crisis point in Harlem. In one week alone, over a thousand dispossession cases were pending in the Seventh and Tenth Municipal Courts; there were rumours that fresh rent rises were probable and there were suggestions that Harlem landlords were planning to disrupt the work of the League. The League decided to call a rent strike. The date was set for October 1935.³³

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1935 the League was ceaselessly active. It lobbied State Governor Lehman and Mayor La Guardia to allocate funds for low-rent housing projects in Harlem; it called mass meetings and tried to organize a number of apartment houses locally. For several months, the League picketed all the houses in Harlem owned and operated by the John P. Peal Company which was attempting to evict its white tenants in order to refill the houses with black tenants at higher rentals. By October 1935, the Consolidated Tenants League could claim five favourable court settlements won by its lawyers, and ten cases in which its threat to use direct action had forced landlords to withdraw proposed rent increases. Eight rent strikes were also in progress under League auspices to win housing repairs and rent reductions.³⁴

The idea of the general rent strike was put aside for that

year. But, in the autumn of 1936, the rumour that Harlem landlords were planning a fresh round of rent rises revived talk of a mass rent strike. In mid-September 1936 members of the League approached a wide range of civic and labour groups in Harlem to seek their support for a protest rally on October 10 and a possible rent strike five days later. As part of this search for community support, representatives from the League visited Father Divine.³⁵

Pleased by the League's interest in the Movement, Father Divine received the delegation warmly. Parade instructions were published in the Spoken Word and, on October 10, the organisers' hope that Father Divine could send a large group to swell the parade was vindicated, when a thousand followers in 'buses, trucks and on foot made up a fifth of the numbers that marched through Harlem. At the rally afterwards, Father Divine joined the executive members of the C.T.L. and representatives from the City-Wide Tenants Association and the Brooklyn Housing Slum Clearance Association on the speakers' platform. Admonishing Harlem renters to stand firm, Father Divine told the meeting that, if necessary, he could house and feed five thousand more at the Peace Mission.³⁶

Father Divine approved of much that the League sought. He believed in the need for slum clearance; and he favoured the care and upkeep of property, high standards of housing sanitation and "making your community a better place in which to live."³⁷ But this was the only time that Father Divine gave practical support to the League's activities; one brief, euphoric occasion. For he disagreed with the League's interpretation of the housing problem and he found that the League, in turn, was not prepared to defer to his leadership and proposals for change.

From the first, Father Divine tried to persuade the leaders of the League to accept his way of thinking. In his interview with the

C.T.L.'s representatives before the parade, Father Divine warned that they could never fundamentally improve housing conditions by concentrating on Harlem as a "racial settlement". With an understanding that the particular plight of tenants in Harlem was caused by the very existence of the ghetto, he warned that the first task was to eradicate the race prejudice that denied blacks the freedom to live where they wished. "I do not mean to stop," he told the C.T.L. delegation, "until you can live downtown on Fifth Avenue, or any other part of the city the same as you can here."³⁸

The members of the C.T.L. scarcely disagreed. It was as obvious to them, as to Father Divine, that housing conditions would improve for blacks if the ghetto was dismantled. In their quest for housing legislation and their co-operation with tenants' unions elsewhere in the city, they also looked beyond Harlem and saw the plight of blacks as part of a larger landlord-tenant issue. They were not as racially provincial as Father Divine suggested. But they sought tangible goals; and, like the leaders of the Jobs Campaign, their first loyalty was to the people of Harlem. Their main goal was to reverse their powerlessness, as blacks, over the basic conditions of life. They were ready to see Harlem as a coherent base for organisation and action. By contrast, Father Divine held that fundamental improvements waited on spiritual rebirth and absolute moral change.

Another, equally profound, difference stood in the way of co-operation. Neither Father Divine nor the followers accepted that there was any conflict of interest between landlords and tenants in Harlem. It was plain from the list of debt repayments in the Peace Mission press that Father's followers had defaulted on their bills for rent. But they were inclined, by the teachings of the "evangelical life", to find fault with themselves. Debt was a

sign of their own sins, their own weakness, rather than the avarice and ruthlessness of the landlord. So, instead of seeing the landlord as an appropriate target for criticism and action, the followers took a more pacifist, self-condemnatory approach. They could not identify, so simply, with the cause of tenant organisation.

Moreover, the Movement basked in a special security that removed Father Divine and his followers still further from the pressures that led others to organise. Although the Movement leased most of its original property in Harlem from property corporations, the followers - as tenants - were never as vulnerable and isolated as others in Harlem. They benefited from the communal organisation of the Peace Mission. By running each building on a collective basis, the followers were able to meet the expenses of the property by pooling their resources. The more affluent believers volunteered their money for the benefit of the group. This freed the followers from the sense of individual powerlessness so common in Harlem and, by providing an informal means to pay the bills, removed the principal cause of landlord=tenant bitterness. The Movement avoided the brunt of rent default and eviction that so sharpened antagonisms in Harlem against the landlords and gave the spur to tenant organisation.

In fact, it was the success of the Movement's internal arrangements that gave Father Divine the confidence to criticize the League. He claimed that he had already solved the housing problem: by co-operation rather than conflict. He felt little need to join the League's campaign when, he believed, the League should learn from the Movement's example.

Father Divine had his own ambitions for the Movement, too, that removed him still further from the preoccupations of the League. He wanted the followers to become property owners

themselves; to buy and create, on a collective basis, quality homes. While the Peace Mission's extensions and lodging houses were offered as a solution to the problems of the tenant, Father Divine always thought and acted from the perspective of a property advisor as well. Indeed, he asked the League to support him in a scheme that he felt would benefit both the owners of property as well as tenants in Harlem. Rent increases, he said, occurred when landlords were forced to pass on to their tenants the cost of taxes levied on properties that were deteriorating in real value. He asked the League to promote changes in the system of tax assessment as a way to help both the tenant and property owner in Harlem. "There are lots of My own Followers up here own property, don't you know," he told the League, "lots of them own property, and the assessed values are far above the actual value of the property." At the League's parade and mass rally, the followers carried their own banners, calling for support for Father Divine's plan of tax change.³⁹

Thus, neither Father Divine nor the followers saw any real identity of interests with the C.T.L. in Harlem. They accepted the need for radical reform, but believed that they already held the key to true progress. Father Divine's brief co-operation with the League was an attempt to use the common ground between them to project his own leadership. When the League showed that it was only interested in the Movement as an extra source of support for its own campaigns, Father Divine withdrew.⁴⁰

The C.T.L. avoided actually calling a community-wide rent strike in the autumn of 1936, but its leaders claimed that the threat alone staved off serious increases and saved Harlem tenants over a million dollars. For the rest of the decade the C.T.L. continued to support groups of tenants in resisting rent increases and it vigorously lobbied for state and federal regulation to

advance tenants' rights; to introduce rent controls and to encourage slum clearance and re-housing.⁴¹

Few, if any, outside the Movement, took Father Divine's advice and example seriously. It was obvious that the security achieved by the followers depended on religious discipline, a belief in the tenets of the "evangelical life" and a profound trust in Father Divine. Harlem was not ready to become an extension of the Peace Mission Movement and local activists sought more appropriate ways to solve the ghetto's economic problems. The difference was to appear in far more accentuated and controversial form in the Movement's contacts with the other important economic movement in Harlem during the 'thirties: trade unionism.

Beginning in the mid'thirties, there was a significant rise in labour union consciousness and a drive towards organisation in Harlem. In many ways, this interest was encouraged by the Jobs Campaign agitation, for the "Don't buy" movement not only increased black understanding of their menial and exploited place in the labour market, but it also demonstrated the power of collective action to force change.⁴²

This lesson came at a time when the trade union movement in New York City was reviving under the stimulus of the New Deal labour codes.⁴³ In Harlem, a group of black trade unionists decided to make Harlem a part of the new city-wide organising initiative. In December 1934 veteran black trade unionist and Socialist, Frank Crosswaith,⁴⁴ gathered together a group of black workers and launched the Harlem Labor Committee. The Committee set out to organise and educate black workers into bona-fide trade unions in co-operation with the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.).⁴⁵

The Committee soon decided that its scope of action was limited as long as it remained a segregated, black organisation. So Crosswaith proposed the idea of a central trade union league, composed of both white and black trade unionists, to serve the needs of black workers throughout the city.⁴⁶ In July 1935, delegates from fifty-three unions and nine fraternal organisations met to initiate the Negro Labor Committee (N.L.C.). Its objectives were to advance labour union consciousness among black workers; to help in the formation of new unions; to win complete equality for blacks in the labour movement and to eradicate, by education and friendship, the hostility and prejudice between black and white workers.⁴⁷

There was much work to be done. Although the Jobs Campaign educated and encouraged many Harlemites, it did not wipe away the deep-seated fears and suspicions of most working-class blacks towards the labour movement. For many years, blacks in the urban North had fared badly at the hands of white trade unionists. Coming North with little experience of industrial life or the ideology of class conflict, the migrants met hostility and indifference from organised labour. Dominated by the interests of the craft unions and skilled workers, the A.F.L. had done little to protect and advance the interests of unskilled workers and thus remained remote from the needs of working-class blacks. Moreover, the craft unions set up racist initiation rules and high union dues to discourage or exclude better qualified blacks from penetrating the union. Exclusion rules were buttressed, if the union was sufficiently strong, by the use of the closed chop. Among those unions that allowed black membership, black workers - with a number of important exceptions, were all too often segregated into powerless jim-crow auxiliaries. Some blacks responded by organising

their own unions affiliated with the A.F.L. But, more characteristically, blacks avoided unions altogether and remained hostile towards the idea of organisation. With little class-consciousness and, in their view, nothing to lose and everything to gain, many readily chose to strike break in order to gain work and widen their job opportunities at the expense of white organised labour. Such action, and the retaliatory violence it often produced, left deep scars between black and white workers in the North.⁴⁸

In New York City, blacks were virtually outside the organised labour movement when Crosswaith and his supporters began work. Skilled trades, like the electricians, used apprenticeship rules and high initiation fees to limit union membership and preserve for the few the limited amount of work available in Depression New York: tactics that inevitably excluded blacks. In various locals of the building trades, less than a thousand blacks were organised in 1935 in a union membership of forty thousand. Blacks were excluded from the clerical unions and, with the exception of the postal workers, sanitary chauffeurs and public relief agency workers, from all the unions representing public service workers. In the amusement and entertainments field, eighty-five percent of organised black workers were concentrated in local 502 of the American Federation of Musicians.⁴⁹

Domestic and personal service occupations, where many blacks found work, were scarcely touched by labour organisation. Only the clothing and textile industry, among the places where black women worked, registered a significant increase in black union membership. This came mainly as a result of the positive efforts of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.) and the success of a walk-out by black and white dressmakers in the summer of 1933.⁵⁰

Crosswaith and the N.L.C. were faced, therefore, with a massive task: not only to educate and organise black workers and convince them that a union could protect and advance their interests despite the Depression and the possibility of unemployment, but also to convince white unionists of the need to admit blacks into their organisations as equals. As it turned out, because of the intransigence of the craft unions, and the rise of the more egalitarian industrial unions affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organisations (C.I.O.) it proved easier to recruit unskilled and semi-skilled black workers than to convince white craftsmen to accord equal opportunity to skilled blacks.⁵¹

Since the trend toward organisation was such an important attempt by blacks to break with the attitudes and experience of the past and to lay the foundation for fuller participation in the economic life of the city, the outlook and conduct of Father Divine concerned Crosswaith and his fellow advocates of trade unionism. Father Divine controlled the activities of a large group of working-class black followers - skilled, semiskilled and unskilled - whom the unionists hoped to educate and organise. Father Divine's support for the cause of organised labour could have been of considerable help to the N.L.C. Instead, Crosswaith and the Committee found Father Divine a thorn in their flesh.

In some ways, despite the assault on unionism in the Righteous Government Platform, Father Divine and the followers seemed extraordinarily amenable to the ideas and aims of the labour movement. In broad terms, Father Divine accepted labour's critique that the selfish use of wealth and the drive for profits created inequality and oppression in the world. Indeed, it was precisely the Peace Mission's opposition to ruthless capitalism, so well expressed in the writings of Frank J. David, that provided one of the bases for

its co-operation with the Communist Party in Harlem in the early 'thirties. Both the Peace Mission and organised labour sought economic change and the redistribution of wealth and opportunity.

Father Divine also shared labour's antagonism toward those employers who exploited their workers with long working hours, poor conditions and low pay. In setting the standards that he required employers to observe in their dealings with the followers, Father Divine insisted that employers must pay fair wages, treat their workers with respect and accept their right to work reasonable hours in decent conditions. He conceded, too, that legislation might be necessary to enforce "righteous" standards on "unjust" employers. The Peace Mission supported measures to outlaw child and convict labour and to enforce minimum wages. The World Herald anxiously charted the United States Supreme Court's deliberations in 1937 on the constitutionality of the Minimum Wage Law in the State of Washington and greeted the news that the law had been upheld as a vindication for the ideas of "all forward looking minds". The editor wrote:

"Even-handed justice should see to it that every individual in the community must get his or her chance to work; must be protected in that work; and must be paid the full worth of the work." 52

Father Divine also accepted the right of trade unions to organise and accepted that they sometimes provided working people with the only check against the abuses of unscrupulous employers. "Where there are no unions organised in certain vicinities and certain communities," he said in a speech to followers in upstate New York, "you find men try to take the advantage of the employees, try to get them to work, as you might say, for a little or nothing." This was especially so, he said, in communities "like this here, far away from the major cities."⁵³

The Peace Mission endorsed the role of government in

guaranteeing the right of workers to organise. The World Herald applauded the United States Supreme Court when it upheld Senator Wagner's Labor Relations Act in 1937. This Act re-affirmed the purpose of the early New Deal legislation which had been challenged by the courts, by the establishment of a national Labor Relations Board which was empowered to protect the right of workers to organise and to supervise plant elections to decide on union representation.⁵⁴

News items in the World Herald showed the Peace Mission's abiding interest in labour relations. While the Spoken Word had taken a vivid interest in politics and, more especially, the Communist Party, the World Herald carried news of the C.I.O. organising campaigns of 1937.⁵⁵

There were times, too, when Father Divine agreed to support the struggles of local unionists. In February 1936 members of the Retail Clerks International Protective Association, Local 1286, approached Father Divine for help. Since the previous October, members of the union, mainly white, who were employed at the Harlem branch of the National Shoe Stores chain at 114 West 125th Street had been out on strike for union recognition, a forty-eight hour working week, a thirty dollar minimum wage, a week's paid vacation and an end to racial discrimination against black employees by the Company. In January 1936 the Negro Labor Committee stepped in to organise a Harlem Citizens Committee to aid the striking salesmen with money and help on the picket line. After the arrest of more than forty pickets, the N.L.C. decided to call a mass meeting on February 3 to drum up public support for the strike.⁵⁶ Communist Party workers were active on the strike committee and, probably as a result of their good offices, it was agreed that Father Divine's help should be sought. He was approached; agreed to speak at the public meeting; and duly crowded the rally with his followers.⁵⁷

But such sympathetic contacts with organised labour were, by no means, characteristic. The followers, themselves, refused to become trade union members. Although Father Divine did not explicitly order his followers not to join, his claim to supreme authority amounted to a ban in the minds of most believers. When they joined the Peace Mission, they agreed to relinquish all other claims upon their loyalties other than those imposed by Father Divine. So any form of allegiance or obedience to groups beyond the Movement became unacceptable.

Even when believers sympathised with the work of a union in their own work place, this loyalty to Father Divine took priority. As one follower explained in a letter to Murray Triff, an officer of the Association of Workers in Public Relief Agencies, rejecting Triff's invitation to join the union:

"As I told you, it is against my philosophical (or religious) principle to 'join' or 'belong' to any organisation. As a follower of the LIVING CHRIST, FATHER DIVINE, I belong to that Universal Union, sometimes called the Brotherhood of Man ... Since I have renounced any membership or connection with that small individualistic selfish unit of capitalist society known as 'my own family and kin' (or race, color or nationality) I cannot afford to again limit or confine myself to any organisation as such."

While the follower was prepared to contribute to the union's dues fund as a gesture of "co-operation", he refused to be formally committed to union membership.⁵⁸

Since the success of trade unionism depended upon workers accepting the need for group organisation and agreeing to be bound by the decisions of their unions, Father Divine's rival authority was a threat. There was no way in which union leaders could control the actions of the believers. In any labour issue, the followers would be directed by Father Divine, not by the union.

Union organisers quickly realized, too, that Father Divine's

support for union causes was fleeting if his own authority was placed in jeopardy. During the Retail Shoe Salesmen's strike he unexpectedly walked out of the mass rally, insulted by the abrupt way he had been received by some of the strike leaders. Frank Crosswaith, for one, had ignored Father Divine and, according to a report in the Spoken Word, "did not so much as refer to Him as a Person in his long, eloquent but rather negative speech". Then, when several speakers, who had arrived late, had been allowed to speak before Father Divine, it had been, according to the Spoken Word's reporter, "more imposition on His time that He was willing to stand, so He walked out of the meeting and took the audience with Him." Had Crosswaith, the Peace Mission's reporter believed, "appreciated FATHER's PRESENCE and shown Him Common Courtesy ... as a Leader, FATHER would have no doubt have remained until the close of the evening." As it was, the exit of Father Divine and the followers seriously disrupted the meeting.⁵⁹

There was another side to Father Divine's relationship with organised labour, however, that was perhaps more important to him than his own pride or his jurisdiction over his followers. Although he was comfortable in his support of unions when they criticised "unjust" employers; he was appalled when union actions affected an individual's freedom to work and earn an "honest livelihood." In particular, he was angered when unions, through the device of the 'closed shop', attempted to interfere with his own followers' search for work.

In August 1935, for instance, a group of believers clashed with union painters over a contract that the Peace Mission had taken. The unionists claimed that the work was covered by a closed shop agreement, but Father Divine denied the union the right to control jobs and exclude non-unionists from earning a livelihood. He told

the followers to ignore the painters' claims. "Do not feel that there are union men [that] can come to the workshops or places of business and take you off of the jobs," he said. "If it is necessary I can call out ten thousand and have them go to the job there, and if the union man comes and tries to take you out of the workshop, why they will get taken out themselves, and will get taken out quickly."⁶⁰

This clash drew Father Divine into an overt form of anti-unionism. While accepting, in one breath, the need for labour protection, he attacked, in the next, the ways by which unions fought to gain this protection. The closed shop was widely used by the white craft unions to exclude black skilled workers from employment⁶¹ but Father Divine made no mention of this in his attack on the painters. He dwelt, instead, on more fundamental matters. He criticized union discipline and collective regulation as assaults upon the individual's freedom to set the hours and terms of his or her work and enjoy the fruits of that labour without interference.

It was his confrontation with the painters, in fact, that caused Father Divine to insert his anti-union planks in the Righteous Government Platform. In a lengthy section, full of quotations from Father Divine's recent speeches, the Platform assailed the "oppression and intimidation of Workers by Labor Unions" as one of the "reactionary tendencies" that Father Divine had "risen to put down":

"Extracting hard-earned money from the Workers in the form of heavy Membership fees and giving them nothing in return; fining them for the slightest violation of Union Rules; attempting to regulate the personal affairs of individuals on the job; limiting Union Workers to so many hours a day and five days a week ... Such outrages must cease. Why should the Unions try to control the people and put them back in Slavery? ... Talking about the Unions coming in and snatching men and women up from their

work when they are getting an honest living!
... They have oppressed the widow and the orphan
and the hireling in his wages long enough... How
DARE they put their hands on an individual! Now
tell them I said KEEP THEIR HANDS OFF! This
Country does not belong to the Unions, it belongs
to GOD!"

The Peace Mission, the Platform stated, would only tolerate union organisation on one condition. Unions must guarantee the "common people" full employment and, in the event of strike action, to compensate the strikers, in full, for lost wages.⁶²

This assault brought the Movement into disrepute in labour and liberal circles in New York. The Communist Party, trying to salvage its informal alliance with the Peace Mission and agreeing with the Movement's criticism of the high dues of the craft unions, excused the sweeping attack on all unions as ill-informed prejudice.⁶³ But others were not so forgiving. Henry Lee Moon, writing in New Republic, voiced a common opinion in liberal circles that Father Divine was propogating a dangerous anti-labour doctrine among a predominantly working-class people.⁶⁴

The Platform encouraged, within the Peace Mission, open criticism of the trade unions. In the main, these were the sorts of criticism that were current among radical unionists themselves. At one Righteous Government meeting devoted to economic issues, editor Honaael and Miss Oral Freedom spoke disparagingly of the high membership fees set by the American Federation of Musicians; and other followers maintained that unions were conducted for the "higher ups" and not for the rank and file workers.⁶⁵ The publication of the Platform also encouraged the followers to relentlessly pursue their self-interest regardless of the claims of union authority and labour solidarity.

In the month following the Righteous Government Convention, the Peace Mission was responsible for strike-breaking at New York's

Central Coal Yards at 135th Street and Park Avenue and 61st Street and York. The strike had been called by the Coal Trimmers Association,⁶⁶ and the employers, in search of amenable, non-union labour, had contacted the Peace Mission Movement. Father Divine agreed to send a group of workers, and, though they had been attacked by angry pickets at the yard gates, the believers refused to turn back.

Mr. Morrissey, the president of the Coal Trimmers Association contacted Father Divine to ask him to withdraw the followers. But Father Divine refused, sending Morrissey, post-haste, a copy of the Righteous Government Platform. When the believers were next threatened at the gates, Father Divine wrote to the New York City Police Commissioner to demand police protection for them. "We feel," he wrote, "[that] the Constitutional Rights of our Great Country have been molested and embarrassed and intruded upon by many of the union organisers, by taking advantage of the people, thru fear of violence and by violence to force them to join unions, force the employers to endorse the unions and to force non-union representatives out of positions."

In a letter to the Trimmers, Father Divine said that he would only withdraw his followers if the Association provided them with either alternative work or full compensation for loss of earnings. "If they do that which is JUST and RIGHT and GOOD and deal justly among the people," he said, "I will co-operate with them, but if they do not ... I will have an organisation and union of my own. This UNION is CHRIST'S UNITED BODY assembled, a BODY that cannot be hindered."⁶⁷

By some of Father Divine's remarks at this time, it appeared that he was, in his antipathy to the unions, prepared to strike-break on a wider scale. In a discussion at the Righteous Government

Forum at West 63rd Street, he told Frederick Benedict of the Communist Party:

"We shall not resort to violence unless perchance I am forced to it in opposition to those that are connected with the different organizations such as Unions, that will interfere with the common people. As I say, I may be forced to call out five thousand, or ten thousand, to remove these organisers and organised unions from the places, when they go to interfere with the laborers if they happen to be working against the wishes of the union." 68

Yet, as long as union organisers anticipated the Peace Mission's intransigence and approached Father Divine personally, confrontation between the unions and the Peace Mission could be avoided. A case such as this arose in 1937.

In 1937 the I.L.G.W.U., newly affiliated with the C.I.O., launched a campaign to organise the city's clothing sweatshops. As part of this campaign a strike was called to enforce a minimum weekly wage at the Hudson Dress Company on 24 East 107th Street. The company employed piece workers and their average earnings were between three and four dollars a day; but the followers on the workforce, because of their "greater degree of harmonious co-operation and consistent endeavor", as the New Day reported, earned three to four times more than the other workers. They would not join the union and felt that they had no quarrel with their employer. In particular, they had no wish to sacrifice their own earnings by strike action. The I.L.G.W.U., ever sensitive to black opinion, bargained with Father Divine for his support: and, after two hours of negotiation, agreed to pay compensation to the followers during the strike for lost wages in return for the Peace Mission's co-operation.⁶⁹

This agreement was hailed, in the columns of the Peace Mission press, as a supreme victory for the "rights of the Workers." However, Frank Crosswaith, employed as an organiser for the I.L.G.W.U.

although not himself involved in the Hudson Dress Company strike, lashed out at the Peace Mission in frustration and annoyance. He charged that Father Divine, by resisting the attempts to unionise Harlem sweatshops, was undermining wage rates. He told the second convention of the National Negro Congress in October 1937:

"We have just found fifty-four girls working in a building in Harlem, getting \$1 a day for nine hours work and five minutes for lunch. The doors were strongly bolted but we got in and got those girls out and at once started a picket line, but, when picketing, whose truck do you think came up with a new bunch of workers and strikebreakers?

The truck was marked 'Peace', giving proof to the suspicion that the little man who calls himself 'God' has unwittingly allowed himself to be used by the people who have always exploited Negroes and all workers." 70

"Unwittingly" was a necessary qualification of Crosswaith's criticism of Father Divine, for the Peace Mission was never anti-union in any conventional sense nor ever the tool of open-shop employers. On at least one occasion, in fact, Father Divine turned down a lucrative offer from an employer to preach against unionisation. Shortly after the Righteous Government Platform was announced, and at the beginning of the C.I.O.'s organisation of the steel workers, Henry Santry of Cox Steel and Wire Company wrote to the Peace Mission inviting Father Divine to make a tour of Dallas, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Chicago in return for a gift of ten thousand dollars. Father Divine politely declined the offer.⁷¹

The Peace Mission acted on a different set of assumptions from the trade union movement. While the trade union movement in Harlem grew out of a sharpening understanding of the nature of capitalism; of the conflict inherent in the employer-worker relationship, and the identity of interests between black and white as working people, Father Divine, guided by the ethics of the

"evangelical life", refused to accept that there was any conflict of interests between capital and labour. He believed in the possibility of a world in which different groups in society could associate on an equal basis, governed by mutually accepted moral principles. He told representatives of the cafeteria workers union in 1939:

"Now labor should not try to rob capital and capital should not try to rob labor, for one is not without the other. Each should work harmoniously with the other ... [then] the whole scheme of things will be adjusted ... and all of those detestable tendencies of man ... that cause them to be disturbed and unhappy and in misery and confusion throughout the world, will be completely eradicated." 72

Nor was this advice given just to the unions. The Spoken Word, in an editorial entitled "Evolution, not Revolution", declared that "one for all and all for one, is the law of life." If the capitalists refused to submit to this, "they must be labeled as mentally insufficient ... [and] we will finally have to ... establish a School for Capitalists in the study of the Brotherhood of Man."⁷³

An editorial in the World Herald described it as a "Fundamental" that:

"The right-hand never argues with the left-hand about its 'rights', one hand never wishes to take advantage of the other. On the same hand the thumb presses against the other fingers, not in antagonism, but only that all five fingers together can grasp the load and do the task." 74

Father Divine claimed that the Peace Mission demonstrated the truth of this teaching. "By co-operation," he said, "we have all success and prosperity, we have all health and happiness." In the economic activities within the Peace Mission, "capital and labor have shaken hands with each other ... We are not bothering about the strikes and such as that. We know the true Capitalists and the true Laborers are in harmony ... We have answered the economic problem that has confronted the millions for many years."⁷⁵

It was this way of thinking that left Father Divine so at odds

with organised labour. He wanted regulation in economic relationships and he believed in the need for labour to be secure and protected. But since he believed that this could be achieved, on the one hand, by righteous legislation and, on the other, by open negotiation and harmonious co-operation between worker and employer, he was uneasy with union intervention in work relationships. He favored a regulated, ethical arrangement between individuals, and he could not understand or accept unions as the representatives of the workers' interests alone, advancing those interests by the strength of their organisation. And since he was certain that his philosophy of labour=capital harmony was the fundamental solution to economic relationships, Father Divine expected others to accept it. "All we must needs do," he told the followers, "is to universalise it."⁷⁶ Thus he had no regrets when his followers moved on a collision course with organised labour in their own search for work and readiness to negotiate their own conditions of employment. For the followers were guided by his instructions; by the superior understanding of labour=capital harmony.

It was an extraordinary philosophy, persistently held. There was no room for the ideas of labour solidarity, or reason to respect the prior claims and struggles of the unions. It meant that, although the Peace Mission seems to have had sympathy with the industrial unionism of the C.I.O., Father Divine could not even give his support to those unions with which he had most in common. This was strikingly displayed in 1938 when two organisers, Dora Jones and Iona Lawrence, unsuccessfully asked Father Divine to lend his support to the struggling Domestic Workers Union in the city.

The exclusion of domestic work from many of the provisions of state and federal labour and social welfare legislation was a

considerable handicap to the establishment of a decent standard of living among black workers in general and black women workers in particular. Domestic workers were not protected under New York State's minimum wage and workmen's accident compensation laws. There was no legal limit to the number of hours they might work and they were explicitly excluded from the federal Social Security Act which provided insurance against old age and unemployment.⁷⁷ In such a situation, the Domestic Workers Union, weak though it was, was the workers' only protection.

This union had been launched in 1934, as an offshoot of the Building Service Employees Union, in an attempt to enforce a six-day, sixty-hour working week for all houseworkers in private families, and to promote protective labour legislation governing domestic work. In 1937 it had tried to end the Bronx "slave markets" and to create, instead, a union hiring hall and a voluntary contract system between workers and employers. Three-quarters of its members were black. But when the union's representatives visited Father Divine, the union had only three hundred dues-paying members among the one hundred and thirty-two thousand regular domestic workers in the city.⁷⁸ Appreciating that many of Father Divine's followers were themselves domestics, the organisers hoped for his help particularly in support of bills before the New York State Legislature to extend workmen's compensation to include domestic workers and to establish maximum hours in domestic work. "We are working and struggling for better living conditions," Iona Lawrence told the followers at a banquet meeting. "We know FATHER'S position on unions. We know FATHER only wants to help and support the unions that are righteous unions ... we hope FATHER will help us in this big struggle to get what we are working for."⁷⁹

Here was a labour situation that Father Divine understood as

one of acute exploitation. He had made special efforts within the Peace Mission to advise and protect his own followers from some of the worst abuses of the work. But Father Divine never conceded the need for a union. He, himself, tried to regulate the hours, working conditions and wages of the followers and he invited the organisers to adopt the way of ethical, harmonious co-operation employed by the Peace Mission's domestic workers. "THE EMPLOYER AND THE EMPLOYEE SHALL BE ONE!" he said. "This is the work I AM doing, such as I have already done. Capital and Labor have unified as one man at Jerusalem."⁸⁰ But such advice was of no help to the hard-pressed union organisers. The bills introduced into the State Legislature in 1938 and 1939 to regulate the employment of domestic workers failed and by 1940, the union had but a formal existence.⁸¹

Father Divine's philosophy led him into contradictory courses of action that must have baffled observers outside the Movement. For although his attitudes generally proved more damaging to labour than to capital, he still straddled the labour-capital divide and his sympathies could be drawn to either side.

Thus it was that in March 1939, in an interview with arch-conservative Ogden Fox, Father Divine endorsed the Supreme Court decision outlawing the sit-down strike as a trespass upon private property. He said of the tactic:

"It is outrageous. If you are not paying Me enough for My services, why should I sit down and say 'if you cannot pay Me this I will occupy your place'? That is what they are saying - 'We are ready for a riot; we are ready for a war'. You would lose the virtue of your democracy if you would tolerate it as a nation." ⁸²

Yet, six months later, in a labour dispute at the Shack Sandwich restaurant in Harlem and after the union organisers had visited the Peace Mission, Father Divine instructed the followers to participate in a "customer nickel sit-down strike" in support of the

cafeteria workers union's fight for higher wages, shorter hours, a closed shop and an end to discriminatory practices by the firm.⁸³

In these cases, Father Divine saw some virtue in both arguments. Fox inflamed his antipathy to class conflict; the cafeteria workers inflamed his belief in the need for justice and protection at work. He saw no contradiction in his reactions.

Thus, Father Divine's contacts with the trade union movement in Harlem were ever ambiguous: sometimes helpful, especially when the union organisers were sensitive to the Peace Mission's Righteous Government campaign; but usually destructive. Father Divine, for the most part, followed his own beliefs, wholly out of tune with the new ideas for change capturing attention in Harlem.

Only unswerving self-confidence could have sustained Father Divine's certainty that his philosophy of labour-capital harmony was the answer to economic problems. He received scant encouragement or commendation from labour activists or liberals. Few were impressed by the Peace Mission as a working model of Father Divine's economic philosophy. While no-one denied the Movement's considerable prosperity and the apparent security and satisfaction of the believers, trade unionists and liberals argued that the Movement's success was based on an exploitation of the followers' labour; facilitated by a false understanding of economic co-operation and a naive faith in Father Divine's never failing ability to supply the followers' needs. From a trade union point of view, the Peace Mission's concept of the harmony of capital and labour was shown, in practice, to be not only a fraud, but also a threat to the rights and security of the followers as working people - and to the livelihood of other workers in Harlem.

The Peace Mission undoubtedly was, in trade union terms, a centre of unorganised and unprotected labour. There were no fixed

standards of earnings, hours of labour or working conditions within the Peace Mission's own extensions and businesses. The followers were led to believe that virtue lay in the unbegrudging gift of their time, talents and energies to the Movement. "Service, service, service," - wrote one follower in the Spoken Word, "that is the only question with FATHER'S CHILDREN."⁸⁴

The followers were not protected by any form of social insurance. The schemes, dear to organised labour and social welfare liberalism, which were designed to protect workers from loss of earnings caused by accident, unemployment or old age were anathema to the believers. They were encouraged, instead, to place their faith in Father Divine and in the promise of security offered by obedience to the tenets of the "evangelical life."

The passage of the federal Social Security Act in August 1935 was not welcomed by the Peace Mission. The followers themselves were barely affected by the system of unemployment insurance, for it was financed by a payroll tax and concerns which employed less than eight people - which meant most, if not all, the Peace Mission's businesses - were exempt. But the old age insurance required contributions from both the employer and the employee.⁸⁵ Although, again, Peace Mission businesses were unaffected, many followers who worked outside the Peace Mission found themselves required to make a contribution to the government's pension scheme. Even without an explicit ruling from Father Divine, many followers refused to contribute. Miss Satisfied told a meeting of the Speakers Bureau in August 1936 that she had been questioned by an investigator from the Social Security Board and had told him: "The Social Security is against my religious belief and I refuse to support it." In the following year, several other followers reported to a Righteous Government Forum that they had taken the same stand.⁸⁶

In 1936 the World Herald remarked that it was "pathetically ironical" that "young men should dedicate their efforts and future hopes to the ideal of achieving an old age dole of a few paltry dollars which is a scant substitute for real and actual security." The World Herald accepted that "the well-meaning administrators of our government ... have made a commendable effort to alleviate the people's economic servitude." But to the followers of Father Divine the "morsel" the government offered was an insult: for they had "arrived at a scientific understanding of the Truth of Life and ... [had] been granted an opportunity to glimpse into the limitless areas of God's unlimited abundance":

"Heaven being recognized universally for what it is, a state of happiness and well-being, an ideal state of Utopia, the idea of 'old age security' in Heaven smacks of the ludicrous." 87

The Peace Mission's notion of the ludicrous also brought it into conflict with New York State authorities who had no more sympathy for the Movement's economic organisation than Harlem trade unionists.

In 1935, an official from the Mercantile Inspection Bureau of the New York State Department of Labor visited the Peace Mission Restaurant at 2289 Eighth Avenue and found that the "manager", A. Callender, had not posted a schedule of the hours of labour in accordance with New York State law. Callender told the officer that his three helpers, "as children of Father's Kingdom", were "free to do as they pleased." They were at liberty, he explained, to choose their own working hours. Callender was summoned to appear before C.B. Ash, head of the Mercantile Inspection Bureau, on a charge of evading the law.

Callender arrived three hours late for the hearing. Apologising to Mr. Ash, Callender explained that his "co-workers" had not

"chosen to show up" to run the restaurant in his absence. "They are told", he said to Ash, "you are free to come if you wish and go if you wish." Ash ordered Callender to comply with the law and prevent his staff from working after ten o'clock at night. The case was put down for reinspection.⁸⁸

In the following year, the Peace Mission came into conflict with the Division of Workingman's Compensation of the New York State Department of Labor. Under the workingmen's compensation scheme, employers were required to contribute to a compensation fund, on their employees' behalf, in case of any loss of earnings that might be suffered by the worker because of an accident at work. The scheme was strongly endorsed by the Negro Labor Committee, which sought to extend the protections of the scheme to domestic workers.⁸⁹ But the followers refused to comply with the scheme in their own premises and, in May 1936, summonses were issued by the Division against four believers: E.O. Littlejohns of the Father Divine Peace Mission Coal Company at 2539 Eighth Avenue; John Mark of the Father Divine Peace Mission Garages 18-44 West 144th Street; Sister Lovelight of the Father Divine Dress Shop 34 East 115th Street and Rebecca Willing of the Peace Mission Restaurant 2537 Eighth Avenue.

Father Divine had two objections to the workingmen's compensation scheme. The first was his standard objection to all forms of insurance: "in regard to insurance compensations and such as that, we will not tolerate it, for it causes men to mistrust GOD ... and visualize disappointments, failures, accidents and disasters."⁹⁰ His other objection was that it was wrong to compel contributions from all employers and employees, since accidents would happen in only a few instances and, in those instances, the party responsible, whether employee or employer, should be made to recognize its responsibility.⁹¹

However, in the four cases that were prosecuted, the legal argument put forward by the Peace Mission attorneys in defence of the followers rested on different grounds. The crux of their defence was the claim that the defendants were not "employers" in the conventional sense. All the staff in the Peace businesses, they argued, worked without wages as "joint tenants" and thus, they were beyond the scope of the workingmen's compensation scheme regulations. The prosecution contended, however, that the defendants were, indeed, "employers" and that they paid other believers "wages" in the form of clothing, food, lodgings and pocket money.⁹²

The magistrates were faced with the difficult task of assessing the nature of the work arrangements in the four Peace businesses and judging if this represented an evasion of the labour laws. The followers' evidence was confusing.

E.O. Littlejohns of the Peace Mission Coal Company told Magistrate Thomas A. Aurelio that Joshua Matthews, who worked with him, drove the truck that collected coal direct from the Pennsylvania coalfields. Littlejohns could only vaguely explain that the profits from the sale of the coal in Harlem were "distributed among the followers", and when he was asked why he had not complied with the insurance scheme on Matthews' behalf, he said, "Father Divine does not tell us to take out compensation insurance ... Insurance is limited and we are conscious that God is unlimited."⁹³

Attorney Madison told Magistrate A.F. Burke of equally irregular business arrangements at the Peace Mission Garages on 144th Street during his defence of follower John Mark. The three men, described by the Prosecution as "employees" at the Garages all insisted that they were "co-operating" in the enterprise and received nothing other than the "necessities of life" in payment. One, Faithful Samuel, told Burke "the Spirit led me to go there"

and said that he worked "for the good of humanity." The two women found working at the Garages by the State inspectors both described themselves as domestics and produced their driving licences to prove that they had been working on their own cars.⁹⁴

The work arrangements at the Peace Restaurant were as unconventional. The prosecution argued that Rebecca Willing, who lived above the restaurant, was its "proprietor" and "employed" the labour of eight other women. But all nine followers denied this description. No one person, they said, gave or received orders in the restaurant. They were just "one family" co-operating together.⁹⁵

The reaction of the magistrates varied. To the delight of the believers, Magistrate Burke dismissed the case against John Mark of the Peace Mission Garages. Magistrate Aurelio, however, ordered E.O. Littlejohns to serve ten days for his violation of the workingmen's compensation law. Judgement was reserved in the other two cases.⁹⁶ Whether the followers subsequently complied with the law or whether the State Labor Board, recognizing the difficulties of prosecution against the Peace Mission, transferred its attention to more orthodox cases of abuse, remains unclear.⁹⁷

The working arrangements of the Peace Mission did more than express the followers' faith in peaceful co-operation. The Movement's success in the depressed economy of the ghetto rested on its ability to get the prices of its labour and services lower than anyone else. Obviously, this policy, which was an article of faith, was immediately attractive to the poor of Harlem. But it depended on the willingness of the followers to accept unregulated and badly paid work within the Movement, and it also, by sharpening competition in an already depressed and over-crowded ghetto economy, undercut the wages of other workers and the viability of many small businesses in Harlem. The Movement contributed, thereby, to the

destruction of the living standards of others in Harlem.

The barber-shop business was a case in point. By the late 'thirties, the situation was so bad that when the C.I.O. Barber and Beauty Culturists Union of America set out to organise the journeymen barbers in Harlem, in 1938, price competition had so depressed the trade that, at prices as low as twenty-five cents and fifteen cents a hair cut, barbers were working as much as fourteen or sixteen hours a day for as little as ten to eighteen dollars a week. The Union demanded a twelve hour working day; a minimum weekly wage of fifteen dollars plus commission and a price of thirty-five cents a hair-cut. The Master barbers, who had earlier tried to organise to peg the price of a hair-cut at forty cents and a shave at twenty cents, were reluctant to accede to even these modest demands. But as Frank Crosswaith reminded them when he arbitrated in the dispute, it was in both their interests to agree on set prices, wages and hours and freeze out cut-price shops.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, the Peace Mission barbers, oblivious of the threat they posed to the livelihoods of others, charged ten cents for a hair-cut and five cents for a shave.

Although Father Divine's declared aim was to bring prosperity to all, his means of bringing this about - self-sacrificing service at the lowest rates possible - meant prosperity for the Peace Mission but threatened ruin to other small businesses in Harlem.

In the management of their own affairs, as in their intervention in the world of organised labour, Father Divine and his followers always believed that they were acting justly and in the best interests of working people. They were not guided by a traditionally conservative, laissez-faire approach to the economic system. On the contrary, they looked toward the creation of a new, just and classless society with more than enough for everyone; where there would

be no distinction between employer and employee; where all would accept their responsibilities toward others gladly and where social insurance would be irrelevant and, indeed, ludicrous. Though few trade unionists and liberals would have criticised the Peace Mission's utopian vision of harmony and abundance, they had no time for Father Divine's solutions. Schooled in the harsh realities of competition and exploitation, they believed that economic security could be achieved by a steady and strong advancement of labour's interests; by collective organisation and protective labour legislation. Father Divine's persistent independence and his conduct was, at the very least, an unwelcome irritation.

Father Divine's aloofness from the Jobs Campaign and the activities of the Unemployed Councils; not to mention his frequent and public clashes with organised labour brought the Peace Mission a bonus. Father Divine's activities identified him, in the eyes of some of the leading storekeepers in Harlem, as a conservative influence in the community. Despite the fact that Father Divine was critical of employers who discriminated against blacks and businesses that did not pay fair wages, the merchants saw him as a potential ally. They courted his favour and sought to win the trade of the followers in order to gain, thereby, both business and goodwill as an insurance against further, damaging harassment from both trade unionists and jobs campaigners in Harlem. The Movement reaped financial benefits thanks to the pressure mobilised against the merchants by others.

In 1937 C.I.O. unions, notably the Grocery and Dairy Clerks Union Local 338 of the United Retail Employees of America, began to organise the predominantly white workers in the large Harlem

stores. They were vigorously supported by Frank Crosswaith and the Negro Labor Committee and they made such rapid strides that, in 1938, the N.L.C. could claim that over a hundred and thirty Harlem stores had been organised.⁹⁹

The work of the C.I.O. was hindered, however, by the continuing agitation of the Harlem Labor Union. The N.L.C. charged that the H.L.U., in return for the promise of more employment for blacks in the Harlem stores, was concluding agreements with the merchants that undermined union standards of wages and working conditions.¹⁰⁰ The H.L.U. replied that the white-led unions affiliated with the N.L.C. discriminated against blacks and had no interest in opening up employment opportunities.¹⁰¹ There seemed to be some truth on both sides of the dispute.¹⁰² But the immediate result was to allow the merchants to play off one side against the other and also to appeal, over the heads of the warring unions, to the more conservative opinion in Harlem.¹⁰³

Following the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the spring of 1938 upholding the right of organisations to picket stores that discriminated against blacks in employment, the position became even more complicated. Two rival pressure groups were formed that sought to influence the employment practices of the white merchants by the threat of picketing. The Greater New York Coordinating Committee, headed by Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Jnr., included the H.L.U. among its affiliates; while the Harlem Jobs Committee, formed by the Amsterdam News, was backed by the N.L.C.¹⁰⁴ In consequence, a score of 125th Street stores faced picketing in 1938, including several large department stores: Orkin's, Vim's, Ludwig Bauman, S.H. Kress and W.T. Grant's.¹⁰⁵ As the situation became tense, a number of merchants made conciliatory gestures. Kanter's published a list of their black

staff in the Amsterdam News, while both W.T. Grant's and Orkin's wrote to the editor to express their desire to co-operate.¹⁰⁶

Since 1936 a number of merchants had bought advertising space in the Peace Mission press and arranged special concessionary prices on their merchandise for the benefit of Father Divine's followers. This was a striking development, since few businesses advertised regularly in Harlem's weekly newspapers.¹⁰⁷ Nor were the Peace Mission's advertising rates cheap. Several proprietors of smaller businesses claimed that they could not afford the cost.¹⁰⁸ The white stores that were first to advertise in the Peace Mission press were those that were, in general, most conciliatory toward the black community. Orkin's Department Store at 218 West 125th Street, which specialised in women's fashions, led the way. From its opening it had employed black staff in all but the most senior positions.¹⁰⁹ It advertised in both the World Herald and the New Day in 1936 and continued to advertise regularly in the New Day throughout 1937 and 1938. In November 1936 Orkin's placed this message in the Peace Mission press:

"Peace to the Followers of FATHER DIVINE. The management of this Progressive Store appreciates and endorses the Peace Mission Movement of FATHER DIVINE as set forth in HIS Righteous Government Platform. We also endorse the Principle as set forth by the message of FATHER DIVINE to sell for Less. This is our Policy." 110

Samuel Kanter, the owner of Kanter's Department Store 140 West 125th Street, also began advertising in the New Day in 1937 and regularly visited the Peace Mission during the late 'thirties. As president of the Retail Ladies Clothing Merchants Association of Greater New York, Kanter's interest in the Peace Mission was instructive. He also had early accepted the need to hire black employees in his store and he had accepted the unionisation of his employees following a strike in 1937. Taking membership in an

Anti-Job Discrimination League as a token of his goodwill, his overture to the Peace Mission seemed a natural, cordial step. Kanter offered the followers the use of the floor space above his store to hold meetings¹¹¹ and, in December 1937, he placed this carefully contrived Christmas greeting in the Peace Mission press:

"Peace. Abundance of Good Things
We know every day should be Christmas
We strive to live and express that Spirit every day in
the year
We who have been blessed with an abundance of good things,
Wish an abundance for all who walk in the paths of
Righteousness,
Justice and Truth, including the Blessings of Health, Joy,
Peace and Prosperity
We have Blessings to share and we know you will want to
share
yours from the Goodness of GOD'S Abundance, with others.
It is written, 'Bless the Lord, O My Soul'
Therefore we wish every good wish to be manifested to
FATHER DIVINE and HIS CHILDREN
during this and the coming year.

Samuel Kanter
Kanter's Department Store." 112

Following the initiative of these stores and the followers' loyal patronage of regular advertisers (in dutiful obedience to Father Divine) an increasing number of smaller local businesses also began advertising in the Peace Mission press. Samuel Ader's general goods and clothing store on 125th Street offered "10% reduction to reader of paper", while the Solar Cafeteria on West 116th Street promised "a meal at the Solar will leave you at Peace with the world."¹¹³ No effort was made, apparently, to vet the job policies or the business practices of these firms to ensure that they did not offend the Movement's principles.¹¹⁴

The testing time for the Peace Mission's relations with the white merchants came in the hectic year of 1938. By then, the Peace Mission was firmly identified as part of the more conservative opinion in the community. Orkin's, picketed by the Greater New York Coordinating Committee, wrote to the Peace Mission in May 1938

to thank the followers for their "wonderful" co-operation and patronage of the store.¹¹⁵ and the Peace Mission took the opportunity afforded by the picketing furore to despatch agents to 125th Street to sell advertising space in the New Day. Throughout August 1938 their reports, describing the reactions of the store owners who were approached, were published in the paper¹¹⁶ and on July 31, the Peace Mission staged a "MAMMOTH DIVINE DEMONSTRATION" on the streets of Harlem.

Local merchants, white and black, were induced to participate and the New Day reported that the large number of decorated cars and horse-drawn floats in the parade representing the stores was "a new note observed for the first time."¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Ross Haynes, of the Greater New York Coordinating Committee, spoke at the end of the rally but the New Day omitted to mention that she represented an organisation that was picketing for jobs.¹¹⁸

The Peace Mission disassociated itself from the C.I.O. campaign and the revived Jobs Campaign on 125th Street. But there seems little doubt that it attempted to take advantage of the merchants' embarrassment to promote their own conciliatory approach and boost its advertising revenue. The merchants' participation in the parade was a measure of the pressure on 125th Street to make peace with the jobs campaigners. Within two weeks of the Peace Mission's parade, the Greater New York Coordinating Committee concluded an agreement with the Uptown Chamber of Commerce which represented about sixty per cent of the merchants on 125th Street. This agreement guaranteed blacks a representation on the sales staff of the stores of at least a third. New black staff would be hired as white staff retired or were transferred.¹¹⁹

Although the agreement was denounced by both the N.L.C. and the H.L.V. because the Coordinating Committee had presumed to set

itself up as the sponsor of new staff in defiance of the trade unions,¹²⁰ it presaged the end of the Jobs Campaign on 125th Street. The H.L.U., in an attempt to control black employment picketed those stores that hired black staff through the Coordinating Committee but, just over a year later, amid persistent charges of racketeering and an investigation by the District Attorney of New York County, the H.L.U.'s leadership resigned and the new executive adopted less provocative policies.¹²¹ The Amsterdam News Jobs Committee petered out and the Coordinating Committee turned its attention to the employment policies of the public utilities and New York's World Fair.¹²² Merchants were forced to accept both the unionisation of their stores and the employment of blacks in white-collar jobs.¹²³ It was significant that when the Peace Mission staged a second business demonstration in June 1939, it was made up, almost entirely, of Peace Mission businesses.¹²⁴

The stores continued to advertise in the New Day however. Indeed, the major effect of the Peace Mission's campaign for advertising in 1938 was to double the number of advertisers from approximately one hundred and fifty in June 1938 to three hundred and forty by December 1938.¹²⁵ The Peace Mission's policy of guaranteed patronage to its advertisers was obviously attractive to the merchants as they became more sensitive to the black community. In 1940 the Uptown Chamber of Commerce persuaded the Amsterdam News, the Greater New York Coordinating Committee and the H.L.U. to co-operate in a goodwill campaign to promote trade on 125th Street.¹²⁶ But it is doubtful that even their combined influence could match the Peace Mission's record in delivering business to the merchants and, by 1940, national companies like Spear's Furniture, Woolworth's, Weston Biscuits and Shell Oil were advertising in the New Day.¹²⁷

The Peace Mission's advertising revenue enabled the Peace

Mission press to establish itself, for the first time, on a commercial basis. In August 1937, both the Spoken Word and the World Herald had been forced to suspend publication and surrender their assets for the benefit of their creditors. Both papers had relied, almost entirely, on the income from subscriptions and sales for their operating capital and the readership had not been large enough to support the publication of two journals. When the Spoken Word collapsed, it had liabilities of over five thousand dollars.¹²⁸

The staff from both papers had transferred to help revive the New Day, a small journal launched by David Kind in Newark (N.J.) which had folded in August 1936 after four months of publication. The first new edition had appeared on July 29 1937 and, conscious of their responsibility as journalists on the Movement's only publication, the followers had promised to strive for "mechanical and literary perfection."¹²⁹ The New Day's hallmark, however, was its commercial success. Even before the Jobs Campaign picketing began in 1938, agents were recruited to scour the city for advertisers and, in March 1938, the staff announced that the paper was free of all financial obligations and operating on a "co-operative co-partnership basis."¹³⁰ By May it had grown from thirty pages to sixty pages an issue. By the end of the year, there were over a hundred pages to an issue.¹³¹

Although the staff of the New Day requested "sincerity in advertising" and warned that its readers would be demanding merchandise that was "honestly made, truthfully represented and which sells for the lowest price,"¹³² the Peace Mission never checked the activities of its advertisers, nor their hiring policies. This was made patently clear in the late 'thirties when the Peace Mission accepted advertisements for Sheffield Farm milk, a company still notorious for its job discrimination against blacks.¹³³

The only relic of Father Divine's former sensitivity to racial discrimination by local firms came in March 1938 when he extended this gentle rebuke to advertisers. "I see merchandise advertised in the New Day," he wrote, "but I do not see very many appearances of the different likenesses of the alleged races or nationalities, such as the merchants desire to have purchase from them." If, he advised, "they put the pictures in the likenesses of the different alleged races ... they will attract those people and they will buy more readily."¹³⁴

In 1939, Father Divine issued a telling instruction to the believers. He told them to be ready to boycott "antagonistic" and "prejudiced" firms in the city. These were the ones, he said, who refused the invitation to buy advertising space in the Peace Mission press.¹³⁵ Advertising had become accepted as an adequate endorsement of Father Divine's work. The money paid to the New Day was seen as support for the Movement's greater work in the world.¹³⁶ No further assurance of a storeowner's respect for justice and right was needed.

This attitude, however, was just one part of the Movement's increasing preoccupation with its own wealth and material comfort. As the number of believers fell in the latter half of the decade, the Movement turned towards consolidation. With an eye to the symbols of prosperity and respectability, Father Divine and his followers entered the property market in Harlem. Instead of looking for cheap accommodation to rent, as they had done in the early years of the Movement's growth, they now looked for quality property to buy.

The first step in this direction came in 1936 when the Peace Mission opened a new extension at 123rd Street and Lenox Avenue. Although the property was leased rather than bought, it marked,

nonetheless, the beginning of a deliberate acquisition of quality premises. A Peace Mission journalist described the house:

"Let us mount the stone steps to the massive walnut doors, holding carved knockers, opening to plate glass inner doors and double parlors; again carvings over wide fireplaces and framed mirrors, leather and rattan furnishings." 137

By the end of the 'thirties, the Movement no longer had pretensions to intervene in the economic concerns of the state and federal government or even of Harlem. Righteous Government economics was, if anything, more quiescent than Righteous Government politics. The prosperity of the Movement now became, for Father Divine and his followers, sufficient proof that the ideals they lived by were the right ones. In 1938, Father Divine boasted, "My Followers who were domestic workers - a good many of them who have been merely floor scrubbers - I have lifted them and they own property ... They could not have even walked through some of the places that we have."¹³⁸

But, as far as most Harlemites were concerned, beside the achievements of the New Deal relief and recovery programmes, inadequate though they were, the Peace Mission's success was as nothing. What economic advancement was achieved in Harlem in the 'thirties was effected by government funds and regulations and by aggressive economic pressure groups. Admittedly, neither Harlem's job campaigners nor New York State law could put an end to job discrimination. Neither the tenants' groups nor the New York City Housing Authority could eradicate slum housing and exploitation of tenants. Nor could the black trade union organisers end discrimination by white trade unionists or dispel the suspicions of black workers toward trade unions. But in each case, there were significant achievements for which Father Divine could claim little credit. As Frank Crosswaith wrote to the New York Post in 1938:

"I have watched with interest [those] who write about Negro Harlem. Invariably they ferret out some religious figure and his queer cult, some go-getter and his underworld activities, or some group whose antics are steeped in superstition ... As an active participant in the growing labor movement among Negroes in Harlem, I am of the opinion that these much publicized religious, political, and other type of 'funny men' do not represent the new Negro, who, above all, is becoming economic-conscious, as the large number of Negro union men and women in Harlem now discloses." 139

The economic planks of the Righteous Government Platform and the rudimentary class consciousness that was displayed within the Movement in its co-operation with the Communists, suggest that there was scope for the Peace Mission to play an important part in local efforts to improve employment prospects for blacks, resist discrimination in employment, extend work relief and secure better working conditions. In fact, as in Peace Mission politics, the conservative aspects of the Movement - its faith in the omnipotence of Father Divine; its belief in the virtues of self-reliance and self-discipline; and its search for an organic society of asceticism and co-operation governed by Divine laws - made it, in many cases, a considerable obstacle to improving the economic status of blacks.

Peace Mission politics was destroyed by a self-righteousness which forced the Movement into isolation and withdrawal. But in the Peace Mission's economic relationships much more was at stake than Father Divine's prestige: it was a question of preserving and enhancing the Movement's prosperity. Although the radical aspects of Peace Mission ideology made its relationships with Harlem's economic organizations ever ambivalent, its growing wealth finally transformed its dream of bringing prosperity to all Americans into a shallow self-interest: an interest directly opposed to the growing conviction in the black community that only by mass organization, common cause with sympathetic elements in organised labour and the

extension of government regulation could black economic advancement
be secured.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

1. The following discussion is taken from World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937. See Appendix.
2. For a discussion of this lobby see Wolters, op.cit., passim.
3. Gary J. Hunter, "Don't buy from where you can't work": black urban boycott movements during the depression, 1929 - 1941, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1977, passim; August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action in Afro-American protest : a note on historical discontinuities (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line : explorations in the black experience, Chicago, 1976, 307-404) 314-339, 379-381, 388; and William Muraskin, Harlem boycott of 1934 : black nationalism and the rise of labor-union consciousness, Labor History 13 (3), Summer 1972, 361-373.
4. Meier and Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action in Afro-American protest (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line, 307-404) 332-336; and Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the poor : the functions of public welfare, London, 1972, 104-111. For the activities of the Unemployed Councils in Harlem see Naison, op.cit., 53-55, 72-73, 119-122, 136-141.
5. There is, as yet, no adequate treatment of these campaigns as a whole. Perhaps the best discussion, although short, is Meier and Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action in Afro-American protest (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line, 307-404) 314-332. The most comprehensive account, although flawed by errors of fact and exaggeration of the movement's effectiveness, is G. Hunter, op.cit., passim. See also: William Jones, Trade boycotts, Opportunity XVIII (8), August 1940, 238-241; and Robert H. Brisbane, Black vanguard : origins of the Negro social revolution, 1900-1960, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1970, 137-144. The Chicago, Washington D.C., and Harlem campaigns had the most contemporary attention. For Chicago: Boycott, Crises 37 (3), March 1930, 102; and Drake and Cayton, op.cit., 84-85. For Washington D.C.: Ralph J. Bunche, Programs, ideologies, tactics and achievements of Negro betterment and inter-racial organisations, a research memorandum, Carnegie-Myrdal study, 1940, Schomburg Collection, 380-389; and John A. Davis, We win the right to fight for jobs, Opportunity XVI (8), August 1938, 230-238.
6. For Harlem see: G. Hunter, op.cit., 177-197, 272-289; Meier and Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action in Afro-American protest (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line, 307-404) 318-321, 328-329; Muraskin, Harlem boycott of 1934, op.cit., passim; McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 181-229; Ottley, New world a-coming, 113-121; and Adam Clayton Powell Jnr., Marching blacks : an interpretive history of the rise of the black common man, New York, 1945, 80-81, 92, 95-103.

7. Many different motives appeared among the Job Campaigners. Some black nationalists believed that the employment of black sales clerks would be the prelude to the expulsion of white merchants from the ghetto; while the intellectual civil rights activists of Washington D.C. merely saw the campaign as the most effective way of mobilising black opinion to end the merchants' discrimination. Between the two extremes were the mixed motives of people like Reverend John H. Johnson, one of the organisers of Harlem's Citizen's League for Fair Play. He believed that the merchants must be forced to show a sense of responsibility to the community from which they profited and that the employment of blacks as sales clerks was the next best thing to a strong black business in making black Harlem prosperous. Implicit or explicit in the views of all the campaigners was the conviction that the merchants must be made accountable to the black community. Davis, We win the right to fight for jobs, op.cit., 230-238; and John H. Johnson, Harlem, the war and other addresses, 60-68.
8. G. Hunter, op.cit., 78-97.
9. Wilbur Young, Activities of Bishop Amiru Al-Mu-Minin Sufi A. Hamid, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 1, Schomburg Collection); and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 186-192. The Sufi's background is a matter of speculation but, on his own admission to Immigration officials when they sought to deport him, he was born Eugene Brown, in Hollingville, Massachusetts, in 1903. It is probable that he spent much of his working life, before going to Chicago, as a seaman. Immigration officials confirmed that he could converse in Arabic, Chinese, Greek, French and Italian. New York Amsterdam News June 22 1935; and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 190.
10. Muraskin, Harlem boycott of 1934, op.cit., 362-364.
11. Ibid., 365-368.
12. Davis, We win the right to fight for jobs, op.cit., 230-231.
13. Muraskin, Harlem boycott of 1934, op.cit., 370-372.
14. Franklin, op.cit., 137-142.
15. The smaller white-owned businesses formed their own organisation as a rival to the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, called it the Harlem Merchants Association and adopted the symbol of a white hand and a black hand clasped in friendship. They offered increased black employment in return for increased black patronage. New York Amsterdam News November 3, November 10, November 24 and December 8 1934. Myrtle Pollard believed that the Harlem riot of 1935 played a significant part in increasing black employment in Harlem stores. In 1937 she wrote, admittedly with some exaggeration: "There are now so many colored men as 'front men' and managers [In white-owned stores] that one cannot know a black from a white controlled establishment." Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 2, 145 and 241.

16. This seems to have been a political rally rather than one directly concerned with the Jobs Campaign. The Sufi was described as being the "head of an anti-segregation, anti-discrimination organisation" and this was before he became stigmatised as the "Black Hitler." Spoken Word 1 (4), November 10 1934.
17. Father Divine, in his speech at the rally with the Sufi's N.I.C.A., said that he would not tolerate the poor living conditions and employment prospects that flowed from discrimination and segregation. Ibid.
18. Muraskin, Harlem boycott of 1934, op.cit., passim. Arthur Reid of the African Patriotic League, the C.L.F.P. picketing committee and the Harlem Labor Union, was the most vehement advocate of a self-sufficient black Harlem. He began at the beginning of the Depression by urging blacks to patronise only black-owned stores. He argued that "Harlem must be made a great Negro industrial city"; and organised black push-carters to oust whites from Harlem pitches. His support of the Jobs Campaign arose out of his desire to see strong black business in Harlem and also out of a conviction that Harlem was black "territory". Myrtle Pollard reports one of his speeches in which he told his black audience that "at 7th Ave. and 135th St. [in the heart of Harlem] they were in their territory. Their chests were well expanded. But upon strolling down to 110th St., they became smaller and smaller as they came to the end of their territory." Negro World July 15 1933; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 2, 300.
19. By "localisation" Father Divine meant any form of residential segregation: "placing yourself at some special segregated place". He also used it, more loosely, of discrimination against blacks in employment and of the use of words to designate race in schools. New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937; and 1 (38), December 9 1937.
20. Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936.
21. Ibid. 1 (26), April 13 1935.
22. New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937.
23. Ibid. 1 (11), July 30 1936; and Spoken Word 1 (4), November 10 1934. The Communist League of Struggle for Negro Rights (L.S.N.R.) subsequently began a boycott of another 'bus company, the Fifth Avenue Coach Company, whose 'buses ran a regular service in Harlem, to force the company to employ black drivers and conductors. The Communist campaign was mounted as a counter to the nationalist boycott of white merchants. The L.S.N.R. felt that the Sufi's boycott alienated white workers and, by confining protest to the ghetto, might encourage white employers in other parts of the city to fire blacks. The Fifth Avenue boycott demands included a call for the re-instatement of white workers dismissed by the 'bus company for trade union activities; and, although concentrating its picketing in Harlem, the L.S.N.R. sought the employment of blacks as drivers and conductors throughout the city not just in the ghetto.

- It was not successful however. Naison, op.cit., 220-223.
24. The Spoken Word further averred that "because people do not exercise self-control and intelligence in the instance of an imagined wrong is one reason why autonomous political control is not granted them." Spoken Word 1 (26), April 13 1935.
 25. Ibid. 1 (33), June 1 1935.
 26. Pittsburgh Courier June 22 1935; and Spoken Word 1 (35), June 15 1935.
 27. Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 2, 237. Myrtle Pollard thought that the Peace Mission's contract was probably a valuable one for she saw the followers drink large quantities of milk.
 28. World Herald 1 (2), November 26 1936.
 29. One of the "RIGHTEOUS DEMANDS" listed under the "PRINCIPLES" section of the Righteous Government Platform was a demand for: "Legislation making it unlawful for employers of skilled or unskilled or professional help, to have different wage scales or salaries for what they term different races, creeds or colors, or to discriminate in any way in the hiring of help." Ibid. 1 (10), January 21 1937.
 30. New Day 1 (24), September 2 1937. The failure of the 'bus companies encouraged Father Divine to protest against the discrimination and segregation experienced by his black followers who travelled on the inter-state All-American Bus Lines. He wrote to the 'bus company that his black followers "have not been accorded the same courtesy on board the buses [as whites], and when it came to dining they were positively forbidden, in places from Arizona to Pennsylvania, to eat with their follow passengers. Some have even been roughly handled by the restaurant keepers along the way." Father Divine warned that all of his followers would refuse to patronise the company's 'buses if the situation did not change,"and in this New Dispensation such enterprises cannot be successful unless they do." Ibid. 2 (2), January 13 1938.
 31. The only tenants organisation in Harlem at the beginning of the nineteen-thirties was the Communist-dominated Harlem Tenants League, founded in 1928. It had little support and collapsed in 1930 due to Communist Party faction - fighting. Liberator December 7 and December 14 1929; and June 7 1930. The Harlem tenants' movement proper began when the tenants of three apartment houses on St. Nicholas and Edgecombe Avenues, run by the Sonn Leasing Corporation, organised to force a reduction in rents in August 1934. The tenants formed a United Tenants League which began to organise the tenants in other "Sugar Hill" apartment houses. After three weeks rent strike and picketing Sonn Leasing agreed to a reduction in rents and improvements in repair and maintenance. The tenants' committees in other houses then began to press their claims. But there was some dissatisfaction with the Sonn Leasing agreement and a group of tenants formed a breakaway New York Tenants League with Communist Party support. Both tenants groups then conducted strikes in the "Sugar Hill" area. The division within the tenants' ranks was

short-lived, however, for when the landlords proved implacable and began to evict striking tenants, both groups discovered that they had no protection in law. The members of the New York Tenants League then rejected their Communist backers and joined with the United Tenants League to form the Consolidated Tenants League to seek changes in New York State laws that would give tenants the right to enforce proper repair and maintenance of their homes and a fair rent. New York Amsterdam News August 18, August 25, September 1, September 8, September 22, September 29 and October 6 1934; and Negro Liberator August 18, August 25, September 1, September 8, September 29, October 6 and October 13 1934. See also: Meier and Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line, 307-404) 336-337; and Naison, op.cit., 30-40.

32. Donelan J. Phillips, Brief review of the origins, salient features and accomplishments of the Consolidated Tenants League, Education 1 (5), September 1935, 5 and 7; and Donelan J. Phillips, Housing and rent situation in Harlem, Ibid. 2 (3), July - August 1936, 3, 6 and 8.
33. New York Amsterdam News March 2, March 30, April 13, April 20 and April 27 1935.
34. Ibid. July 13, July 20, July 27, August 3, August 10, August 24, August 31, September 7 and October 12 1935; Crusader News Agency September 28 and October 19 1935; and Phillips, Brief review of the origins, salient features and accomplishments of the Consolidated Tenants League, op.cit., 5 and 7.
35. New York Amsterdam News October 3 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936.
36. New York Amsterdam News October 17 1936; Crusader News Agency October 19 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (90), October 6 1936.
37. See, for instance, New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937; and 2 (23), June 9 1938.
38. Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936. See also: New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937; and 1 (38), December 9 1937.
39. Father Divine returned frequently to this theme in the latter part of the decade. He even complained when the New York Housing Authority inspectors pursued him for violations of the Multiple Dwellings Act. Ibid. 1 (31), October 21 1937; 1 (32), October 28 1937; and 1 (33), November 4 1937; Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936; and 2 (90), October 6 1936; and World Herald 1 (25), May 6 1937. He wanted a system of tax exemption for landlords who improved their property. He sought such exemptions on the Peace Mission's behalf. New Day 2 (17), April 28 1938; and 2 (18), May 5 1938. But he warned his followers: "Now do not ask for exemption of taxes for property that you are not improving. We should pass a law to the contrary; for every person who will not improve his property and will allow it to run down,

he should have to pay taxes for allowing it to run down. If this were done, we would have a better country and cleaner cities and communities in which to live." Ibid. 2 (23), June 9 1938. Harlem landlords claimed, in their negotiations with the C.T.L., that it was the city's high tax assessments that forced them to charge high rents. But Hubert T. Delaney, Commissioner of Taxes, told the C.T.L. that the La Guardia administration had reduced assessments by 19% between 1933 and 1937. Testimonies of Donelan J. Phillips (President of the Consolidated Tenants League) and Vernal J. Williams (attorney for the Consolidated Tenants League) (In New York New York State Temporary Commission, Public hearings, op.cit., 1259 - 1260.

40. The C.T.L. also held a series of mass meetings at Harlem churches at this time. New York Amsterdam News October 31 1936.
41. New York Amsterdam News December 26 1936; March 13, April 17, June 7, August 14, August 21, September 13, September 18, November 20 and November 27 1937; January 15, May 28, June 18, and July 2 1938; February 4, February 25, October 2, October 9 and October 21 1939; Crusader News Agency January 4, June 7 and September 7 1937; October 9 1939; and May 6 1940; Donelan J. Phillips, Should tenants organise? African 1 (3), December 1937, 61-62; Donelan J. Phillips, Rent control and housing, Ibid. 1 (4), March - April 1938, 82 and 94; and Donelan J. Phillips, Wagner housing bill and Harlem, Ibid. 1 (5), May - June 1938, 113-114. The Consolidated Tenants League was plagued by dissension at the close of the decade. Earl Miller replaced Donelan J. Phillips as President in 1938 only to be ousted in the following year amid allegations of mismanagement. New York Amsterdam News April 22 and May 6 1939. See also: Meier and Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action in Afro-American protest (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line, 307-404) 337 - 338. This tends, by suggesting that the C.T.L. was part of a "rent-strike movement" (akin to the suggestion that trade unions are set up for the purpose of striking) to distort the aims of the C.T.L. Although Meier and Rudwick point out that the C.T.L.'s middle-class character prevented it from having a great impact, they fail to mention the obvious difficulties of organising poorer tenants who tended to move from apartment to apartment. They thus tend to undervalue the C.T.L.'s efforts, its influence and its achievements.
42. See Muraskin, op.cit., passim.
43. Section 7 (a) of Title 1 of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 encouraged the unionisation of workers and led to an upsurge of organising activity. This upsurge was quickly dissipated, however, when corporations disregarded Section 7(a) or organised their own company unions. Furthermore, in late 1934, a federal District Court declared Section 7 (a) unconstitutional. In 1935 a bill to outlaw company unions and enforce collective bargaining was passed by Congress. The National Labor Relations Act set up a National Labor Relations Board which was to protect the right of workers to organise and empowered them to hold elections to determine which union

should represent the employees in any plant. In 1937 the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the law. Joseph G. Rayback, History of American labor, New York, 1966, 327-332, 341-346.

44. Frank Crosswaith was born in St. Croix in the Virgin Islands in 1893 and came to New York in his teens. He began his working life as an elevator operator but studied part-time at the Rand School of Social Science, joined the Socialist Party and became a trade union organiser. He and Asa Philip Randolph, a fellow Socialist and the President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, were the most persistent and energetic advocates of trade union organisation of blacks in New York City. Sadie Hall, Frank Crosswaith, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 1, Schomburg Collection).
45. Franklin, op.cit., 142-143. Crosswaith modelled the Harlem Labor Committee on the United Hebrew Trades. He had tried to form such a committee ten years earlier with the help of the New York Urban League and white trade unionists, but it had quickly fallen through. Reid, Negro membership in American labor unions, 131-132.
46. In 1934 Crosswaith wrote: "The Negro worker needs a United Negro Trades predicated upon the principles of trade unionism and composed of bona fide Negro and white trade unionists united in opposition to every form and practice of injustice and inequality within and without the limits of the organised labor movement. Such an agency will enable the Negro worker to make an invaluable contribution to the cause of labor and social justice." Frank Crosswaith, Sound principles and unsound policy concerning problems of Negro workers, Opportunity XII (11), November 1934, 342.
47. New York Amsterdam News July 27 1935; and Negro Labor Committee, Negro Labor Committee, organised by the Negro Labor Conference, July 20 1935; what it is and why, New York, 1935 [?] [pamphlet], passim. The main supporters of the N.L.C. were the Socialist-led International Ladies Garment Workers Union, for whom Crosswaith worked as an organiser, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.
48. Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, Black worker : the Negro and the labor movement, New York, 1931, passim. For an example of violent anti-union attitudes among blacks see William M. Tuttle Jnr., Labor conflict and racial violence, the black worker in Chicago, 1894-1919 (In Milton Cantor ed. Black labor in America, Westport, Connecticut, 1969, 87-110). In his introduction to a pamphlet explaining the work of the Negro Labor Committee, Morris Feinstone, the executive secretary of the United Hebrew Trades, drew attention to the role of discrimination by organised labour in driving black workers "into the open and welcome arms of the employers with the result that the Negro has developed an unfriendly attitude toward the labor movement and a corresponding affection for the employer of labor." Negro Labor Committee, op.cit., 6.

49. Franklin listed ten unions in 1936 in Manhattan who barred blacks from membership by explicit provisions in their rituals or constitutions. Seventy-one locals had no formal barrier to blacks but tacitly excluded them. One hundred and thirty-six locals claimed some black membership but, in many of these, such members were small in number and limited in their rights and influence. Franklin, op.cit., 183-224; and Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, op.cit., 31-34.
50. Franklin, op.cit., 127-128. It was the success of this strike and the endeavours of the I.L.G.W.U. to organise blacks that convinced Crosswaith that there might be sufficient support among white trade unionists for the organisation of black workers and an assault upon the discriminatory practices of organised labour. Crosswaith, Sound principles and unsound policy concerning problems of Negro workers, op.cit., 340-342.
51. The two New York City unions most amenable to the organisation of black workers, the I.L.G.W.U. and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, were instrumental, with the United Mine Workers and the Typographical Union, in the establishment of the C.I.O. Rayback, op.cit., 346-356. In New York City, as elsewhere, some black trade union organisers broke from A.F.L. affiliates to organise on behalf of the C.I.O. Noah C. Walter, black Socialist and a founding officer of the N.L.C., broke from the A.F.L. affiliated Laundry Workers Industrial Union to found the United Laundry Workers, Local 204 (C.I.O.) in 1937. Louis Nestel, Labor relations in the laundry industry in Greater New York, New York, 1950, 38-41. The Negro Labor Committee, which was composed of both A.F.L. and C.I.O. affiliates seems, however, except in the case of Harlem's grocery clerks, to have avoided the rivalry between the two groups that characterised union organisation in other areas. New York Amsterdam News August 19 1939.
52. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937; and 1 (20), April 1 1937. See also New Day 2 (12), March 24 1938.
53. New Day 2 (16), April 21 1938. See also Spoken Word 2 (24), February 8 1936.
54. World Herald 1 (22), April 15 1937.
55. Ibid. 1 (20), April 1 1937; 1 (21), April 8 1937; 1 (22), April 15 1937; and 1 (32), June 24 1937.
56. The pickets alleged that police attacks on the picket lines had been vicious. New York Amsterdam News January 4, January 25 and February 1 1936.
57. Spoken Word 2 (20), February 4 1936.
58. Ibid. 1 (52), October 12 1935. The A.W.P.R.A. was founded in 1933. It had a non-discriminatory policy of union membership and, in 1935, it claimed that about 15% of its membership was black. Franklin, op.cit., 203-205.
59. New York Amsterdam News February 8 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (20), February 4 1936. The Communist invitation to Father

Divine to join the strike meeting was, no doubt, an attempt to convince Crosswaith and other Socialists that Father Divine could form part of a United Front in Harlem. If this was so, it was a serious mistake, for the meeting only proved to the Socialists, as Reverend Ethelred Brown wrote to the Amsterdam News, that it did no good to "mix oil with water." New York Amsterdam News February 15 1936.

60. Spoken Word 1 (45), August 24 1935. The Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers (A.F.L.) had no formal provisions in its constitution or rituals for the exclusion of black painters. But, before 1936, it was, through high dues and informal discrimination, an almost entirely white organisation. In 1936 a black union organiser was appointed and a black membership campaign began by District Council 9 of New York City after the election of a left-wing executive. New York Amsterdam News August 31 1940; Herbert Northrup, Organised labor and the Negro, New York, 1944, 36; and Reid, Negro membership in American labor unions, 44-45. The discriminatory nature of the union in 1935 was not mentioned in Father Divine's criticism; and, in 1938, the followers had another altercation with members of the Brotherhood when they were working on a house on Lexington Avenue. New Day 2 (7), February 17 1938.
61. There was evidence that when workplaces were organised by white craft unions under the New Deal labour legislation black skilled workers were often dismissed because of the enforcement of the closed shop. According to testimony before the New York State Temporary Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population, this had occurred in the shops of Standard Electric Equipment Corporation of Long Island. Aware of discrimination, the N.A.A.C.P. and the National Urban League fought, unsuccessfully, for a provision in the New Deal labour codes and in the Wagner Labor Relations Act that would protect black workers. The A.F.L. opposed such legislation on the grounds that the employers would use it as a device to tie-up the unions in endless litigation. Black unionists, however, supported it. In their evidence to the New York State Temporary Commission, both Manning Johnson, of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees, and Asa Philip Randolph spoke favourably of an anti-discrimination amendment to the state Labor Relations Act. Subsequent to the Commission's investigations, an act denying the right of collective bargaining to any discriminatory union was passed by the New York State Legislature in 1940. Testimonies of Burt Kirkman (President of Local no. 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers); Benjamin M. Lichtenstein; Theodore Roosevelt Tyler; Vivienne France; Asa Philip Randolph (President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters); and Manning A. Johnson (of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Alliance, Local no. 302.) (In New York State Temporary Commission, Public hearings, 1460-1486, 1541 and 1612); Northrup, op.cit., 240; and Wolters, op.cit., 172-187.
62. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
63. Daily Worker February 11 1936.

64. Moon, Thank you, Father so sweet, op.cit., 150.
65. Spoken Word 2 (82), September 8 1936.
66. This union had a large black membership. New York Amsterdam News May 20 1939.
67. Spoken Word 2 (21), February 8 1936.
68. Ibid. 1 (23), February 15 1936.
69. New Day 1 (36), November 25 1937.
70. New York Amsterdam News October 23 1937.
71. New Day 1 (5), June 18 1936.
72. Ibid. 3 (15), April 13 1939.
73. Spoken Word 2 (74), August 11 1936.
74. World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937.
75. Spoken Word 2 (75), August 15 1936; and World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937.
76. Ibid.
77. In New York State, households employing more than four domestic workers were included in the unemployment provisions of the Social Security Act. It was not until 1950 that the federal Act was amended to include domestic workers. Palmer, Report on Negroes in domestic service (In Norgen, op.cit., Schomburg Collection) 225-228; Ellis, op.cit., 32-37; and Rayback, op.cit., 338 and 404.
78. New York Amsterdam News October 16 1937 and July 2 1938; Theodore Poston, Domestic workers in New York City, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 3, Schomburg Collection); and Ellis, op.cit., 66-70.
79. New Day 2 (12), March 24 1938; and 2 (13), March 31 1938.
80. Ibid. 2 (49), December 8 1938.
81. Palmer, Report on Negroes in domestic service (In Norgen, op.cit., Schomburg Collection) 227.
82. New Day 3 (11), March 16 1939.
83. New York Times September 23 1939. The Hotel and Restaurant Employees International, Local 302, founded in 1911, had no black members until it began the organisation of cafeteria workers in 1929. After 1935, however, merging with the Food Workers International Union Local 110 and with the employment of Manning A. Johnson as black organiser, it grew strongly among black as well as white cafeteria workers. Like the

I.L.G.W.U., the cafeteria union workers assiduously cultivated the Peace Mission. New York Amsterdam News May 27 and June 10 1939; New Day 3 (15), April 13 1939; and Franklin, op.cit., 197-198.

84. Spoken Word 1 (47), September 7 1935.
85. Rayback, op.cit., 338-340.
86. New Day 2 (33), August 18 1938; and World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
87. An additional reservation that the followers had about signing their Social Security forms was that, "it is against their Religious convictions to designate themselves as of any race, color or creed, and this designation is also required on the Blanks they have been asked to fill in." Ibid. 1 (3), December 3 1936.
88. New York Times June 2 and June 4 1935.
89. New York Amsterdam News July 4 1936.
90. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
91. New Day 3 (15), April 13 1939.
92. New York Times May 19 1936.
93. Ibid. May 22 1936.
94. Ibid. June 5 1936.
95. Ibid. June 12 1936.
96. Ibid. June 5 1936; and Spoken Word 2 (55), June 6 1936.
97. New York Times June 12 1936. The problem was not reported again either in the metropolitan or the Peace Mission press. So, presumably, some compromise was reached between the New York State Labor Department and the Peace Mission, Anxious followers did press for a ruling from Father Divine at the end of 1936 on whether they should continue to refuse to cooperate with the Social Security Act. Some were being threatened with dismissal if they refused to comply. Father Divine, in a long and vehement speech, refused to commit himself one way or the other. On the one hand he urged the followers that they - like "Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego" - should stand by their religious convictions and fear not the consequences, though it be "the lion's den" or "the burning flames". On the other hand, he did not expressly state that the followers' religious convictions were in jeopardy:

"I need not tell you, 'Do this, do that, nor do the other!' for the Spirit of MY Presence will tell you ... Be governed by your highest intuition, which is MY Spirit, internally speaking. By so doing, you will go on to Victory."

The followers were thus left with some space for compromise. World Herald 1 (3), December 3 1936.

98. New York Amsterdam News August 9, August 16, August 23 and August 30 1933; October 23 and October 30 1937; and July 16, August 20, October 15, October 29 and November 19 1938.
99. Negro Labor Committee, Unions or rackets? Negro workers beware! [pamphlet] New York, [1938?], no pagination. In Negro Labor Committee, Vertical File, Schomburg Collection; and Claude McKay, Labor steps out in Harlem, Nation CXLV, (16) October 16 1937, 399-402.
100. New York Amsterdam News November 21 1936; August 21 1937; and May 7, June 4 and July 23 1938; New York Post November 17 1936; and Negro Labor Committee, Unions or rackets? passim.
101. New York Age April 23 and April 30 1938; New York Amsterdam News October 29 1938; and McKay, Labor steps out in Harlem, op.cit., 401-402.
102. Claude McKay, who admired the initiative of the H.L.U. but felt that the black workers' best course was to join the larger labour movement, admitted that many stores, especially the smaller ones, had signed up with the H.L.U. because its terms were easier. New York Amsterdam News November 6 1937; and McKay, Labor steps out in Harlem, op.cit., 401-402. The main appeal of the H.L.U. was its emphasis on securing jobs for blacks. The C.I.O. organisers argued that, as a union, the C.I.O. could exercise but a small influence over the hiring policies of employers. Manning Johnson, an organiser for the C.I.O. in Harlem, told the New York State Temporary Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population, that "[while] the responsibility of discrimination rests to some extent on labor unions, ... the main emphasis must be placed on the employer ... When a union comes in to organise, they organise the workers they find there. If they find only white workers they organise only white workers ... When you send a colored worker there, the employer necessarily refuses to place him ... Only if the union is strong can it strike." Testimony of Manning Johnson (of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Alliance, Local no. 302) (In New York State Temporary Commission, Public hearings, 1607-1619) 1619. However, it was part of the C.I.O.'s policy to expand job opportunities for blacks and, under pressure from the H.L.U. and the N.L.C., agreements were made with Busch's Jewelry Stores in April 1938 to add fifteen black staff throughout New York City. New York Age April 23 1938; and New York Amsterdam News April 30 1938. Frank Crosswaith claimed that the C.I.O. campaign had "trebled the number of Negro clerks heretofore employed in Harlem." Negro Labor Committee, Unions or rackets?
103. McKay, Labor steps out in Harlem, op.cit., 401-402. When the United Retail Employees of America called a strike at Weisbecker's department store in November 1937, the management wrote to the New York Age appealing for support against the C.I.O. But neither the Age nor the Amsterdam News were persuaded. Ebenezer Ray, in the Age, remembered Weisbecker's

resistance to the Jobs for Negroes campaign in 1934; and the Amsterdam News reminded its readers that Weisbecker's had stubbornly refused to hire black sales clerks. The Amsterdam News argued further that, "this is one of the few times that we have been able to applaud a strike waged by an almost entirely white group. We do applaud this strike, because we feel that, in its success, Weisbecker's will be forced to include Negro workers." In April 1938 Weisbecker's capitulated and, as part of the agreement recognising the United Retail Employees as the workers' representative, twelve black union members were added to Weisbecker's permanent staff. New York Age December 11 and December 18 1937; and New York Amsterdam News November 27 and December 4 1937; and April 30 1938.

104. The Greater New York Coordinating Committee was first formed, on the initiative of the local branch of the National Negro Congress, to press for an end to discrimination in employment by the public utilities. However, following the decision of the United States Supreme Court, it consulted with the H.L.U. and began picketing 125th Street. The Amsterdam News Jobs Campaign aimed to influence both unions and merchants by polite appeal and the pressure of public opinion and worked directly with Frank Crosswaith. The intervention of Adam Clayton Powell Jnr's Coordinating Committee and, more especially, the continuing activity of the H.L.U., was seen by the Amsterdam News as a threat to union organisation on 125th Street, the security of white workers in Harlem and, indirectly, the security of black workers who were employed outside Harlem and depended on the goodwill of white employers and unionists. New York Age April 9 1938; New York Amsterdam News February 26, April 2, April 9, April 16, April 23, April 30, May 7 and May 14 1938; and Crusader News Agency January 31 and February 7 1938.
105. New York Amsterdam News May 7 1938.
106. Ibid. April 30, May 14, and May 28 1938.
107. Abram Hill, Role of the Negro press, January 31 1940 (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 4, Schomburg Collection).
108. Followers soliciting advertisements for the New Day reported this reaction. New Day 2 (40), October 6 1938.
109. New York Amsterdam News May 28 1938.
110. World Herald 1 (2), November 26 1936. Orkin's regular advertisement in 1937 and 1938 pictured a dove with the words "Righteousness, Justice and Truth" issuing from its beak and a cross made up of the word "PEACE". New Day 1 (31), October 21 1937.
111. Ibid. 1 (30), October 14 1937.
112. Ibid. 1 (40), December 23 1937.
113. Ibid. 1 (28), September 30 1937; and 1 (29), October 7 1937. An optician on Lenox Avenue tried to persuade the followers to: "Read FATHER'S Messages with Correctly Fitted Glasses." Victor Kay Furniture of East 44th Street offered

- a 40% reduction to followers and I. Steinberg of West 145th Street promised, "We make and sterilize your mattress at special rates to brothers and sisters." Ibid. 1 (40), December 23 1937; 1 (41), December 30 1937; and 2 (7), February 17 1938.
114. One or two businesses which advertised in the New Day urged the followers, in the words of A. Bearison and Son, a cut-price grocery store in Newark (N.J.), to "Bring Your Relief Checks Here." Ibid. 1 (4), June 11 1936; and 1 (14), February 18 1937.
115. Ibid. 2 (25), June 23 1938.
116. See, for instance: Ibid. 2 (31), August 4 1938; 2 (32), August 11 1938; 2 (33), August 18 1938; 2 (34), August 25 1938.
117. Ibid. 2 (32), August 11 1938. Among the black participants was the showpiece of Harlem's black business, the Belstrat Laundry. The Belstrat Laundry advertised regularly in the New Day as "Harlem's largest Community-Owned Enterprise" and assured the followers that "Your continued patronage will help us to continue giving our share of jobs to residents of this community." Ibid. 2 (7), February 17 1938.
118. Ibid. 2 (32), August 11 1938. The only mention of discrimination in employment that was made by the New Day's description of the rally was its report that one sign read: "We support Father Divine's Policy of No Discrimination in hiring of help. Ideal Shoe Co., 101 W. 125th Street." The New Day described Elizabeth Ross Haynes as a "well-known public citizen and political worker of Harlem" and said that she "spoke in the most glowing terms of her trip to Milton [on - Hudson - a Peace Mission extension], the beautiful Artist's Colony."
119. Representatives of the Amsterdam News Job Committee and the Greater New York Coordinating Committee began negotiations with the Uptown Chamber of Commerce in May 1938 as soon as picketing commenced. New York Amsterdam News May 14, May 21 and May 28 1938. The text of the agreement is in Ibid. August 13 1938.
120. The white metropolitan press hailed the agreement. The black press was more sceptical. Neither the Amsterdam News nor the Age had much faith in the Uptown Chamber of Commerce and both argued that even if it settled the question of black employment within Harlem, the matter of discrimination in the rest of the city was, as yet, untouched. New York Age August 20 1938; New York Amsterdam News August 13 1938; New York Post August 9 1938; and New York World Telegram August 8 1938. The objection of the H.L.U. and the N.L.C. was that, as Arthur C. Parker, a black trade unionist, wrote to the Amsterdam News: "The Committee sets itself up as an employment agency notwithstanding that everyone knows a union always reserves the right to place its members in vacancies in any industry with which it contracts ... If there is to be any contracts between the employers of Harlem

and the working people of Harlem, these contracts should be between the legal representatives of the employers and the properly recognized unions of the workers." New York Amsterdam News September 10 1938.

121. The dispute between the Greater New York Coordinating Committee and the H.L.U. was of the same kind as that between the Citizen's League for Fair Play and its picketing committee four years before: the matter of who should control job placement - the middle class social service agencies, the Urban League, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., or the street speakers. New York Age November 5 1938; and New York Amsterdam News October 22, October 29, November 12, November 19 and November 26 1938. The N.L.C. stepped up its opposition to the H.L.U. in 1938 and 1939. In September 1938 Frank Crosswaith threatened to call a general strike in Harlem in protest against the H.L.U.'s activities. In December, the N.L.C. appealed to Mayor La Guardia "to wipe out this common enemy of the people of Harlem and the labor unions." N.L.C. affiliates continued to bring the H.L.U. before the State Labor Board in disputes over jurisdiction. But it was not until June 1939 that the unions prevailed on the District Attorney's office to investigate the H.L.U. In December 1939 the H.L.U. leadership was forced to resign. New York Age December 16 and December 30 1939; New York Amsterdam News September 13 1938, December 16 and December 30 1939; Crusader News Agency December 4 1938 and June 5 1939; and Muraskin, Harlem boycott of 1934, op.cit., 372-373.
122. The Greater New York Coordinating Committee picketed both the grounds of the World Fair at Flushing and the Empire State building throughout the spring of 1939. Pickets were still present when President Roosevelt opened the Fair in May. The Coordinating Committee claimed to have gained two hundred and fifty jobs for blacks on the site. New York Amsterdam News March 18, April 8, April 15, April 22, April 29, and May 6 1939; and Crusader News Agency July 10 1939.
123. In its annual report for 1938, the New York Urban League reported that, as a result of the Coordinating Committee's agreement with the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, over three hundred blacks were placed in the stores that year. Arthur Reid of the rival H.L.U., made the astonishing claim of three thousand white collar jobs gained by blacks on 125th Street by 1939. At the fifth anniversary celebration of the Negro Labor Committee, Crosswaith claimed to have seen an increase in the trade union population of Harlem from twelve thousand in 1935 to seventy thousand in 1941. Negro Labor Committee, Fifth anniversary of the Negro Labor Committee, New York, 1941 [no pagination] pamphlet in Negro Labor Committee - Vertical File, Schomburg Collection; New York Urban League, Annual report, 1938; and Pathfinder Bureau, Harlem day and night, New York, [1939?], [no pagination], pamphlet in Harlem directories - Vertical File Schomburg Collection.

124. In 1938 Orkins, McCrory's, Grant's, Kanter's and Bishop's took part. A year later, only Kanter's appeared in the parade. McCrory's and Strickler's were reported to have ordered signs for the parade but not bothered to appear. New Day 2 (32), August 11 1938; and 3 (25), June 22 1939.
125. The number of advertisements in the New Day grew from 158 in June 1938 to 183 in August 1938, to 241 in September 1938, to 341 in December 1938. Two years later, in December 1940, there were 354 advertisers. Ibid. 2 (23) June 9 1938; 2 (34), August 25 1938; 2 (36) September 8 1938; 2 (51) December 22 1938; and 4 (52), December 26 1940.
126. This campaign was launched as a result of a meeting with the Uptown Chamber of Commerce in February 1940. In March the Amsterdam News published a long list of those stores co-operating in the drive to increase customer confidence in 125th Street stores, boost trade and increase black white-collar employment. New York Amsterdam News February 3, February 10, March 23 and June 1 1940; and Voice of Ethiopia February 3 and February 24 1940.
127. New Day 4 (15), April 11 1940; 4 (25), June 13 1940; and 4 (52), December 26 1940; and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 68.
128. New York Amsterdam News August 28 1937; and New York Times August 21 1937.
129. New Day 1 (2), May 28 1936; 1 (19), July 29 1937; and 1 (26), September 16 1937.
130. Ibid. 2 (10), March 10 1938. In this issue the editor announced: "Consistent with the policy of the followers of paying cash for everything and selling nothing on credit, current advertising will be collected for in advance of each publication date, the same as all metropolitan dailies."
131. Ibid. 2 (17), April 28 1938; 2 (18) May 5 1938; 2 (19), May 12 1938; and 2 (46), November 17 1938.
132. Ibid. 1 (37), December 2 1937.
133. Sheffield Milk advertisements appeared, for instance, in Ibid. 3 (43), October 26 1939; and World Herald 1 (14), February 18 1937. When Borden's and Sheffield Milk announced, in 1940, that they intended to discontinue milk deliveries in Harlem, the Manhattan Council of the National Negro Congress threatened a boycott campaign if the companies did not restore the routes and hire black delivery men. New York Amsterdam News December 14 and December 28 1940. and Crusader News Agency December 23 1940. The Peace Mission was certainly aware of Sheffield's policies for it was reported to a meeting of the Speakers Bureau in May 1938 that the Greater New York Coordinating Committee was thinking of boycotting the company because it refused "to hire mixed help." New Day 2 (21), May 26 1938.

134. Ibid. 3 (13), March 30 1939. Sheffield Milk responded to this injunction by replacing the smiling white baby enjoying Sheffield Milk in its advertisements with a smiling black one. Ibid. 3 (43), October 26 1939.
135. Ibid. 3 (6), February 9 1939. See also: Ibid. 2 (34), August 25 1938; 2 (43), October 27 1938; and 3 (7), February 16 1939.
136. The New Day instructed its readers: "We should patronise those who advertise with us. By their advertising the business firms of New York are expressing the endorsement of FATHER's great work and are in this matter - in a practical and legitimate way - supporting the spread of the messages of Righteousness, Justice and Truth. The least we can do, when we are anticipating making purchases of any kind, is to first look in the 'New Day'." Ibid. 1 (38), December 9 1937.
137. This was the Eastman Gaines School House which previously housed a business college. Its opening was accompanied by a parade. Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936; and Parker, op.cit., 182-183.
138. New Day 2 (45), November 10 1938.
139. New York Post March 9 1938.

CHAPTER TEN: "EVERY KNOCK IS A BOOST" : CONFLICTS, SCHISM
AND RIVALRIES.

After 1936, the Peace Mission contracted: not only in numbers but also in ambition. In place of the outward-looking vitality of its early years in Harlem and the euphoria of its followers, there came persistent disruption and insecurity. Throughout the latter part of the nineteen-thirties, the Movement was plagued by legal action, public controversy and internal disaffection.

Its troubles were partly the penalties of its success. The Peace Mission's size and wealth called attention to its organisation and the followers' behaviour. Outside authorities and commentators became concerned about the believers' attitude to family relations, health and medical care; and about the followers' readiness to put obedience to Father Divine before all other social obligations, including the law. There was an especial interest in Father Divine's financial role in the Peace Mission. His claim to be above worldliness and his refusal to accept legal responsibility for the Movement's finances, made him appear both deceitful and irresponsible.

The Movement's size and wealth also had repercussions on its internal affairs. The Movement's size destroyed much of its original intimacy; and, as an educated elite assumed responsibility for the Righteous Government campaign, so the mass of the believers became isolated from direct contact with Father Divine. It became harder for him to control dissent within the Movement and increased the opportunities for rivalries and schisms.

Father Divine's ambition paved the way for followers to question and challenge his authority. Within a year of its official opening, the Righteous Government campaign was fizzling out in resentment and recrimination and, despite Father Divine's brave face, his

power and his influence had been shown to have their limits. Moreover, tempted by the success of the Peace Mission's businesses to launch new and grandiose investment schemes, Father Divine intervened in the Movement's financial affairs in ways that affronted even his most trusted believers.

Disgruntled ex-followers took the opportunity provided by the public interest in the Movement's affairs, to try to force Father Divine to refund money that they had entrusted to him for the Movement's use. As the courts sought to fix financial responsibility for the Peace Mission's affairs on Father Divine, Faithful Mary, Father Divine's most famous convert, perceiving that, after all, "God" was "just a natural man", took her chance to leave the Movement and set up her own cult. Other rival cult-leaders stepped in to take advantage of Father Divine's difficulties.

The Peace Mission became inward-looking, suspicious and hostile. It fought a war with its detractors and defectors that did not stop at words. But the controversies and criticisms cost the Movement the loyalty of many followers: and those who remained lost their zeal for proselytizing. The Peace Mission's membership dwindled. Within five years of its sensational entrance into Harlem, the Peace Mission was losing support in the black community. It sought, more and more, to withdraw from the public eye: to avoid rather than invite, further confrontation with the outside society; and to quell the possibility of any further disruption within its own ranks.

Controversy and criticism was, of course, not new to the Movement. Ever since the 'twenties, the Movement had attracted opprobrium. The residents of Sayville objected to its inter-racialism and the noisiness of its devotions. Judge Smith, who

sentenced Father Divine for disturbing the peace, was disgusted by his claims to divinity. In Newark, the Hartshorn Committee was even more alarmed about the Movement's effect on social welfare in that city. In New York, Father Divine's arrival and activities brought a mixed reception. Some people cautiously approved aspects of the Peace Mission's work. Others, like Lincoln Scotland, in the Interstate Tattler, concluded that Father Divine turned "depression into a howling big racket."¹

In New York City, the Movement was, at first, free of official investigation. But disquiet increased as the Movement grew and took a more conspicuous part in Harlem's life. The intervention of the New York S.P.C.C. in the Movement's affairs expressed growing fears about Father Divine's impact on family life and social welfare. Judge Jacob Panken of the New York Domestic Relations Court was appalled by the threat Father Divine posed to moral and social well-being in the city. Similarly, officials from the New York State Department of Labor were forced to intervene in the Peace Mission's affairs because of the followers' refusal to comply with New York State's labour codes.

The Peace Mission's financial affairs were also the subject of attention. No-one knew how the Movement's finances were administered and how Father Divine was involved. Publicly, he claimed to own nothing in the Peace Mission; and to accept no contributions or donations for himself. For many years, outside observers were content to leave the question to amused speculation. But, by 1936, the large number of businesses under the Peace Mission's banner, as well as Father Divine's interest in property investment, caused serious questions to be raised about the integrity of his leadership.

This public interest went beyond New York. In June 1936 a

series of articles, written by A.J. Liebling and St. Clair McKelway, appeared in the New Yorker, a current affairs magazine with an international circulation. The journalists offered the first detailed account of Father Divine's alleged background and the Movement's origins and growth; and two of the three articles sought to explain the Peace Mission's financial operations and Father Divine's part in them. McKelway and Liebling reported Father Divine's claims to be above monetary affairs, and they accepted that no-one had been able to prove that Father Divine commanded visible assets of his own. The journalists held, nonetheless, that Father Divine was the financial genius and organiser behind the Movement. They cast him, unambiguously, in the role of an artful manipulator through whose hands large sums of money passed each week.² To support this contention, they cited the experiences of two ex-followers, Verinda and Thomas Brown. These followers alleged that, during their six years' association with the Movement, Father Divine pressured them into giving him over five thousand dollars from their savings; as well as their earnings, their labour and countless small gifts.³

McKelway and Liebling's preoccupation with this aspect of the Peace Mission Movement had been excited, in particular, by a court case concerning a road accident in Maryland. In December 1934, a dilapidated Peace Mission bus, driven by John Lamb, had collided with a car driven by Nina I. Bayless as Lamb and a group of believers were on their way to Harlem from Washington D.C. Bayless was injured in the crash and the Maryland courts had awarded her judgements totalling over seven thousand dollars against John Lamb, Father Divine and the Peace Mission Movement. The case had attracted attention because the money was not paid: and William Lesselbaum, Nina Bayless's New York attorney, had been obliged to take the case to the New York Supreme Court in February 1936. Father Divine had been summoned

for questioning in April; and he had sworn on oath that he had neither money nor assets of his own with which to pay. To McKelway and Liebling, Father Divine's claims to poverty had appeared a flagrant and monumental deceit.⁴

The case had more profound repercussions; for Father Divine's testimony did not satisfy the courts either. Again called to account in the Supreme Court in September 1936, Father Divine continued to be bland and evasive. Once more he denied that he held assets of his own and that he was responsible for the Peace Mission's affairs. He rejected the suggestion that the Movement was an organisation that was accountable in law. Rather, he described the Peace Mission as a "spiritual religious movement" akin to the Christian movement and, asked to explain his part in it, Father Divine said that his "vocation" was "evangelical work". To more pressing enquiries he replied, "that I couldn't say definitely" or "that I do not know."

Despite Lesselbaum's lengthy cross-examinations, Father Divine claimed ignorance of the Movement's finances and he was vague about how much money he handled and spent. He said that he received no compensation for his work other than in food and lodgings. All his needs were mysteriously met. He did not own the Rolls Royce that brought him to the court and he had no idea where even his suit came from. "The other day I found it in my office with a note 'For Father'," he said, "I do not know how it got there. I do not seek to know. The Lord has promised to provide for those who follow his teachings." He denied that anyone had given him any money or property over the last two years. Questioned about his part in the Movement's recent purchase of Hasbrouck Manor, a large homestead in upstate New York, he replied that he could not remember if he had handled the cash for the transaction. Then, when Lesselbaum asked

him to turn out his pockets, Father Divine obliged - and produced only a key ring.⁵

In his enquiries into the Peace Mission's affairs, Lesselbaum failed to find any direct evidence against Father Divine. None of the Movement's properties and vehicles were held in Father Divine's name and there was no trace of a private bank account.⁶ Yet, referring to McKelway and Liebling's investigation, Lesselbaum said that it was "inconceivable" that Father Divine could have "such wide financial interests in the operation of his Peace Mission movement, and be at the head of an organisation through which such large sums of money have passed ... and yet be as destitute of any means of satisfying the judgements against him as his testimony is intended to show."⁷

Lesselbaum searched for witnesses willing to swear that Father Divine accepted and handled money in the Movement. In December, 1936, he submitted five statements to the court. One witness, Arthur Hasbrouck, formerly of Kingston, (N.Y.) said that Father Divine had given him eight thousand dollars in cash to purchase his house there. Another, Harry Moretti, a mechanic who had worked for the Peace Mission Garages, claimed that Father Divine had paid him wages of thirty dollars a week, "peeled off of a roll of bills which he would take from one of his pockets." Moretti added that he had also seen Father Divine pay cash for a delivery of petrol. The other statements came from former members of the Peace Mission itself: from Thomas and Verinda Brown, and from a woman identified only as "Humility Consolation" since she refused to give her conventional name for fear of causing embarrassment to her husband.⁸

It was the evidence of these former followers that caused a sensation. Never before had members of the Peace Mission testified against Father Divine in court. Thomas and Verinda Brown reiterated

the allegations that they had made in the New Yorker, though tempering their claims a little under oath. Humility Consolation, proclaiming herself glad to be at last "free" of Father Divine's influence, related her experiences as a cashier at the 203 West 139th Street extension between January and August 1935. During that time, she alleged, she had taken ledgers and cash - the money hidden in candy boxes - to Father Divine. He would scrutinise the accounts, she claimed, and then hide the money in his bedroom behind his private office.⁹

Through the statements of the former followers, Lesselbaum did all he could to discredit Father Divine. Verinda Brown's affidavit was redolent of her attorney's influence. She described herself as "a colored woman of middle age with unlimited faith in divine providence and a quickness and readiness, through a highly impressionable and emotional mentality, to believe in human perfection and the brotherhood of man." She dispassionately described her husband, Thomas, as always seeking "relief from an inferiority complex resulting from the color of his skin in the consoling thought of a blessed hereafter." With Lesselbaum's encouragement, she pictured Father Divine as a plausible but vicious racketeer, preying on their idealism and credulity. "I paid all the money," her statement read, "in the belief that unless I did I was doomed to everlasting misery, and that by giving this money to Father Divine I was depositing it in his heavenly treasury and was in that way assured of eternal life and peace."¹⁰

On the basis of this evidence, Lesselbaum suggested that Father Divine's claim that he had no knowledge of the Movement's finances was palpably false. Lesselbaum moved that Father Divine be cited for contempt of court. Accordingly, a date was set for a new hearing and Lesselbaum and Father Divine were instructed to prepare fresh

statements.

In his new statement, Father Divine still denied that he had funds of his own. But now he was apologetic and humble. He swore that he would not deliberately deceive the court and pleaded, "if perchance at any time I have done anything not exactly according to My answers and according to the requirements by law ... it was not to My Conscious Knowledge of same." He explained that he had "dismissed from My vocabulary the custom of keeping any literary record of anything." He might, he conceded, have paid for Hasbrouck Manor himself or, at least, "it may have been that Mr. Madison asked Me to take the satchel, [containing the money] for such an act would not be strange." He cited letters commending the followers' repayment of old debts as evidence of his belief in honesty and his own good faith.¹¹

Lesselbaum, in a counter statement, pressed home his slight advantage. He had no new evidence to offer, but he recounted the difficulties he had met in trying to collect evidence about Father Divine's financial affairs and suggested that a deliberate conspiracy of silence and deception had obstructed his efforts.

He claimed that he had been informed that a white woman, Julia Ferris, worked in Father Divine's office and kept account of all the money received from Father Divine's chauffeurs and 'bus drivers. Other informants, he said, had told him that "Peace Branch" was Father Divine's "financial secretary". But he said that he had been unable to trace either woman or discover even in "Peace Branch" was Julia Ferris. He had subpoenaed a "Lovely Peace" who knew "Peace Branch". But she had refused to co-operate. Lesselbaum concluded with a criticism of Father Divine's own conduct in court. "He sets a poor example," Lesselbaum said, "by his own lack of frankness in testifying and by his deliberate attempts to mislead the court as to

his financial activities.¹²

In early January 1937, the judge referred the case to the official referee, Joseph I. Green, for resolution. Three weeks later, the proceedings against Lamb, Father Divine and the Peace Mission, as well as the contempt charge against Father Divine, were dismissed. Cash for the Bayless judgement had arrived from an "undisclosed source."¹³

The payment freed Father Divine, Lamb and the Peace Mission from the immediate pressure of prosecution. But the affair had been costly in more ways than one. It was clear that the courts, despite their deference to the freedom of religious movements, were not prepared to allow the Peace Mission to be beyond the reach of the law. Moreover, Father Divine was now faced with accusations of racketeering. His evasions, his vague spiritual claims and his assertion that he owned nothing personally, convinced those who were already suspicious of his activities that his intentions were dishonourable.

Most important of all, the success of the Bayless case - with ex-followers appearing as witnesses for the prosecution - emboldened two other ex-followers to open civil suits in order to recover money that they had given to the Movement in happier days.

In April 1937 Barbara Jones, a white ex-convert and the widow of a minister, sued Father Divine for the return of \$2,315. A few days later, Jessie Birdsall, a nurse, sued for the return of \$2,379. Both women accused Father Divine of extorting money from them on false pretences; and Barbara Jones also claimed that Father Divine had not only forced her into "intimacies", but had threatened her with death if she attempted to leave the Sayville extension. "He said that these intimacies would be a blessing for me," she said, "because he claimed that he was God."¹⁴

The accusation could not have come at a more sensitive moment. There had always been doubts about the Movement's sexual taboos and the propriety of Father Divine's relationship with his women devotees. But, for more than a year, there had been sexual scandals surrounding the Movement, involving one of Father Divine's leading white converts, John Wuest Hunt (St. John the Revelator). Hunt's conduct had already convinced some outside the Movement that Father Divine was encouraging a dangerous and perverse fanaticism.

In February 1936, Hunt had been committed to Bellevue Hospital in New York for psychiatric tests following his arrest for sending seven hundred copies of his conversion testimony, described by Federal Commissioner Garret G. Cotter as "viciously corrupt", through the mails to leading public figures and national organisations.¹⁵ No sooner had Hunt been released from hospital as sane,¹⁶ than he had become involved in a fresh scandal with a young, white follower known as Delight Jewel.

Hunt had become obsessed with the idea that Delight Jewel was destined to bear a child by virgin birth who would be the Redeemer. He had begun to call her "Virgin Mary" and he had taken her, in a converted "throne car", on a series of trips throughout the West.¹⁷ In December 1936, their behaviour had attracted Father Divine's attention, and he had written to warn them against any "appearance of evil" or infraction of his sexual taboos.¹⁸ But, in March 1937, Delight Jewel accused Hunt of immoral conduct and the federal authorities issued a warrant for his arrest under the Mann Act.¹⁹ In New York City, the case received headline treatment in the New York Times, the New York Evening Journal and the Amsterdam News.²⁰

The news of Hunt's arrest; the civil suits against Father Divine; and Barbara Jones's allegations of sexual misconduct against Father Divine were a grave embarrassment to the Movement. But, for the

time being, the Peace Mission held together.

The Peace Mission press, always staunchly loyal, rallied to defend the Movement and Father Divine's leadership. In early April 1937, a writer in the World Herald held that "not a ripple disturbed the Perfect Peace and Happiness of the Thousands at FATHER'S New York City headquarters ... No one talked or even thought about opposition, for they were with their LORD and KING." Although a visitor had mentioned the matter of the press accusations, the followers were not concerned or upset. "They knew if the schemes of wicked men had any power to destroy," this writer added bravely, "they would have done so long ago, and if FATHER DIVINE had not been GOD HE would not be on the scene today."

But, in reality, the followers smarted under public exposure and criticism. In the same edition of the World Herald, another journalist acknowledged that there was a storm of protest among the believers against the "prejudicial papers"; and he felt impelled to offer a defence of the Movement's moral standards:

"The high standards of modesty and morality FATHER DIVINE has established in and among HIS followers is so outstanding it is known throughout the world. Probably never before ... has a whole People lived such a life of Purity, for FATHER DIVINE has Taught them to live just as JESUS lived after He was Born, and as Mary lived before Jesus was Born." 21

A few days later, the staff writers of the World Herald published a long and impassioned reminder of Father Divine's "miraculous" work:

"Cancers, tumors, tuberculosis, and practically every so-called disease vanished at the thought of Him. Whole sections of the underworld were transformed in a matter of weeks, and to the ends of the Earth as a living Flame, the HOLY NAME of FATHER DIVINE was spread."

Turning to the offensive, the writer warned the Movement's detractors of the dire fate that awaited them:

"What happened to the opposers? They were devastated. Some died immediately, others lingered in suffering. Judge Smith and others died physically. Some died mentally, vocationally, professionally, financially and in popularity. Some went through bankruptcy. Many were killed or injured in automobile accidents, some went to the insane asylum, and all reaped what they sowed, 'pressed down, shaken together and running over'." 22

Father Divine, himself, was quick to see the threat to his reputation. He was concerned for his prestige; but he was even more concerned about the impact the criticisms had on his authority among the believers. If he was evasive and deferential in court, back at the banquet table he sought to assert his authority by turning his wrath against his court critics, the press and the hostile ex-followers.

As soon as Verinda and Thomas Brown's allegations appeared in the New Yorker magazine, he went into the attack. He railed against those "grafters, racketeers and murderers" who had left the Movement "because I would not give them thousands of dollars for nothing." They had slandered "the BODY of it for a few pieces of silver; but I AM telling them, 'IT IS BETTER FOR THEM TO LAY OFF'." He told the followers not to read the "prejudicial" articles; for they would only "reproduce and reincarnate prejudice in you ... and destruction follow." They would cause the followers to doubt him; to return to their old conceptions of God and to regress into their former, fatally destructive ways.²³

Of course, even before the followers, he never admitted that he had taken money from those who were now prosecuting him. But the burden of his assault upon the exiles was not that they were lying, but that they were ungrateful. He had taken this attitude in 1929,

when Fannie Richardson, had demanded back all that she had given to him. In a written reply, Father Divine had told Fannie that he felt under no obligation to refund her money. She had given the money freely and she had received much in return from the Movement. If Fannie insisted, he had added, he would have back payment for all that he had provided for her:

"Give me the same you would have had to pay anyone else for food, room, laundry, dress-making, pressing, taxi-service, employment agency service and use of books; and count everything I have done for you ... including my personal instructions, and allow me the same you would have to pay any other person for the same, then add all what you have given me and subtract it from mine and see how much you owe me. When you give me all or the value of all I have given you, then I will give you all you have given me." 24

This was the essence of his attitude again in 1937. He denounced the ingratitude of the ex-followers and denied the power of the press and the exiles to hurt him. Their slanders, he said, only publicized his work and achievements:

"I have Risen above opposition and Declared to the world at large, every knock is a boost, every criticism is a Praise, every curse is a blessing. Therefore, we have something to be thankful for."

He warned his persecutors that they could not hope to prosper: "Every opposition that rises in opposition I shall use the sword to slay himself and those who are concerned."²⁵ In a rage of righteousness, he compared his persecution with the agony of Christ's crucifixion. Like Christ, he had to suffer the barbs and blows of the evil, the blind and the sinful in order to redeem humanity. His difficulties would end in triumph:

"I will Resurrect all of the dead! I will do things seemingly unbelievable because of MY Stripes! They are the Healing Balm ... It is essential for accusations, persecutions and all undesirable sayings to arise that GOD might be seen and known above all the reputation of men."

No-one could hinder his work: "I Say nothing shall prosper that may rise in opposition to the Fundamental, for I SHALL SHAKE ALL CREATION."²⁶

The controversy drew crowds of followers and sightseers to the Movement's banquet meetings in Harlem. Many followers were confused and hurt by the allegations made against Father Divine and they sought his reassurance and guidance.²⁷ Already, some of the believers had themselves tried to defend Father Divine against his detractors. During the Bayless case, over a dozen followers had written to the courts to insist that Father Divine owned nothing of his own in the Movement and received no money for his work.²⁸ Now, with their distress and uncertainty whipped to fever pitch by Father Divine's anger and his appeal to the followers to compare his difficulties to Christ's persecution, their emotions finally spilled over into violence.

On April 20 1937, two thousand five hundred converts and visitors were packed into the banquet room and auditorium at 20 West 115th Street, listening to Father Divine, when Paul Comora and his friend, Harry Green, arrived to serve a summons on Father Divine in the Jessie Birdsall suit. The meeting was noisy and fervent, and the two men waited on the edge of the crowd for Father Divine to finish. But by two o'clock in the morning there was still no sign that the meeting was near an end, and so, Comora pushed his way through the crush and slapped Father Divine on the chest with the summons. Surprised, Father Divine stepped back with a cry. The followers, fearing that he had been attacked, surged forward and closed in, angrily, on the process server.

In the uproar that followed, Comora and a reporter from the New York Evening Journal were knocked down, kicked and punched. Comora fought his way out of the building, hailed a taxi and fled. When

the police arrived at the extension, they found Harry Green unconscious, with several broken ribs and a stab wound, which was presumed to have been made with an icepick, in his stomach. Three followers were arrested and a summons was issued for Father Divine's arrest. But Father Divine had disappeared.²⁹ John Lamb refused to say where he had gone and Arthur Madison was equally unco-operative. "People have been making a great mystery of Father Divine for so many years," he said curtly, "it appears ... that Father Divine intends to continue the mystery for the time being by remaining out of sight."³⁰

On April 22, Father Divine was found by the police in rather ignominious circumstances; hiding behind a furnace in the back of a house used by followers in Milford, Connecticut.³¹ His arrest, moreover, precipitated an event that proved that the Movement was in far greater disarray than anyone could have imagined: for, that same day, the news broke that Faithful Mary had quarrelled with Father Divine over property matters and had left the Movement.³²

In a statement to the New York Post Faithful Mary said that she intended to strip the Peace Mission of all its trappings of mystery. Father Divine's followers, she said, needed "something to hold them together. They will follow me."³³ Over Radio WMCA she said: "I love the God that is in Father Divine today. I love the God that is in his angels today. I love the God that is in any person, but Father Divine is not solely God and no mortal person can be."³⁴ Then, from the safety of a hotel, registered in her name at High Falls in upstate New York, she elaborated her charges against Father Divine and spoke of her own plans in an interview with Earl Brown, a reporter from the New York Amsterdam News. Under Brown's promptings, Faithful Mary embellished all the allegations of financial and sexual misconduct already levelled against Father Divine in public.

She insisted that Father Divine controlled a weekly income of between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars; ten thousand dollars of which was profit. She, herself, had handed him large sums of money. Before she moved to the 126th Street extension, she gave him five hundred dollars a week over a four year period; after her move, the amounts were much larger: one thousand five hundred dollars a week from the 126th Street extension and five hundred dollars a week from the extension at Lenox Avenue and 123rd Street. She pictured Father Divine as a jealous, unscrupulous financial manipulator. She told Brown:

"I have seen money packed in candy boxes in his 'forbidden office' in the main Kingdom - stacked so high that it would make Rockefeller jealous. Don't let anybody kid you. Divine handles all the money that comes into the Kingdom! And he's keeping it too!"

She claimed that she had seen Father Divine accept a 'peace offering' of fifteen thousand dollars from John Wuest Hunt during the Delight Jewel affair. In return, she alleged, Father Divine had allowed the two to remain together until circumstances had been changed by Hunt's arrest. She added that Father Divine had also intervened in her own affairs to take away ten thousand dollars that had been entrusted to her safe keeping by Will Gottlieb, an elderly, white Cleveland convert.

Then she accused Father Divine of taking sexual advantage of young girl followers and, in response to Brown's promptings, said that she had been "attacked" too:

"Yes, he had immoral relations with me! He forced himself on me - he got me under his devilish spell - he sated his inhuman desires on me - the same as he has done with scores and scores of women, since he has founded his racket cult."

To compound her attack, Faithful Mary charged Father Divine with contempt for the sick and dying in the Movement; a contempt that let

the dead go to the "potter's field" for burial as charity cases, "even after they had given him everything they had in this world."

Father Divine, she said, had tried to curb her independence. He had taken her away from the West 126th Street extension because she was becoming too powerful. But now she was free of his control: "I'm going to do all I can to see that devil put behind bars for a long, long, long time ... I'm going to tell the world plenty about that man before this thing is over."

As for her own future, she told Brown that she was planning to open up a chain of restaurants in every state in the Union. She would start in Harlem, Newark (N.J.) and Washington D.C., hiring hundreds of unemployed girls as waitresses and twenty chefs to run both a day and night time service. She would begin her own organization:

"I am going to do some good in this old world now ... I'm going to start just like I did in Newark. With only a few dollars. But watch the money come rolling in! It takes brains and God to succeed. I got brains and I now trust in the real God. I know I'll succeed." 35

Two weeks after Faithful Mary's defection, another blow struck the Movement when a city court announced its ruling in the Jessie Birdsall suit. Noting that Father Divine had failed to appear in court to answer the case against him, the judge awarded in Jessie Birdsall's favour. Father Divine was ordered to refund her contribution of \$2,739.³⁶

Settlement in both the Jessie Birdsall and Barbara Jones cases remained pending, however: for, three days after the Birdsall judgement, on May 6 1937, Attorney Lesselbaum filed suit in the New York Supreme Court for Verinda Brown, requesting the liquidation of the Peace Mission's assets in order to reimburse all those who had entrusted their funds to it since 1930. She asked the courts to

appoint receivers to control the Peace Mission's assets and income and to stop its property from changing hands. Seventy-five followers who held property within the Movement were named as co-defendants with Father Divine.³⁷

Requiring the courts to examine the Peace Mission's financial organisation in detail, Verinda Brown claimed that Father Divine had appropriated and mis-used the money of his disciples. In particular, that he had used it to invest in property that was then legally entrusted to believers who had played no part in paying for it. On her behalf, Lesselbaum argued before Supreme Court Justice Philip J. McCook that the entire Peace Mission Movement was "contrary to public policy and should be dissolved."³⁸

The city press confidently predicted the imminent collapse of the Movement. The New York Sun announced: "Self-Anointed Demi God's Clay Feet Crumble Fast" and the Amsterdam News headlined: "'Divine' Kingdom Falling."³⁹ News came that the District Attorney of Kingston, Ulster County (N.Y.) had opened a Grand Jury investigation into the Movement's upstate properties and that Faithful Mary had agreed to testify.⁴⁰

Many followers were thrown into utter confusion. Over five hundred converts gathered outside the police station in downtown New York to greet Father Divine on his release on bail after his Milford arrest. "Victory! Victory! God is back on Earth" they shouted; and large crowds met him on his return to Harlem.⁴¹

Loyal believers turned angrily against the defectors and their supporters. John J. Zellner, a process server, was turned back by a group of followers, his legal documents thrown into the street, when he tried to serve a summons in the Verinda Brown suit.⁴²

Journalist Earl Brown and four white friends were unceremoniously ejected from 20 West 115th Street when they attempted to attend a

banquet meeting.⁴³

Bitter words were spoken. At one of the extensions previously under Faithful Mary's supervision, a believer said:

"Faithful Mary better not show her face here. We'll not let her darken our door. Now that she's said all that she thinks about Father, she has been stripped of all her power. She ain't got nothing but that big body of hers and that's hers only as long as Father lets her keep it. If she comes back here, we'll throw her right out." ⁴⁴

The anger led to more blows. On June 17 the ever loyal Priscilla Paul met Humility Consolation and Barbara Jones on the street and challenged them to explain why they had joined Faithful Mary. Humility Consolation was only too willing to tell Priscilla Paul: "God Divine is a racket. You are fools for worshipping him". At that, two male believers who had overheard the argument, stepped in, seized Humility Consolation and, aided by Priscilla Paul, dragged her into a Peace Mission store at 24 West 115th Street and beat her. When Humility later returned to the Peace Mission with two policemen to identify her assailants, they were surrounded by a crowd of followers who barred their way. Police reinforcements were called and six radio cars, an emergency squad and a dozen detectives rushed to the scene. The police dispersed the crowd; and, in the charge, two black male converts and Barbara Jones were injured. Humility Consolation suffered a dislocated shoulder, several fractured ribs and a bruised face at the hands of the believers.⁴⁵

It was obvious that there was something badly amiss in the Movement for it to be so deeply divided; and for believers who had once been devoted to Father Divine to be his most bitter public enemies.

There had always been strains and tensions within the Movement.

Father Divine's rulings on sex, medical care and the rejection of family ties caused as many problems within the Movement as they excited criticism from without. These were difficult disciplines; and not all the followers found it easy to cope with them, especially when faced with sickness, the death of fellow followers or the presence and demands of loved ones. At all times, the pressure of obedience to the "evangelical life" led some followers to become dissatisfied and disillusioned.

But these tensions cannot explain the Movement's sudden disruption. Indeed, there can be no simple explanation, for each exile had his or her particular grievances and motives. Yet their alienation had common roots in the changes that accompanied the Movement's growth and success over the first half of the decade.

The Movement paid the greatest price for its rapid expansion in a loss of intimacy between Father Divine and his followers. The Movement's organisation and discipline depended on this personal relationship. Thus, it was inevitable that Father Divine's increasing remoteness not only encouraged grievances among the believers, but also prevented their resolution. Thomas and Verinda Brown, the followers who became the central figures in the legal action against Father Divine, had broken away from Father Divine's influence as the Movement became too large for him to devote hours of attention to them.

Cook and butler for a wealthy, white family in Forest Hills (N.Y.) Verinda and Thomas Brown had joined the Movement in Sayville through the encouragement of friend and neighbour, Priscilla Paul.⁴⁶ They cashed their savings and insurances to give to Father Divine, and they volunteered their wages, labour and personal possessions to support the Sayville household. They separated in obedience to Father Divine's dictates on celibacy and Thomas went to live and work

at 52 Macon Street.

Although Thomas and Verinda found the disciplines of the "evangelical life" at times harsh and impossible to obey, Father Divine kept their loyalty by a combination of discipline and encouragement. He ignored them at the banquet table when they were reluctant to surrender all their savings for the Movement's use; and he rebuked them when they confessed to breaches of his sexual taboos. Yet, he also rewarded them with favours and attention. Years later, they remembered, with affection, evenings spent with Father Divine discussing the Bible; and a Sunday spent sat next to him at the banquet table.

But once the Peace Mission shifted to Harlem and converts came by the score, it was impossible for Father Divine to sustain such close contact with each believer. Verinda and Thomas Brown still found the disciplines of the "evangelical life" difficult, but now they had to cope without Father Divine's constant, familiar encouragement. Increasingly, he relied on rebuke and criticism to hold their obedience. But criticism alone could not guarantee their loyalty. The Browns, especially Verinda, became more and more unhappy. Her disillusionment became complete in 1934.

She took her usual gift of thirty-five dollars from her wages to Father Divine, but he would not accept it. He criticised her for seeing Thomas and said that he was not interested in her until she conformed to his "mind and spirit." She was made to feel even more wretched and rejected a few weeks later when a group of followers prevented her from boarding a 'bus taking them and Father Divine to a meeting in Philadelphia. "Then I went away and I took my money and bought this coat," she said later, "and a lot of other nice things that I wanted for a long time." She left the Movement.

Thomas stayed a few months longer. But, late in 1935, he

followed his wife. He had been working as a furnaceman in a Harlem extension and felt that he no longer mattered in the Movement. His closest friend and workmate had just died, leaving him sad and lonely. He walked out and returned to Verinda and his old job at Forest Hills.⁴⁷

Thomas and Verinda Brown left the Peace Mission because they felt that Father Divine no longer cared enough about them. Indeed, it would appear that Father Divine's detachment increased in proportion to the size of the Movement. As the Peace Mission grew, so he kept in contact with the believers by frequent public appearances and by "spontaneous" visits to different extensions and Peace businesses. Each night, he presided at the banquet table. Yet he was inevitably remote from the mass of his followers, who read his teachings in the Peace Mission press instead of hearing them from his own lips.⁴⁸

His remoteness was now tinged with arrogance. He savoured the aura of power and enjoyed the exaggerated adulation that was heaped upon him by his followers whenever they saw him. Myrtle Pollard described the extraordinary number of gifts offered to Father Divine during a 1936 Peace Mission boat trip up the River Hudson: "The best brands of candy, nuts, assorted cakes and cookies, fruits and specialities of many kinds were in evidence. Someone sent in the loveliest small sized canteloupe. Father Divine refused this as He had done everything previously."⁴⁹

Common sense dictated that to accept these gifts publicly would be to risk exciting jealousies among the followers and raise the suspicions of outsiders. Yet Father Divine chose to keep a barrier between himself and his followers, and their competition for his attention was an expression of a hunger for greater intimacy.⁵⁰ Indeed, Father Divine widened the gulf by relying, more and more, on

a select circle of followers to carry out his instructions. This group enjoyed Father Divine's favours and shielded him zealously from personal contact with the mass of the believers.⁵¹

Not only did they become an elite within the Movement, but this select circle brought a distinctly new style to the Peace Mission's affairs. These were the men and women responsible for the organisation of the Righteous Government campaign. They were middle-class, educated, and ambitious for the Movement; and a significant number of them were white. While they were attuned to the aspirations of the mass of Father Divine's followers, their attempt to mould predominantly lower class black women in their own image undoubtedly left its toll in intimidation and even resentment. Despite the Movement's avowed inter-racialism, outsiders noticed that the black followers tended to defer to the white converts⁵² - surely an indication that they did not feel wholly at ease with them.

The love and respect that began to be accorded to Faithful Mary was yet another indication that the followers were losing touch with Father Divine and uncertain in a changing Movement. In contrast to Father Divine, Faithful Mary was warm, active and accessible to the believers; and, at a time when he and his advisors were moving the Peace Mission in new directions, she was an anchor of the past, a living reminder of the Movement's roots.

Faithful Mary took little part in the Righteous Government campaign. Most of her energies were devoted to the management of the businesses and extensions under her care. Most important of all, she was a symbol of success and all that the Movement represented for many of Father Divine's lower-class black followers. Her past and its elements - beginning with hard times in the South; war-time migration; destitution in the city and final salvation - were well known and touched on the struggles and aspirations of many

believers. To those who felt uneasy in the changing Movement, she was the one person who was powerful and respected within the Peace Mission with whom they could talk and identify. Indeed, by the middle of 1936, Faithful Mary had become the pre-eminent woman in the Movement and rivalled Father Divine in the affections of some of the followers. At her 126th Street extension, posters and pennants celebrated her name⁵³ and her devoted fellow-followers called her "Mother" or "Mother Mary."⁵⁴

Father Divine's old intimates were replaced by new and he grew away from the mass of the believers. Thus, the seeds of strife were sown. The Browns' left the Movement, angry and disappointed; and Faithful Mary gained in independence, confidence and popularity.

Still, these tensions might yet have been contained if Father Divine had not grown financially ambitious and decided to seize control of the money generated by the Peace Mission's businesses to use it for the acquisition of property.

Throughout the early 'thirties, the Peace Mission had operated on highly decentralised, informal lines: a network of small and autonomous units. Money, and the decisions about its use, remained largely in the hands of the believers. Some of the believers gave their money and goods directly to Father Divine for the Peace Mission use and, in this way, he came to handle and spend large sums within the Movement. But the believers gave him this money freely; and did not begrudge him his elegant lifestyle. It was understood that he owned nothing of his own; that he spent the money in his possession for the Peace Mission's benefit; and that all his comforts were the followers' "love offerings" to him for the changes that he had made in their lives.

Certainly, there is no evidence that, in the early 'thirties, Father Divine made any attempt to organise the Peace Mission's

financial affairs or cream off the profits in a systematic fashion. But, in 1935, Father Divine started to look for new ways to expand his work and to use the wealth that the Movement was generating.⁵⁵ He decided to invest in property: not only in New York City but also in rural, upstate New York. There, he envisioned, his followers could own land, farms and homes and, escaping the city, build a rural colony, the "Promised Land".⁵⁶

The decision to buy property was a fateful one. For once the Peace Mission's wealth was invested in tangible assets, it focused critical attention on Father Divine's motives and his access to money. It made his claims to ignorance of financial matters absurd. Moreover, the spectacle of groups of believers holding legal title to property in the "Promised Land" encouraged Verinda Brown to open suit in the Supreme Court. That his present followers should benefit from the wealth of a Movement that she had helped to advance, while she, herself, had nothing to show for her years of devotion and sacrifice, was salt to her wounds.⁵⁷

But the most important effects of Father Divine's decision came within the Peace Mission itself, for it precipitated the defection of Humility Consolation and Faithful Mary who, until then, had been firm in their loyalty to him.

There were a few wealthy believers, like the woman who bought a farm in New Paltz (N.Y.), who only needed the slightest suggestion from Father Divine to invest their money in property: followers who, as Father Divine said, were keen to "give ... service ... by purchasing real property [so that] others would be the enjoyers of it, by going and living and developing this property and improving it."⁵⁸ But he was not prepared to leave his vision to their haphazard initiative. He wanted to direct and execute the plan

himself. So it was that he intervened in the financial affairs of the Movement in an unprecedented fashion.

He began to check the profits and assets of the Peace Mission enterprises under his "Personal Jurisdiction"; to call in funds, wherever possible, that were normally controlled by other believers; and to court wealthy followers. Aware that such an intervention threatened to destroy his image as being above monetary matters, he made it discreet and even surreptitious. It was known only to his most trusted disciples: principally his secretaries at 20 West 115th Street and his legal advisor, Arthur M. Madison, who accompanied him on several journeys to view property in upstate New York.

At first, all went well. Most of the followers were ignorant of his new financial involvement. Even if they knew of his property transactions it was accepted that he received money as gifts by the followers and that he used it for the Peace Mission's benefit. So, the source of the funds that he was using for investment was not questioned. Meanwhile, Father Divine's trusted circle of advisors and assistants accepted his initiative as highly proper and in the Movement's best interests. As Lesselbaum demonstrated in court during the Bayless case, the secretaries were prepared to support and protect Father Divine to the point of perjury.

But danger lay in the contradiction between Father Divine's public claims to be above money-mindedness and his new, keen financial interest. The contradiction became too much for Humility Consolation, who had collaborated in Father Divine's collection of money. Her knowledge of his activities placed an intolerable strain on her loyalty and faith in him. Eventually, she left the Movement, filled with a sense of betrayal and outrage; ready to embarrass Father Divine in public once the Bayless case brought his role in the affairs of the Movement into question.⁵⁹ Most important of all,

Father Divine's determination to call in money normally controlled by other believers had a disastrous effect on his relationship with Faithful Mary.

Since her arrival in New York City from Newark, Faithful Mary had enjoyed considerable financial independence. Appreciating her strength of character and her business flair, Father Divine had allowed her to open numerous extensions and businesses on the Movement's behalf. In November 1934, the Spoken Word reported that she directly supervised nine Peace Mission extensions which cost one thousand dollars a month to rent.⁶⁰ By January 1935, fifteen premises were under her personal control.⁶¹ She held independent, financial power in a movement that normally stressed co-operation and communal responsibility. She paid all the bills for the premises under her supervision and four secretaries assisted her with the administration of her affairs. She wore fine clothes, expensive jewelry and had her own car and private chauffeur.⁶²

For many years, she was impeccably loyal and unquestioning in her obedience to Father Divine. She always attributed her success to him and she was grateful for the chance he had given her to hold responsibility and to prove her capabilities.

It is possible that she never fully accepted all of Father Divine's messianic and millennial claims. She said after her desertion: "I never believed in this bunk about living forever in these bodies of ours. I believed in the life hereafter, earned through good, clean living and in contact with the spirit of God."⁶³ But she loved her life in the Movement; her opportunity and freedom of action. She believed in its ideals and its power to salvage people like herself. As she said after her desertion: "The movement is not bad. It is, on the whole, good. I knew that right from the beginning. Even when the spirit told me that Father Divine

was not God, I knew that the movement was good. It showed people the way to healthy and happy lives".⁶⁴

Even in the summer of 1936, just a few months before her desertion, she went to great lengths to affirm her obedience to Father Divine. In a banquet testimony printed in the New Day she reiterated her conversion experience and spoke of her allegiance to Father Divine. Since the day he had saved her, she said, "HIS Mind and Spirit are with me and keep me in the right path". She added:

"I do not allow the mortal mind to register in this consciousness now. The germs of mortality that try to enter, I expose them ... I let nothing come between my soul and my Savior, let no personality come into my consciousness, nor anything that is negative; nothing but the positive because that same mind can attach itself to my mind and cause me to walk after mortality instead of walking after GOD Who is FATHER DIVINE."

She insisted that she was still Father Divine's "vessel":

"I am still letting Him express through me and keep my mind stayed on the throttle of Life, Joy, Peace and Happiness. I know just what I left behind me. I know what would happen if I would compromise with the flesh to please the flesh. I look always, at the Blessor and the Giver of Life instead of looking at personality and I let nothing move me ... I thank FATHER for giving me the power to keep my mind stayed on Him ... Whatever good I am doing now it is FATHER DIVINE doing it in me".⁶⁵

In the following month she published a statement in the New Day in which she asked the followers not to call her "Mother" or "Mother Mary":

"... for the benefit of saving others from sure destruction, it would be best to refrain from attaching any name or title to me other than Faithful Mary, as while you are doing that you may before you know it become attached to me as a person and possibly develop a human affection. Then the negative conditions of those who claimed you in mortal consciousness can find a loophole through which to enter your system and cause you to become detached from your GOD, your maker and your real MOTHER." ⁶⁶

But her success, her independence and her popularity undermined her loyalty and her awe of Father Divine. As she developed her own enterprises and came to understand the basis of the Movement's organisation, so she began to recognize her own part in her success. She came to appreciate that Father Divine's power lay not in any special access to divinity, but in his ability to release and channel the abilities of followers, like herself. Once she had made this discovery, her belief in Father Divine's power was deflated and her confidence that she could succeed without him increased. Indeed, she began to see herself as one of the pivots of Father Divine's success. She told reporters later: "He never cured anybody. It was I who showed them the way to be healed by contacting my spirit."⁶⁷

Still, she was content to stay in the Movement; happy to let the other converts praise Father Divine as their saviour. "They gave the credit to Father Divine," she said of them, "and I was willing that they should."⁶⁸ But she could not brook Father Divine's attempt to curb her independence and claim her profits.

In 1936 Father Divine made his first move to regulate her assets. He tried to take control of the hotel in High Falls that was registered in her name. The hotel stood on a quarter-acre plot and was used mainly as a summer rest-house for city followers. It was important, too, as a base for converts who were considering permanent settlement in the Movement's new rural communities.⁶⁹

Faithful Mary decided to protect her interests against Father Divine's intervention. In August or September 1936, she secretly contacted Nathan Kranzler, one of the Peace Mission's lawyers whom she felt she could trust, and transferred the ownership of the premises to a corporation which was registered in her original name, Viola Wilson. She opened a private bank account, also in this name, in Newark.⁷⁰

Still she remained within the Movement. But she became increasingly critical of Father Divine. When Mother Divine fell ill and was admitted into the charity ward of a hospital under her former name, Annie Brown, Faithful Mary was disgusted by Father Divine's lack of compassion. She intervened, paid for private hospital treatment and regularly visited Mother Divine in defiance of his orders.⁷¹

Other incidents irritated her. Father Divine criticised her for keeping her own financial records; and for allowing posters and pennants in her name to decorate the extensions under her supervision.⁷² He selected Grace Faith to take over the supervision of Faithful Mary's West 126th Street "heavens."⁷³ She was moved to supervise another extension on 123rd Street and Lenox Avenue.

She began to suspect Father Divine's interest in money. She noticed bitterly, his keenness to take Will Gottlieb's money away from her control;⁷⁴ and what she believed to be his readiness to turn a blind eye to John Wuest Hunt's conduct in return for his gift of fifteen thousand dollars. She became rebellious and spoke of "sham" in the Movement.

On April 18 1937, Father Divine tried to re-assert his authority over her. He summoned her to his office and told her that she must be punished for her sins. She was to publicly confess to her "sin against God" and pay penance by working in the kitchens of a Peace Mission farm in the "Promised Land".⁷⁵

But Faithful Mary was no longer willing to defer. Father Divine's mystique was shattered. In a Movement in which suspicion of men was conspicuous, Father Divine's conduct had revealed him to be, in Faithful Mary's eyes, no better than many another exploitative man. As she wrote later,

"I knew he was only trying to get me to turn over

to him what I had in my possession. I could see through the whole thing and did not intend to be made a fool ... my experience of the past had taught me how to deal with men. For, after all; he was a man, just a natural man, if there were any tricking to be done - I intended to do it." 76

Convinced of her capacity to succeed without him, she found in the spate of civil suits and the disruption in the Movement, the chance to leave and set up in opposition. "The morning one of the angels came around to my place at 123rd Street and Lenox," she said, "and told [me] that Father Divine had run away because of that stabbing [of Harry Green] I hollered 'Thank the good God! I am now a free woman!'"⁷⁷

The way that the followers divided, for and against Father Divine, depended, ultimately, on whom they were prepared to trust and believe. They had to decide whether or not the surrender of money and goods to Father Divine for the Movement's use amounted to exploitation. They had to judge the truth of Humility Consolation's and Faithful Mary's reports of Father Divine's financial intervention since most of them knew nothing of these activities.

The group of trusted advisors, who had aided and abetted Father Divine's recent initiatives, were, themselves, troubled by misgivings and recriminations. Arthur M. Madison apparently received the brunt of the blame for bringing Father Divine into disrepute. In August 1937 Lamb and Madison quarrelled; and although Madison was representing Father Divine in the Supreme Court suit, Ralph Meyers replaced him as Father Divine's chief attorney.⁷⁸ Then, in October 1937, Madison abruptly left the Movement amid charges that he had become too "dominant" in the Movement's affairs and had been involved in the "solicitation of funds."⁷⁹

The Peace Mission was plainly in disarray. Two street speakers, "Prophet" Kiowa Costonie and Sufi Abdul Hamid, then chose the moment to advance their own interests at Father Divine's expense.

For some years, both men had earned their living and built their reputations by the exploitation of popular issues. During the first half of the 'thirties they had each combined elements of conjure, religious exoticism and showmanship with the rhetoric of racial militancy on the streets. In Baltimore, Costonie had used spiritual healing and the paraphernalia of candles, incense and balms to draw crowds to hear his cold, every-day logic on race assertion and direct action against white-owned stores that refused to hire blacks.⁸⁰ In Harlem, the Sufi had also blended eastern mysticism with racial militancy in Harlem's Jobs Campaign. But, by the mid-'thirties, both men's fortunes were at a low ebb.

Leaving Baltimore after an injunction had halted picketing there, Costonie had moved to Brooklyn in 1934. He had set up a tent headquarters on an empty lot on Pacific Street between Utica and Rochester Avenues, but lacked the following he had once attracted.⁸¹ The Sufi, hounded by the law and Jewish organisations, had retired to a farm in Monticello (N.Y.) apparently stepping out of public life in favour of the study of Yoga and eastern religions.⁸²

But, like Costonie, the Sufi was a street habitue and it was only a matter of time before he sought his fame and fortune there again. Father Divine's undisputed influence as a popular 'religious' leader stood in the way of both men's ambitions. They knew that their survival as street speakers depended upon their ability to capture public interest and outstrip their rivals in the field of popular leadership. Their success depended on Father Divine's fall.

Costonie appreciated this as early as 1935. In that year, he

challenged Father Divine to debate his claim to divinity with him. Father Divine demurred and contented himself with leading four thousand followers past Costonie's tent in Brooklyn on to a rally in a nearby hall.⁸³ Costonie retaliated by moving his headquarters to Harlem and challenging Father Divine to strike him dead. He told the press:

"When I get up to Harlem he'll have to quit. Only the fanatics of my race believe in that kind of stuff. That's why I dared him to strike me dead. I want to impress all members of my race. I want them to come to my teachings and listen to me."

He trumpeted his arrival in Harlem with handbills:

"FREE FREE FREE
See and Hear this Amazing Man you
Heard on the Radio and Read
of in the Newspapers
Prophet K. Costonie
in person
Do You Need Money? Do You Need a Home? Do
You Need a Car? Do You Need Something Special?
Prophet Costonie says:
With God's Power All Things Are Possible
Money Luck Wisdom Power
Services every night except Saturday 7.30 p.m. at
Congregational Church of God in Christ 125 W. 130 Street
Free Souveniers to First 50 People."

From his new headquarters, he announced that he had put a curse on Father Divine that would guarantee Divine's failure and eventual exile.⁸⁴

With a grasp of the elements of Father Divine's success, Costonie imitated Father Divine's offer of moral, economic and political leadership. Costonie promised the poor and sick cash gifts; he opened a free employment service and he promised legal aid for those in trouble with the police. He began adult education classes, in co-operation with the W.P.A., in commercial training, languages, civics and citizenship at his Temple. He asked his devotees to prepare themselves to vote and he spoke of running as a candidate for the State Assembly from Harlem's Nineteenth Assembly District.

With an eye to Father Divine's suave and affluent public image, Costonie leased an apartment on Harlem's "Sugar Hill"; surrounded himself with a retinue of personal assistants; and engaged press agents.⁸⁵

Father Divine's legal difficulties and Faithful Mary's defection, then provided Costonie with an opportunity to supersede Father Divine. He announced that his "curse" on Father Divine had come to pass and he told reporters that he planned to make Faithful Mary his leading aide. "A woman like her," he told the journalists, "is good for nothing else but playing second [fiddle] to some man who has more brains than she." Warming to the idea of using her skill and knowledge to build a Costonie empire on Peace Mission lines, he said: "I could take Faithful into my organisation (some 35,000 people) [sic] and give her charge of the food and the housing, and we could get somewhere."⁸⁶

Faithful Mary, however, had her own ideas. Insulted and disgusted by Costonie's suggestion, she told reporters: "I wouldn't think of joining up with that Costonie, because he is just as bad as Divine, if not worse." The disgruntled Costonie complained, "she thinks she is bigger than Divine and no one can tell her anything."⁸⁷

The Sufi was more subtle. He bided his time and did not attempt to interfere with Faithful Mary's plans or bring her into his organisation. She was plainly too ambitious for herself. The Sufi undoubtedly calculated that she could effectively undermine Father Divine's authority without any extra assistance.

Indeed, after her defection, Faithful Mary moved rapidly to consolidate her own position in the cult stakes. She appeared in the Supreme Court as Lesselbaum's star witness against Father Divine in the Verinda Brown suit.⁸⁸ Then, claiming that the extension housed in the Eastman-Gaines building on 123rd Street and Lenox

Avenue was leased in her name, she began legal proceedings to order Father Divine to vacate the Peace Mission from the premises.⁸⁹ She sent removal trucks to Greenkill Park, one of the Movement's upstate, rural retreats, to collect furniture, worth three thousand dollars, that she said she had bought.⁹⁰ She courted publicity and attended a Holiness revival held at St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlem sponsored by the Churches of God in Christ, where she denounced Father Divine and spoke on the theme, "The God within me."⁹¹ Then, failing to dislodge the Movement from the Eastman-Gaines building, Faithful Mary took the lease on a house at 2064 Fifth Avenue and informed the press that she intended to launch her own "Universal Light Movement."

Reporters found that she had abandoned the cosmetic rules of the Peace Mission. Her hair, once greyish and pushed modestly into a lace cap, was now tinted black and fashionably styled. She was full of energy and confidence. Her Mission, she said, would be formally opened on August 29, and she expected between two and three thousand people at the main service and supper. She told the press that she intended to rescue and uplift the poor, and open hostels for them throughout Harlem where they could buy chicken dinners for five cents and obtain room, board and laundry facilities for five dollars a week. "I will go out," she said, "and bring them from the bar-room, the hedgeways and the by-ways." She denied that she sought to copy Father Divine. She would, she said, offer her devotees "moral and religious teachings" and show them how "to know God; recognize God in others and recognize God in themselves. For God is in all."⁹²

The Sufi was involved only indirectly in Faithful Mary's rival bid. One of his leading henchmen, Cheves Richardson, served as a ghost-writer for Faithful Mary's expose of Father Divine⁹³ - 'God' - he's just a natural man - which was published in the week before the opening of her Universal Light Mission.

The book was a lively polemic, repeating much of the scandal and the allegations that had already appeared in the city press. It was written as if by Faithful Mary herself. It related her life history before she joined the Peace Mission, her conversion and her estrangement. It deflated the "money mystery" of Father Divine, described him as a tax-dodger, and claimed that he lived off the money and slave labour of his misguided disciples. It ridiculed Father Divine's political ambitions; and suggested that he did not abide by the "evangelical" disciplines that he imposed upon his followers. The expose rehearsed the now familiar details of the Hunt affair, the defections and the court cases, and ended with an invitation to the reader to join Faithful Mary's Universal Light Movement.⁹⁴

The Sufi presumably calculated that he could easily outstrip Faithful Mary once he had allowed her to undermine Father Divine's leadership and mystique. In September 1937, scarcely a month after the opening of Faithful Mary's new mission, the Sufi, now resplendent as "Bishop Amiru-Al-Mu-Minin Sufi A. Hamid" announced the beginning of his own Universal Order of Tranquility, and promised that there would be "no fakery ... my religion shall be based on the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, ancient Egyptian philosopher."⁹⁵

Never before had so much adverse publicity plagued the Peace Mission. Newspapers and journals treated the upset of Father Divine's fortunes as the inevitable reverses and demise of a cult leader. His career and past were subjected to scrutiny, both frivolous and serious.⁹⁶ Even those who sought to be fair to Father Divine did him no service. Floyd Calvin, a features writer on the New York Age, who begged "colored editors [to] ... play the Divine case" with care, was less concerned for Father Divine's pretensions to divinity than anxious that the black press should not ridicule black

leadership.⁹⁷ 1936 and 1937 saw, too, the publication of John Hoshor's and R.A. Parker's full-length books about the Peace Mission which, while testament to the Movement's size and influence, did little to bolster Father Divine's messianic mystique.

By 1937 the Righteous Government campaign was also running into difficulties. Even Father Divine's most loyal converts found it hard to explain why he did not sweep the political arena; why he did not command the obedience of employers or why he did not, as he had promised, "put His Spirit through" when all doors were closed against him. To some extent, they found ways to deflect criticism and suppress their doubts. They spoke of "unjust", "bigoted" and "prejudiced" officials; of the conspiracy of the "unrighteous" to sabotage Father Divine's work. But they could not explain why the unjust did not suffer agonies of retributive suffering for their contempt. Judge Smith in Sayville had suffered death for his opposition: Judge Panken, like the heedless politicians, the discriminatory employers, the court critics and the defecting followers, remained alive and well.

By September 1937 the adverse publicity was so strong that Father Divine felt obliged to offer some brief comment on his activities to the believers in order to repair his damaged image. At a banquet meeting at 20 West 115th Street he spoke of his role in the financial affairs of the Movement.

For many years, he said, he had rejected money proffered to him by his faithful followers: "I could not and would not accept it, according to MY Purpose, as MY Mission is a FREE Gift to the World, GRATIS to mankind; therefore, as a Message bearer and as a REDEEMER and a SAVIOR, I could not sell MY MESSAGE, neither MY BLESSINGS." He said that he had told these followers to wait, "that the time would come when they could invest in some way

constructively that they would get something material in return." Finally, in 1935, "I saw that there was a method" and he had invited the believers to invest in property for all the followers' benefit.

It was an extraordinary statement. Never before had Father Divine felt the need to explain himself to the believers. It was still only half the truth, as he avoided the crucial matter of his role as a collector and disbursing officer of funds. He tried, too, to use his admission to deflect rather than to draw criticism; to tell the followers what they must do to win his approval. "I mention these thoughts as a summary of the Mystery and of the Work and MY MISSION," he said, "that you might see and know distinctly what you should do, if you desire to be of ME." It was, nonetheless, an admission of weakness.⁹⁸

Father Divine's rivals clearly expected to benefit from such weakness. Faithful Mary, for one, hoped to recruit her following from the Peace Mission's ranks. Some believers did, indeed, leave to join her. Frank J. David, the author of the fiery Iconoclast columns in the Peace Mission press and formerly one of Father Divine's deeply devoted disciples, was one of the most important of these exiles.

David's loyalty had been based on his trust that Father Divine was a pillar of integrity against the forces of corruption, convention and self-interest. In 1936, however, after the Peace Mission's breach with the Communist Party, his outspoken views found less favour within the Movement. The editors of the Peace Mission press no longer accepted the Iconoclast as a regular feature and, in April 1937, the editors of the Spoken Word refused to publish a column David had written, entitled Spiritual Porch Climbers, in which he denounced the behaviour of John Wuest Hunt.

Deeply offended by Hunt's "sex license under the guise of

redemption" David intended the column as an open challenge to Hunt to confess his sin and to acknowledge that he "in no wise had the endorsement of Jesus Christ or the Movement that he professes to follow."

When the editors rejected the column, David - upset and suspicious - interpreted their action as evidence of the insidious influence of those educated, polished, middle-class converts who had gained such influence in the Movement. As he wrote later:

"They thought the writer too radical in telling the plain Truth in comparison to their puritanical, theoretical abstract lore ... and they call themselves Truth students, seekers of Truth, and when you hand them Truth on a silver platter, a free gift, they submerge it and ignore it for Error, Untruth, Judases, Trimmers, Puritanical Imposters, Holier than Thou Counterfeiters, foul ball Gospel lovers, Betrayers of Jesus Christ and Traitors to all that is Just, Honest and Decent."

With his article rejected by the editors of the Spoken Word for a second time, in the week following Faithful Mary's defection, David decided that Father Divine's integrity had been compromised and he left to join Faithful Mary.⁹⁹

Still, if Faithful Mary expected thousands of disgruntled followers to flock to her side she was badly mistaken. Only a few hundred people drifted into the opening meeting of her Mission on August 29 and when she appeared, dressed in white preaching robes, to conduct a service in the hall of the house, there were only thirty people present. Despite her confident declaration that her Mission was dedicated to the "people of Harlem" and that she intended to "pick up good people that has throwed themselves away"¹⁰⁰ she drew neither large numbers of ex-followers nor other Harlemites. Three months after opening her rival Mission, she cancelled her lease on 2064 Fifth Avenue and fled to California. After witnessing her salutary failure, Costonie transferred his own operations to Philadelphia.¹⁰¹

The Sufi, always the shrewdest of the street-speakers, chose this moment to step up his own rival bid in Harlem. In April 1938 his first Temple of Tranquility was opened at 103 Morningside Avenue with all its seats filled. The Sufi presided, dressed in a black and gold fez and a brocaded robe over a gold vestment. That same month, he married Madame Fu Futtam, one of Harlem's leading "occultists", who specialized in clairvoyance and the interpretation of dreams.¹⁰² Exploiting his wife's reputation and his own love of the exotic and esoteric, the Sufi began to organise the Temple on Peace Mission lines.

He offered to give his adherents the "Secret of Tranquility". He described his plan for a "Universal City of Tranquility" where there would be "no relief" and where "you will live in peace and unity - tranquil as one." This city would be based on co-operative principles: "we're going to have Communism here. Not the Communism of Karl Marx where you demonstrate and strike, but the Communism of Christ." Whereas, only a few years earlier, the Sufi had spoken of racial confrontation, he now spoke of tranquility, co-operation and interracial organisation. "All races and nationalities," he said, "are welcome to use the Universal Temple of Tranquility." Providing further evidence of his recognition of the bases of Father Divine's appeal, the Sufi also announced that there would be "no dues and collections" in his movement: "where I get my monies for all this, is my business."¹⁰³

The Sufi offered a free employment service to his followers and then energetically launched a programme of semi-religious activities and co-operative enterprises. His organisation established a fruit and vegetable market at 303 West 119th Street and then opened a garage and service station. He began to make arrangements to feed "hundreds" at his Temple at a maximum charge of twenty cents

a meal. He planned a whole series of ventures including athletics and musical and drama projects, even the opening of a shoe manufacturing firm.¹⁰⁴ Then, perhaps in imitation of Father Divine's jaunty appearances in his famous red monoplane, the Sufi bought his own 'plane and hired a pilot to teach him to fly.

But he was never to see the results of his efforts. For, on July 30 1938, the 'plane crashed and the Sufi was killed.¹⁰⁵ Madame Fu Futtam swore that she had received a message from her dead husband to continue the programme of the Temple in opposition to Father Divine. But, without his personal magnetism, drive and organising skill, the Temple of Tranquility declined and became a haven of esoteric worship.¹⁰⁶

The New York Post believed that the Sufi's death "removed the only serious rival to Father Divine in Harlem."¹⁰⁷ Certainly, only the Sufi, among the popular religious figures, possessed the flexibility and talent to capitalise on Father Divine's difficulties and adapt his ideas to his own advancement. "Daddy" Grace of the United House of Prayer for All People never managed to do more than temporarily embarrass the Movement when he arrived in New York City in 1938, ambitious to establish a new branch of his cult there on the disruption of the Peace Mission's fortunes.

Bishop Charles M. Grace had a considerable following in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C. when he turned his attention to New York City.¹⁰⁸ He orchestrated a publicity coup at Father Divine's expense to herald his arrival. He bought the Peace Mission's headquarters on 115th Street and served an eviction notice on Father Divine and his followers. On moving day, the believers carried bedding and furnishings from the building while "Daddy" Grace strutted up and down on the pavement outside. "Look at me," he crowed to reporters, "the man who though not God, ousted

God from his erstwhile kingdom."¹⁰⁹

Father Divine feigned unconcern. He had, he said, "a-plenty" of places to use and moved, in fact, into the Eastman-Gaines extension that Faithful Mary had tried to annex at the time of her desertion. The move was not without incident. As he said later, people "started to rain down stones and such like - break out the window lights" as soon as he began serving banquets there. But the vandalism was checked; the Movement swiftly adjusted to its new headquarters;¹¹⁰ and "Daddy" Grace did not substantially gain from his publicity stunt.

It was an indication that the Sufi's rival bid was of considerably more consequence that Father Divine lost no time in using the Sufi's death to bolster his own authority. It was, he claimed, an act of divine retribution:

"Sufi Hamid opposed me and was supposed to drive me out of New York. But the first time he went up in his aeroplane, it fell and he was killed instantly ... as he thought himself great and attempted to and desired to destroy Me Personally, he destroyed himself! They that would rise in opposition to me from time to time, and everyone who would rise, they will be cut down in the same way." 111

The Sufi's death served, in fact, as something of a tonic.

Indeed, by the middle of 1938, the local press was drawn to acknowledge, with some admiration, Father Divine's extraordinary capacity to survive the challenges to his authority. The editor of the New York Amsterdam News wrote in sheer amazement:

"Father Divine is nothing less than a killer-diller. This slang phrase means top; and in his line Divine is right on the crest. We don't profess to know the inner workings of 'God's' Kingdom ... We do know, however, that Father Divine has kept it going longer and better than most folk ever believed he could." 112

If Father Divine survived the challenges of his rivals, he still faced the damaging effects of legal action. While the case against him and three of his followers concerning the stabbing incident at 20 West 115th Street had been dropped for lack of evidence,¹¹³ Faithful Mary's testimony in the Supreme Court had greatly strengthened Verinda Brown's case against him. Judge Philip J. McCook had refused to appoint receivers to control the Movement's property and income out of deference to its spiritual work, but he had ruled that Father Divine had a case to answer and had imposed an injunction freezing the Movement's holdings for the time being. The full trial of the suit was still pending.¹¹⁴

Meanwhile, in the State capital, Albany, Internal Revenue Collector, Harry M. Hickey, had filed seventy-two income tax liens against those followers holding title to the properties in upstate New York for failure to pay their federal taxes.¹¹⁵

In late November 1937, a writer in the New Day declared, "FAITH IN FATHER STRONGER SINCE RECENT PERSECUTION". The writer compared the "recent far-flung campaign" against Father Divine with the Fall, engineered "by the same adverse spirit and deceiver who began his work in the Garden of Eden and succeeded in destroying that Paradise, the first Kingdom of Heaven on Earth."¹¹⁶ But these were brave words, no more. Substantial numbers of disillusioned followers were leaving the Movement - not to transfer their allegiance to a rival cult - but to return to conventional life in the outside society. Few new believers came to bolster the declining numbers.

More and more, Father Divine resorted to threats of divine retribution to enforce his authority over the remaining followers. He became an avenging God, prophecying the doom and destruction of all his critics and opponents. The New Day reinforced this in article and editorial, ascribing, for instance, the demise of

Randolph Hearst's newspaper empire in 1937 to divine retribution for its attempts to "discredit Father Divine and destroy His influence among the people by publishing a prolonged series of exaggerated, perverted, and distorted articles about Him and His Work."¹¹⁷

In December 1938, Father Divine took advantage of the death, in a psychiatric hospital, of Mr. Jewett, father of Delight Jewel and witness in the Hunt case, to remind his followers of his awesome powers:

"So it does not pay to fool with GOD! ... With all the money he received from the newspapers and others, it profited him nothing and it shall not profit any of them who are or have been connected with him! Woe to the man or woman who will speak a word against the Fundamental! I AM SPIRIT AND I AM LIFE! I AM A LIVE WIRE! Those who think antagonistically concerning ME, their thoughts shall be confounded and they shall be confused. They shall lose the control of their minds, not only of their bodies but of their minds, even as he did, and many others are following suit! ... Then, I say, it is a terrible thing to rise in opposition to ME ... What will happen to you if you speak against the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL! YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED! I Said, YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED!" 118

There was to be one truly great moment of vindication for Father Divine that restored some of his battered authority over the remaining believers. For, in late 1938, Faithful Mary asked his permission to return to the Movement; and she then made a public recantation of all her allegations against him, swearing a fresh oath of allegiance to his divine authority.¹¹⁹

From five o'clock in the morning of January 1 1939 Father Divine's followers gathered outside the Rockland Palace to be sure of a seat for her public confession. Her testimony spilled over into a second meeting on the following day; and the audience roared its approval as Faithful Mary, dressed in the preaching robe that she had used during her apostasy, struggled emotionally, but with all her customary flair, through her extraordinary confession.

Father Divine had warned that terrible retribution would befall all his enemies: and Faithful Mary's description of her experiences after leaving the Movement vividly embellished this claim. She had previously testified about her life of degradation before joining Father Divine; now she graphically described the personal failure, physical collapse and paranoia that she had suffered since leaving him.

She said that all the health and success that she had enjoyed as long as she had been loyal, disintegrated with her desertion. "Everywhere I went," she said, "why I didn't have no success at all; trying to have resentment in me and not calling on Him, saying that I would just call on the GOD I had been calling on, and I had never got no success from that whatever."

Old illnesses returned. "It was something they call a mucus from the stomach," she said, "and all night my head had to hang from the bed and it was coming out by cups full, and when the bucket would be emptied, the towel would have to be put on the bed to catch it." New illnesses came. She was, she said, demented by a buzzing in her head that would only cease when she forgot herself and said, "Thank You, Father, Thank You."

She fled to Los Angeles, she explained, in order to hide her chronic ill health from the gaze of Father Divine's loyal followers. But she found no rest or success there. The people she met only made her feel worse. The dying "Dr. Rozier" begged her to "keep faith" and his church sisters prayed to save her. She moved to another neighbourhood in the city to escape their pressure, but her health only "got worse and worse" until "people began to say: 'Well, maybe Father Divine is working on her'. I knew all the time that it was Father, but I was trying all I could to keep from yet calling on Father Divine."

Then, she said, she began to have "visions" of Father Divine and his followers. In the second of these visions, "Father Divine came with a Host of His Children ... He didn't smile but the Children was smiling, clapping hands and saying: 'Father is not angry with you.'" In the third vision, she found Father Divine relentlessly pursuing her along roads, through stable-yards and barbed wire fencing until finally he caught up with her. "When I went to bring my arms down," she related, "Father had come suddenly under my arm and had His head peeping right up." Then she knew that she must return to the Peace Mission: "I want to thank Father Divine because I had said I would die first before I would come back ... and so confess these things. But when Father Divine served this warrant on me, I had to come in."

Faithful Mary blamed herself for the events leading to her desertion. She confessed that she had become ambitious for herself and neglectful of her saviour, Father Divine, after she had won the followers' loving attention in Harlem. "The spirit in me," she admitted, "used to be so conflicted when different ones would come in my office and bring in a little package to offer a chance to get to Faithful Mary. But I don't blame no-one but blame Faithful Mary."

She said that she had rankled at Father Divine's commands: "the mind completely got insane, vexed and got mad at things Father was instructing me of, and what to do." But she absolved Father Divine of the charges that she had made against him, and said that she had fabricated them all under the pressure of the "Hearst reporters."

"When I began to get conflicted," she claimed, "I had no intention at that time of going out of the kingdom - just going up to High Falls and live up there in the country." But, she said, the Hearst reporters had tracked her down and, with promises of money, fame and protection, they had badgered her to expose Father Divine

as a racketeer. The reporters, she said, had the support of a group of ministers who wanted to "break this Work down" and drive Father Divine out of the city, if not the country.

She gave a lurid account of her dealings with the pressmen: how they had made her broadcast the news of her defection; how they had cajoled her and plied her with egg-nogs and bribes to invent allegations against Father Divine, especially ones of sexual misconduct:

"Father, they said it would HAVE TO BE SOMEONE UNDER FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN, and at that time when we was arguing over that and I couldn't think anything at all, I HADN'T EVEN HEARD ANYTHING OF IT YET, LET ALONE KNOWING ANYTHING. And Father, these egg-nogs came through."

She was asked, she said, to repeat her allegations to the District Attorney in Kingston (N.Y.) for his Grand Jury investigation of the Movement, but, this time, she had been too upset and afraid to "TELL LIES." Nonetheless, the pressmen persisted: "Father, they kept me at least four or five weeks. TRYING TO GET SOMETHING TO TEAR DOWN THIS SAME MISSION." But now she was thankful that, "You allowed me to come back and confess to the public and confess it to You; not only for them just to hear, but I am confessing to GOD Almighty. That's who lifted me from 'sin and shame'." She sang:

"I have never seen such happy days,
I have never seen such happy days,
Since Father has drew me safe back home.
From mansions to mansions, I have never seen,
I have never seen such happy days,
Since Father has drew me safe back home." 120

Son Peter, one of the followers who had joined Faithful Mary in exile, also made a public confession.¹²¹ Then Father Divine sealed the emotional occasion by exonerating them. "I rejoice and AM exceeding glad," he told the gathering, "that those who did come forth [did so] without taking them through the third degree." Skirting over the fine points of his quarrel with Faithful Mary and the facts

of her defection, he was content to let the press take the blame for the troubles. With her confession, he said:

"I have plainly exhibited before you and before your mind's eye just what has been attempted by the malicious and prejudiced newspapers ... who encouraged and induced Faithful Mary as an individual to throw down the name and nature of Faithful Mary, and take on the name which means nature of Viola Wilson, just what she was before I lifted her." 122

Faithful Mary's return to the Movement, however, did not pass without repercussions and recriminations. Anxious to redeem herself, Faithful Mary blamed others in the Peace Mission for complicity in her defection. She said that several believers had warned her to protect herself against Father Divine because he planned to take all she had. In particular, she blamed attorney Nathan Kranzler and said that he had extorted two thousand dollars from her for legal help in the transfer of her properties. In reply, Kranzler insisted that all his legal work was done at Faithful Mary's initiative as a private business arrangement. Kranzler added that he had stayed away from banquet meetings for two years in deference to Father Divine's request that he should "hold his peace" about the matter.

Father Divine, himself, chose to be non-committal in the dispute: "I did not say definitely either way exactly, whether the body called Faithful Mary was telling the TRUTH or whether she was not telling the truth as far as these things were concerned." He gave a simple warning to the guilty party: "ill gotten gains will not stand ... If you get something dishonestly ... you must lose it more than that of which it is itself."¹²³

But he was not always so keen to let disputes slide in order to keep the peace. Some of the followers who had stayed resolutely with Father Divine throughout his troubles were outraged by Faithful Mary's return and exoneration. Among these was Priscilla Paul, for ten years a devoted disciple and ardent, even violent, defender

of Father Divine before his critics. Just two weeks after Faithful Mary's return, Priscilla Paul argued with Father Divine and was expelled from the Movement.

The details of the row are not clear: only that Miss Paul had wilfully flouted Father Divine's sexual taboos in an act of anger, probably prompted by her disgust at Faithful Mary's return. A banquet meeting was arranged at which Miss Paul was expected to make a public apology to Father Divine. But when she rose to speak, her apology turned to self-justification. In no mood for such rebellion, Father Divine told her angrily that she could not be permitted to continue her "contemptible acts and ways around ME." The time had come, he said, "for you to get somewhere else to go, somewhere else to eat and somewhere else to stay, instead of staying with MY Followers and the quicker the better!" Priscilla Paul left the Movement; taking with her into exile many of the women who had worked with her at her dress shop at 26 West 115th Street.¹²⁴

Father Divine's savage treatment of Miss Paul apparently quelled any further overt criticisms of him among the followers. Then, once Faithful Mary had served her use as a repentant "angel" she, too, was forced into obscurity. She was sent to live in a Peace Mission house in Newark and she was never allowed to recover her former prestige and authority.¹²⁵

The fate of these followers showed that Father Divine was determined to quell, once and for all, the internal conflicts that had plagued the Peace Mission for more than two years. Indeed, by 1939, Father Divine's original image as an intimate God of love and peace had been partly superseded by the image of a more autocratic messiah.

Of course, Father Divine did not rely on authoritarianism alone for his survival as a leader. The Peace Mission continued because

it still provided a haven for a substantial number of men and women. The appeal of the "evangelical life" and the social and economic organisation of the Movement to which the other cult leaders had paid homage, was still strong. Dissatisfied and disillusioned followers had left; but those who remained were people who still trusted Father Divine and felt that their lives were substantially better within rather than outside the Movement. They were people like Faithful Mary, who had found their only real success, happiness and opportunity within this closely regulated community. They needed this security and support. Faithful Mary, herself, had found this out the hard way by leaving the Movement. Her return, in 1939, was proof of her need.

There were many followers who owed everything they now owned and had become to the Peace Mission. They had no sympathy for the defectors. They saw those who demanded money back from Father Divine as callous and selfish. They saw Faithful Mary as ungrateful and ambitious. As Miss H.L. One wrote to the New York Supreme Court in defence of Father Divine during the Verinda Brown case, she had come to the Peace Mission with no money, with only the clothes on her back and with a young child:

"Through His goodness, clothes were brought right from the store for us to change to. Now, you know, if Father was a money-lover, He wouldn't have blessed me like that for nothing and with no returns all these number of years. Now the child is a big boy of eight years. He is still living in the Sayville home, going to school, fed and clothed and raised on the best, as I was; and not a penny have I given in behalf of all this." 126

When Sara Harris lived in the Philadelphia Peace Mission many years later, researching her book, Father Divine, holy husband, she met followers whose gratitude had not diminished since joining Father Divine. Miss Jonathan Matthew said:

"Father gave us understanding when we came to him in them Depression days. He give us heaven and a God at hand when nothin' else was there to hold on to." 127

Henry Lee said, "There's not enough money in the universe to turn me against Father Divine."¹²⁸

But, by 1940, despite the number of followers who remained loyal, the Movement had been forced to change in order to survive. Despite Father Divine's confident claim that "every knock is a boost", the conflicts and rivalries had sorely damaged his influence and reputation. Accordingly, he retreated from active proselytizing and from the ambitious vista of 1935 and 1936. He could no longer encourage initiative and responsibility in his followers for he feared their rivalry. The dramatic expansion of the Movement's size and pretensions had exposed Father Divine to too much pressure, public ridicule and investigation. It had left too much scope inside the Movement for complaints to flourish and for believers to become alienated.

Father Divine concentrated increasingly on the Movement's internal affairs and its material consolidation. The imposition of a more rigid discipline and the retreat from the contentious issues of the mid-'thirties eased the stress within the Movement and helped to make it more stable and homogeneous. But, by the same token, it became smaller, more inward-looking and more conservative. As the more ambitious and inventive of the black followers were curbed and as the Peace Mission withdrew from political and economic activism, so the Peace Mission lost its roots in the Harlem community. It was now looking toward a "Promised Land" that drew it far from the scene of its growth. The outcome of the Verinda Brown suit in the Supreme Court, was to help it on its way.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TEN

1. Interstate Tattler March 3 1932. For commendations of the Movement see above, Chapter One p. 47.
2. McKelway and Liebling, Who is this king of glory? op.cit., June 13, June 20 and June 27 1936, passim.
3. Ibid. June 20 1936, 22-23.
4. New York Times February 7 1936; McKelway and Liebling, Who is this king of glory? op.cit., June 27 1936, 26; and Parker, op.cit., 275.
5. New York Times September 30 and October 21 1936.
6. McKelway and Liebling, Who is this king of glory? op.cit., June 27 1936, 26. Lesselbaum was also unable to glean any incriminating evidence against Father Divine from leading members of the Movement who were brought to court to testify. Heavenly Rest, a white stenographer, said that she had never written any letters for Father Divine concerning financial or property matters. She said that "all Father Divine's letters are in line with his spiritual teachings." Secretary John Lamb similarly denied that Father Divine held any assets of his own. Both followers said that they lived and worked at 20 West 115th Street and received meals and lodgings in return for their work. Lamb, who described his relationship with Father Divine as one of "father and son", admitted that he had bought the 'bus involved in the accident, but added that he had no personal assets and expected no financial compensation for his work in the Peace Mission: "I am a servant in the cause of Christ on earth and I am devoting myself to that cause." New York Times October 29 and November 6 1936.
7. Ibid. September 20 1936.
8. Ibid. December 18 1936. Moretti, who gave his age as twenty-five and his address as 513 West 149th Street, said that he was employed from July to October 1935 to take charge of all equipment and repair work at the Peace Mission Garages at 16 and 38 West 144th Street. This is, apparently, an instance of an outsider being employed by Father Divine, presumably to do work that the followers were unable to do themselves.
9. Ibid. According to Humility Consolation, there were no witnesses to the transfer of money.
10. New York World Telegram December 17 1936.
11. Father Divine wrote that he had "never charged any man for My Religious or Spiritual Teachings" and, in a moment of pique, called the judgement against him illegal since he did not own the 'bus involved in the accident. New York Times December 24 1936.
12. Ibid. December 27 1936.

13. Ibid. January 5, January 10 and January 26 1937. It was never revealed who was responsible for settling the judgement or where the money came from. There is no evidence that collections were organised within the Peace Mission: indeed, such a recourse would have been inimicable to Father Divine's image as one in contact with boundless wealth. On previous occasions, substantial sums of money had been paid to the courts as bail bonds in cases involving Father Divine and the Movement. Ibid. November 17 1931 and March 8 1935.
14. New York Amsterdam News April 17 1937; New York Times April 23 1937; and Crusader News Agency April 19 1937. Barbara Jones said that she had been invited to join the Peace Mission after she had sought Father Divine's aid for a sick friend. Ibid.
15. John Wuest Hunt, aged 33, was said to have abandoned a prosperous advertising business in Los Angeles and left his wife after meeting Father Divine in February 1935. He claimed a college education at Hillsdale College, Michigan and Occidental College, Los Angeles. His conversion testimony, which was published in the Spoken Word, followed the standard pattern of Peace Mission testimonies. It vividly described Hunt's allegedly corrupt morality; his "unnatural desires" and his illness with venereal disease before he was "cured" by Father Divine. This testimony was sent, first of all, to the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity in Champaign (Ill.) in a letter accusing the Greek letter societies with failing to provide spiritual, economic and political leadership. Another copy was sent to the United States Postmaster-General. The committal order was arranged by John F. Dailey, the Assistant-Federal Attorney. New York Times February 14 1936.
16. In Bellevue, Hunt recounted a series of shocking sexual transgressions that he said that he had committed before his conversion. His release was celebrated by the followers as a victory over their psychiatric critics. Parker, op.cit., 172-173.
17. The seventeen-year old Delight Jewel said that she had been introduced to the Peace Mission by her father, Norman Jewett, a former government horticulturist. New York Times April 1 1937.
18. This letter dated December 27 1936 and addressed to 'Virgin Mary', Hotel Estralla, Palm Springs, California said:

"John, in the likeness of man, and you, in the likeness of a woman, will express the Virginity of Mary and the Virtue of CHRIST, if you are of ME, by abstaining from all appearance of evil and refusing to allow yourselves to be found indulging in the appearance of human affection, human devotion or love for one another ..."

It was, apparently, a private rebuke; for it was not until the scandal broke a few months later that the letter became public knowledge. Father Divine released a copy to the New York Evening Journal and the contents were read out to the believers at a banquet meeting at 20 West 115th Street the same day. New York Evening Journal April 2 1937; and World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937.

19. Hunt surrendered to the Los Angeles police three weeks later. New York Times April 3 and April 23 1937. After the trial, in which Delight Jewel's father served as chief prosecution witness, Hunt was sentenced to a three year jail term. Ibid. July 2 and July 3 1937; New Day 2 (48), December 1 1938; and Rozier, op.cit., 27.
20. A reporter from the New York Amsterdam News, in random interviews in Harlem, found that Harlemites were not impressed by the press handling of the affair. They were dubious of Father Divine's responsibility for Hunt's bizarre conduct and suspected that it was being used for a below-the-belt attack against Father Divine. New York Amsterdam News April 10 1937.
21. World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937.
22. The writer recalled Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you ... for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.' Ibid. 1 (22), April 15 1937.
23. Spoken Word 2 (86), September 22 1936.
24. Parker, op.cit., 211-214.
25. Father Divine suggested, on this occasion, that his critics were motivated by fear of his Righteous Government work: "They are worried about it because they know the time has truly come and it shall be universally known, wheresoever a person has respect for self, for law and order they shall be recognized the same as those of the limited few of the millionaires." This may have been a reference to millionaire Randolph Hearst, whose papers were among the most disparaging in their treatment of the Peace Mission Movement. World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937.
26. Ibid. 1 (22), April 15 1937.
27. Some followers tried to find good in the trouble. A. Honaeel Meriditas felt that it was "wonderful" that in the course of its "prejudicial" reports, the New York Evening Journal had published excerpts from Father Divine's speeches. Brother David was less sanguine: "The press has sold its birthright for a mess of potage ... they are getting themselves in the bag." Ibid.
28. New York Times December 24 1936.
29. Madison told a reporter that the followers probably mistook Comora for a maniac as "only a maniac would interrupt a preaching man when he was conducting services." The three arrested followers were: Happy Boy Job, a cook, of 20 West 115th Street; Roosevelt Perry, aged 33, of 18 West 135th Street; and Charles Calloway, aged 59, of 20 West 115th Street. All denied the charge of felonious assault and they were released on five hundred dollars bail each supplied by Madison. Ibid. April 21 1937.
30. Ibid. and April 22 1937.

31. The followers at 11 Gunn Street apparently told the police that Father Divine was not there. When he was discovered, Father Divine denied all knowledge that there was a warrant out for his arrest and protested that he was innocent of the violence. He was, nonetheless, charged with felonious assault. Ibid. April 23 1937.
32. Ibid. April 22 1937.
33. New York Post April 22 1937.
34. Ibid. April 24 1937.
35. This was a front page exclusive interview published under the banner headline, "Faithful Mary Reveals All." New York Amsterdam News May 15 1937.
36. New York Times May 4 1937.
37. Ibid. May 7 and May 13 1937.
38. The prosecution case is outlined in Supreme Court Justice McCook's judgement as published in Rozier, op.cit., 47-57; and Lesselbaum's opening statement is cited in New York Times May 13 1937.
39. New York Amsterdam News April 24 1937; and New York Sun April 24 1937.
40. New York Times April 29 1937.
41. Father Divine's bail of five hundred dollars was paid by Angel St. Mary Bloom. She said that this was her own money. At the banquet meeting held on Father Divine's return to Harlem a white follower, Blessed Love, made an impassioned denunciation of the press and Faithful Mary's apostasy. Ibid. April 24 1937.
42. Ibid. May 25 1937.
43. A policeman attached to the West 123rd Street police station warned a reporter not to go to the 20 West 115th Street extension: "You take your life in your hands if you go down there at night." This is in marked contrast to the Movement's usually high reputation with the police. See above, Chapter Three p. 147-148 and Footnote 121 p. 178. New York Amsterdam News May 22 1937.
44. New York Post April 22 1937.
45. Priscilla Paul was subsequently convicted for third degree assault against Humility Consolation although three followers and Samuel Battle, New York's first black policeman, appeared as character witnesses for her in court. New York Amsterdam News September 18 1937; New York Times June 18, June 19 and September 14 1937.
46. It is probable that Priscilla Paul lashed out against Humility Consolation in 1937 because she was acutely aware that it was through her own influence that the Brown's - Father Divine's

- public critics - were drawn into the Movement in the first place. For Priscilla Paul's part in the Brown's conversion, see Verinda Brown's court testimony as summarised in Judge McCook's decision in her suit, published in Rozier, op.cit., 47; and McKelway and Liebling, Who is this king of glory; op.cit., June 20 1936, 23.
47. The above account of the Browns' life in the Movement is compiled from their account as given to journalists McKelway and Liebling; from their affidavits submitted to the court during the Bayless case; from Verinda Brown's testimony in court; and her written affidavit in her 1937 suit against Father Divine and the subsequent proceedings in this suit during 1939-40. New York Times December 18 1936; May 7, December 19 and December 20 1937; and January 4 1940; New York World Telegram December 17 1936; McKelway and Liebling, Who is this king of glory? op.cit., June 20 1936, 22-26; and Rozier, op.cit., 47-50.
 48. All three of the Movement's papers carried verbatim reports of Father Divine's banquet speeches. In December 1938 a reading class was organised at the 63rd Street extension to enable those who could not read easily to comprehend Father Divine's messages published in the New Day. Beginners started by studying the large-type advertisements before tackling the complexity of Father Divine's banquet speeches. New Day 2 (50), December 15 1938.
 49. Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1., 254.
 50. Pollard described the "bone crushing procedure" on the boat trip as the followers jostled to catch a glimpse of Father Divine. A special cabin was reserved for him, his personal staff, leading followers and the musicians. While Mother Divine and Faithful Mary spent much of this trip on the decks with the mass of the believers - although special seats were reserved for them - Father Divine kept himself apart. He smiled, talked and danced, in an engaging way, with the one hundred or so followers and friends in his cabin, but he did not spend time with the rest of the believers. He used the loudspeaker system, instead, to address them. Ibid., 249-255.
 51. Pollard noted, on the boat trip, that a "brother" positioned himself at the door to Father Divine's cabin to turn away the hundreds of believers begging for admittance. Pollard, herself, only gained access to the cabin after Grace Lemmon, a Righteous Government committee worker, found her among the crowd and escorted her to Father Divine's suite. Ibid., 249-251.
 52. According to Cantril and Sherif, "the testimonials of white children are listened to more attentively to those of the Negroes. When a white visitor enters, or wants to pass in the crowd, children of the darker complexion politely make way for him." Pollard noted on the boat trip that Miss Grace Lemmon was able to successfully "Peace" her way through the crowd although Pollard, who was trying to follow her, was unsuccessful. Similar deference, of course, was shown to leading black members of the Movement. On the boat, a large

pathway was made by the believers to allow Mother Divine to walk through to the special suite. Cantril and Sherif, Kingdom of Father Divine (In Nelsen et al., op.cit., 175-193) 183; and Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1., 249-250.

53. McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 57.
54. New Day 1 (15), August 27 1936.
55. For Father Divine's admission that he looked for ways to invest the Peace Mission's wealth see Ibid. 1 (28), September 30 1937.
56. McKay notes that Father Divine surprised everyone in 1935 by announcing his intention to open settlements in the "Promised Land". McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 50. For a full discussion of the "Promised Land" development, see below, Chapter Eleven, p. 723-745.
57. See her Supreme Court affidavit, Rozier, op.cit., 50.
58. New Day 1 (28), September 30 1937.
59. This account of Father Divine's activities is deduced from the testimony, charges and counter-charges that came to public attention during the Bayless case, the Verinda Brown suit and Faithful Mary's defection. No other information exists: contemporary observers did not hazard any explanation of the financial reasons behind the Movement's sudden disruption.
60. The rent was paid two months in advance. Spoken Word 1 (4), November 10 1934.
61. Ibid. 1 (15), January 26 1935.
62. New York Times June 21 1937; Spoken Word 1 (11), December 29 1934; and 1 (50), September 28 1935; Pollard, Harlem as is, vol. 1, 251; and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 57.
63. New York Post April 22 1937.
64. Ibid.
65. She ended with the words: "make me meek and humble where the evil cannot harm me." New Day 1 (8), July 9 1936.
66. In her statement Faithful Mary intimated at the controversy that her popularity had caused. She wrote: "There are many who seem to think you have no right to call the Temple "Mother" and they have even said you are under bondage here in this kingdom because you are compelled to call me "Mother" if you live in the Extensions FATHER has blessed me to be overseer of. They also claim that you have me in your consciousness ... as long as they look on the Temple as a person and think you are bound to me, instead of looking at GOD, Who is doing His Works in the Temple." She said that her devotees did not mean disrespect to Father Divine by calling her "Mother", but insisted that the custom must stop. It is possible that the name "Mother Mary" had been in use for some time as Faithful Mary said: "it may be hard for some of you who have

accustomed yourselves to saying that word ever since you came in contact with the Temple, but FATHER'S Spirit is sufficient to correct you ..." Ibid. 1 (15), August 27 1936.

67. New York Post April 22 1937.
68. Ibid.
69. In April 1937 the New York Post reported that Faithful Mary had recently refused to sign legal papers brought to her by two men who said that they were "clearing up" the title to the property. A Kingston real estate agent told reporters from the New York World Telegram a month later, that Father Divine had been trying to get a local agent to buy the hotel and turn it over to him but had failed because "old Mary is too sharp". New York Age May 15 1937; New York Post April 22 1937; New York Times April 22 1937; and New York World Telegram May 4 1937.
70. These financial manoeuvres only became public knowledge with Faithful Mary's return to the Peace Mission in 1939. At the time of her defection she boasted: "I have some money, I am well fixed. I prepared for the break a long time before I left him." New York Amsterdam News May 15 1937; and New Day 3 (7), February 16 1939.
71. New York Post April 22 1937; and Rozier, op.cit., 92.
72. New York Times June 2 1937.
73. Faithful Mary alleged that it was Father Divine's policy "to keep the angels moving from place to place so that they won't get too powerful." It is impossible to judge the legitimacy of this allegation for lack of evidence. New York Amsterdam News May 15 1937.
74. In her testimony in court in the Verinda Brown suit she said that it was the argument over Gottlieb's money that precipitated her decision to break with Father Divine. New York Times June 2 1937.
75. According to Faithful Mary, Father Divine told her that his secretaries had informed him of her conduct and criticisms. Rozier, op.cit., 89.
76. Ibid., 90.
77. New York Amsterdam News May 15 1937.
78. Lesselbaum used the tumult within the Movement as the basis for a renewal of the move to place the Peace Mission in receivership. New York Times August 17 and September 4 1937.
79. There was some suggestion that Madison was charging the Peace Mission for his legal services. This he denied. The exact substance of the charges against him is unclear but, obviously, Madison's authority in the Movement as Father Divine's chief legal advisor and chairman of the Righteous Government Executive Committee exposed him to criticism and recrimination once the Movement's difficulties escalated. New Day 1 (29), October 7

1937. Floyd Calvin, a columnist in the New York Age said that he had a "healthy respect" for Madison and some of Father Divine's leading white followers. It is possible, therefore, that Madison's abrupt departure increased some outsiders' doubts about Father Divine's integrity. New York Age May 8 1937.
80. Costonie said that he was born in Utah in 1905. His given name was Toni Green. He claimed to have travelled widely as a seaman. The name "Prophet" was one given to him by his devotees: Costonie said that he preferred the title "Professor" but readily used "Prophet" nonetheless. Like other street speakers, cum folk healers, he liked the suggestion that he possessed special knowledge. He even claimed a part-American Indian and part-black ancestry. He did not set himself up as a rival to conventional medicine, but urged people to come to him only after conventional medicine had failed. Indeed, he claimed that he utilised his mystique as a folk healer to interest people in his programme of racial self-sufficiency. He urged his audiences to support black business, to oust white political leaders and to insist on their share of political patronage. Most important of all, he initiated Baltimore's "Don't buy where you can't work" campaign in 1933. Baltimore Afro-American June 3 1933; New York World Telegram August 19 1935; and Meier and Rudwick, Origins of non-violent direct action in Afro-American protest (In Meier and Rudwick, Along the color line, 307-404) 322-325. For Costonie's activities in Baltimore, see Gary Hunter, op.cit., 113-122.
81. New York Times August 12 1935; Negro church today, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 2, Schomburg Collection); and Gary Hunter, op.cit., 121-122.
82. New York Amsterdam News August 6 1938; and Nugent, Sufi Abdul Hamid, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 1, Schomburg Collection).
83. New York Times August 12 1935.
84. Costonie eventually set up his main Temple of the Inter-denominational Church of God at 2236 Eighth Avenue. New York Amsterdam News March 13 and August 21 1937; New York World Telegram August 19 1935; and Negro church today, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 2, Schomburg Collection). Handbill In Vertical File, Prophet K. Costonie, Schomburg Collection.
85. The Costonie Temple also casually participated in a number of demonstrations and protests in Harlem: against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia; for the release of the Scottsboro boys; for the passage of a federal anti-lynching law; against cuts in home relief payments and against anti-alien legislation. New York Amsterdam News March 13, April 3 and August 7 1937; Negro church today, n.d. and Wilbur Young, Prophet Costonie, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 1, Schomburg Collection); and a circular for the Costonie Temple In Harlem Scrapbook vol. 4, Schomburg Collection.

86. New York Amsterdam News August 21 1937.
87. Ibid. August 21 and August 28 1937.
88. New York Times June 2 1937.
89. New York Amsterdam News June 12 1937.
90. Ibid. June 19 1937.
91. Ibid. July 31 1937. It is possible that her speech was not a great success. Later, in 1939, on her meek return to the Peace Mission, she said that her audience at St. Mark's had found her speech confusing: "When I got up to speak ... about Father Divine not being GOD, instead of me saying that, I could not say nothing but thank You Father, I want to thank You for being here." It is doubtful that Faithful Mary was quite so stuck for words, but it is likely that she did have difficulty changing her style of speech after so many years testifying in the Peace Mission. New Day 3 (1), January 5 1939.
92. Outside the building was a notice which read: "Faithful Mary's Mission - The True Teachings of Christ". New York Amsterdam News June 19 1937; and New York Times August 27 1937.
93. Richardson contributed a preface to the book in which he described Father Divine as a potentially dangerous "master psychologist". The book showed the influence of a ghost-writer and, in 1939, in a court case for damages against Faithful Mary when her book was withdrawn from sale following her return to the Movement, Richardson claimed that he had been hired by her to help in the book's production. The Amsterdam News described Richardson as one of the Sufi's earliest and most important supporters. New York Amsterdam News August 6 1938; Crusader News Agency January 16 1939; and Rozier, op.cit., ix.
94. Rozier, op.cit., passim.
95. New York Amsterdam News September 11 1937.
96. See for instance: Ibid. April 10 1937; New York Sun April 24 1937; New York Times April 25 1937; New York World Telegram April 26 and May 25 1937; and J.T. Flyn, Other peoples' money, New Republic, 91, May 26 1937, 73.
97. New York Age May 8 1937.
98. New Day 1 (28), September 30 1937.
99. David's break with the Movement and the text of his banned column appear in Rozier, op.cit., 71-77.
100. New York Times August 30 1937.
101. New York Amsterdam News November 27 1937; and Wilbur Young, Prophet Costonie, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in

- New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 1, Schomburg Collection).
102. New York Amsterdam News April 16 1938; and New York Post August 1 1938.
 103. From a description of a service held at the Universal Temple of Tranquility on April 20 1938. Part of the service was broadcast over Radio W.I.N.S. To the soothing chanting of a choir and dimmed lights, the Sufi entered the room, climbed the steps to an altar platform and intoned before the illuminated image of a Buddha: "adoration to Buddha; adoration to Christ; adoration to Hermes; adoration to the prophets of past ages ..." The cult's "Manifesto" was read by an altar boy and then the Sufi addressed his audience, first in what seemed to be Chinese, then in English. After the broadcast was ended, the Sufi introduced a "Master" who would "put a woman to sleep and perform demonstrations that are theoro-psychic." There then followed an unconvincing demonstration of hypnosis and mind-reading. The Sufi pronounced a long and solemn benediction before closing the meeting. Service reported by Lyonel C. Florant in J. Raymond Jones, op.cit., 120-123.
 104. During the service on April 29 1938 he advised his radio audience to contact the Temple if they required reliable, trustworthy and honest servants. He told his Temple audience that he was going to get jobs for people over the radio every night: "if the jobs pay \$40.00 weekly, you'll pay only one dollar for secretarial charges." Ibid. For the Sufi's other schemes see New York Amsterdam News October 15 1938; and Wilbur Young, Activities of Bishop Amiru-Al-Min-Sufi A. Hamid, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 1, Schomburg Collection).
 105. New York Post August 1 1938.
 106. New York Amsterdam News October 15 1938; and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 80.
 107. New York Post August 1 1938.
 108. Bishop Grace, who claimed to be Portuguese, was a former railway cook who began preaching in 1925. His United House of Prayer for All People was basically a Holiness church, with ecstatic worship and the usual Holiness taboos against adultery, lying, stealing, profanity, provocative dress and so on. It diverged in concentrating worship on the person of Bishop Grace alone, and in an obsession with the collection of money, which was also channelled to Bishop Grace. There were a number of Grace products - Daddy Grace tea, face powder, pomade, soap, shoe polish - which the followers were encouraged to buy. The Grace magazine was supposed to have healing qualities. "Daddy" Grace, who was frequently patronizing to his black followers, relied a great deal on snappy dressing and sex appeal to attract his congregations. Fauset, op.cit., 23-30.
 109. New York Times February 21 and February 22 1938; New York World-Telegram February 21 1938; New Day 2 (9), March 3 1938; and Harris, op.cit., 61.

110. Father Divine explained: "we just went in their houses when they would run in there ... and got them and carried them before the bar of justice and stopped them!" New Day 4 (33), August 15 1940.
111. Father Divine's speech is quoted in Claude McKay, Father Divine's rebel angel, American Mercury, 51, September 1940 (Clipping In Vertical File, Father Divine, Schomburg Collection)
112. New York Amsterdam News August 13 1938.
113. New York Age May 21 1937; and New York Times May 15 1937.
114. New York Times October 1 1937; and Judge McCook's decision, dated June 28 1937, as published in Rozier, op.cit., 47-57.
115. New York Times September 23 1937. For more details of the tax enquiry see below, Chapter Eleven, p. 735-736, 744.
116. The writer mentioned not only the legal action against the Movement, the press exploitation of the Hunt affair and the apostasy of leading followers, but also the recent collapse of the Spoken Word and World Herald and the cases of alleged arson and Ku Klux Klan vigilantism in the "Promised Land." New Day 1 (33), November 4 1937. For the Movement's troubles in the "Promised Land" see below, Chapter Eleven, p. 732-740.
117. Ibid. 2 (52), December 29 1938.
118. Ibid. 2 (48), December 1 1938. In 1939, in an introduction to one of Father Divine's banquet messages, a Peace Mission journalist advised: "The casual reader who does not read these masterful Messages of authority from the DEAN of the Universe, from beginning to end, might gain the impression that some of HIS Statements are Personal threats of what HE will Personally do if politics, society and other fields do not come into subjection to HIS demands; but the intelligent person will understand that the destruction which comes to humanity for their wrong doings is brought about IMPERSONALLY by the SPIRIT, and not through any physical effort or activities of FATHER DIVINE." Ibid. 3 (30), July 27 1939.
119. Ibid. 3 (1), January 5 1939.
120. For the full text of Faithful Mary's "Testimony and Confession" see Ibid.
121. Son Peter, aged twenty-four, had been brought into the Peace Mission by his parents on their conversion in 1930. When Faithful Mary left the Movement in 1937, he had sympathised with her and, according to his version of events, had been sent, in punishment, to Hope Farm in the "Promised Land" to skivvy for the group of twenty-five believers. He had then decided to join Faithful Mary. His account is in Rozier, op.cit., 37-38 and his confession is noted in New Day 3 (3), January 19 1939. According to the New Day several others, implicated with Faithful Mary, confessed and repented on the

- second day of the mass meeting. Ibid. 3 (2), January 12 1939.
122. Ibid. Father Divine also accused the Kingston (N.Y.) District Attorney with inducing Faithful Mary to fabricate allegations of sexual misconduct against him. In a dramatic gesture, he presented on the stage three white women followers who were ready to have medical examinations to prove their virginity. Ibid. 3 (2), January 12 1939; and 3 (1), January 5 1939.
123. Ibid. 3 (7), February 16 1939.
124. Priscilla Paul was shocked and outraged by Father Divine's curt rejection. All she could say when Father Divine expelled her from the Peace Mission was a bitter, "Thank You very much! Thank You very much!" New York Amsterdam News January 21 1939; and New Day 3 (3), January 19 1939.
125. McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 63.
126. New Day 4 (14), April 4 1940; see also Ibid. 4 (13), March 28 1940; 4 (15), April 11 1940. 4 (16), April 18 1940; and 4 (17), April 25 1940.
127. Harris, op.cit., 63.
128. Ibid. 71. See also other testimonies, Ibid., 49-50, 99-100.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: "LIVING IN SPLENDOR"

Father Divine's intervention in the Movement's financial affairs, which figured in all the conflicts of the late 'thirties, was born of his desire to invest the Movement's new found wealth in ways that would both benefit the believers and enhance his reputation as a leader. He regarded investment in land and property as an appropriate use of the money that the Movement was generating.

This investment was significant for more than the financial returns and prestige that it might bring. Begun when the Movement was at its peak and when the Righteous Government campaign made Father Divine and his leading followers self-conscious about their mission, Father Divine's upstate investments were dressed in messianic pretension. Father Divine told his followers that he would lead them - the modern Children of Israel - out of the poverty and "negative" influences of the city to the tranquility and abundance of a rural "Promised Land" upstate. Spokesmen for the Peace Mission hinted that the upstate settlements would serve as a demonstration of the practicality of Father Divine's economic plan and make the land truly productive. In the confidence that swept the Movement in the mid nineteen-thirties, some of the believers, perhaps even Father Divine himself, looked upon the "Promised Land" as destined to be a model of the Peace Mission economy envisaged in the Righteous Government Platform.

But this inclination to create a model Peace Mission community upstate proved fragile. The settlements themselves met with a number of difficulties. They were opposed by local residents and discouraged by New York State officials. The followers failed to exploit the land successfully and had neither the skill nor the determination to develop novel forms of economic activity. Most

important of all, the "Promised Land" venture lacked strong leadership. Rebuffed by the politicians and entangled in the courts, Father Divine lost his enthusiasm for innovation and expansion: caution and consolidation became his by-words. While some groups of followers were happy to stay on quietly in upstate New York and gradually won acceptance, the "Promised Land" became little more than a vacation resort for the city faithful. Rather than a model self-sufficient economic community, it became most important to Father Divine as a showcase of the Movement's wealth and respectability to counter the ridicule and criticisms of his opponents.

By the end of the 'thirties, the Movement had shifted away from the Harlem community and the black ghetto, both physically and ideologically. Although, until 1941, Father Divine continued to live and have his headquarters in Harlem and the followers continued to acquire premises there, many of the Movement's sizeable property investments were outside ghetto areas - whether in upstate New York or in the towns and cities of the North-eastern seaboard. The interests of consolidation replaced those of conversion. During the early 'thirties, Father Divine and his followers had been happy to rent premises in shabby and deteriorating ghetto neighbourhoods; certain that this was wholly appropriate to their mission to save the poor and despised of humanity. By the end of the decade, however, the Movement's preoccupation with the purchase of residential property and Father Divine's insistence that the followers should establish "model homes", marked a major departure from ghetto concerns and the redemption of the oppressed and suffering.

Father Divine became an outsider in the very community that had been responsible for his rise to fame. He was detached from the campaigns that dominated the ghetto throughout the mid- and late 'thirties and, although Harlem still provided the Peace Mission's

largest following in the country when Father Divine was forced to leave New York City under legal pressure in 1941¹, the Movement had already lost its roots in the community. The legal exile merely made the break complete; and closed, once and for all, the dynamic era of the Peace Mission's history.

Father Divine first began investing in property outside New York City in 1935. In that year, he obtained the services of John Delay, a real estate agent in Rosendale, Ulster County (N.Y.) and negotiations began for the purchase of farms and other properties in upstate New York. Four farms were purchased in the Wallkill Valley, in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains; and, by late 1936, at a cost according to Father Divine, of one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, the Peace Mission had acquired a total of about a thousand acres of land in Ulster County and neighbouring Cromwell County at Olivebridge, Stone Ridge, New Paltz, High Falls, Krumville, Kingston and Saugerities.²

Father Divine took advantage of a stagnant rural property market, but it seems that, at first, he had no clear idea of what to do with his purchases. In a speech at the end of 1935 he suggested that his aim was to put home ownership within the grasp of all his followers:

"I am not asking you all to buy, neither to help Me buy a piece of property. I have purchased the property - several places - and they are all free and clear ... If perchance you have the means, or will have the means to build a home, the ground, the land, the lots, will be given to you free of cost, and you will have your deeds for them without a string tied to them. This is an abstract expression of the Communistic idea, making all things common, claiming nothing for yourself as an individual, refusing to hoard up riches for yourselves for a selfish purpose, but give everybody a chance to enjoy some of it." 3

The desire that the followers should become home-owners was a natural aspiration for Father Divine to hold. In the early years he, himself, had chosen to move out of Brooklyn (N.Y.) to buy a home in Sayville; and it followed that he should see home ownership as an appropriate use of the Movement's money. There is no evidence, however, that any of his followers had either the means or the inclination to take up this particular offer of "home sites". Nor had Father Divine made the purchases with only that in mind, for he bought, in the names of his followers, not only several small farms, but also several large and stylish country houses.

Although there was over five hundred acres of land available for "home sites" on an estate bought at Krumville, the property was undoubtedly chosen for its fine mansion house. At Stone Ridge Father Divine chose to purchase a pre-Revolutionary landmark - Hasbrouck Manor. Similarly, in Kingston, he bought 67 Chapel Street, a large private house that was formerly the home of Senator Sweeney.⁴ He also expressed an interest in commercial premises. During his visits to Ulster County in 1936 he inspected, but did not buy, brickyards and a woodworking factory in the Kingston area; and he negotiated - unsuccessfully - for the purchase of Kingston Airport.⁵

Furthermore, as soon as he had acquired a nucleus of properties, Father Divine began to speak of upstate New York as a "Promised Land" laid ready for his followers. At a banquet meeting in August 1936, Father Divine explained that just as God had made a promise to Moses to take the Children of Israel out of oppression, so "there is a PROMISED LAND for the Children of this generation, and in this particular Dispensation ... this PROMISED LAND is up in Ulster County, in and around the Catskill. Now isn't that Wonderful, the Land where even Physical Science, Medical Science and Practically all of the

sciences will tell you 'IT IS HEALTHY UP THERE.'"⁶

He now seemed to have more in mind than providing his followers with the land on which to build their own homes. With messianic ardour, he told the believers that this "Promised Land" offered all that Canaan had offered the Jews - a place where the followers could live full, peaceful and practical lives. In Ulster County, he told the followers, they would find that "GOD has abundantly blessed the land with horses and cows, chickens and ducks, rabbits and pigs and pheasants and deer, with a full and a-plenty for the true and faithful";⁷ and he announced the opening of this new Canaan with his customary flair.

On August 20 1936 he led his city followers on the Peace Mission's first official visit to the "Promised Land". It was a great celebration. Two thousand people boarded the excursion steamer "City of Keansburg" for the six hour journey up the Hudson River. A second steamer, the "Calvert", carried several hundred more.⁸ From the flagpole of the "City of Keansburg" a blue and white banner lettered "The Gospel Ship" fluttered in the breeze; and as the steamers entered Randout Creek at Kingston, crowds of local residents and those followers who had travelled upstate by road jammed the waterfront to greet the visitors:

"Suddenly someone shouted, 'There is the Personal Body!' At once all bodies became tense as every eye searched the vast crowd lining the rails for the One Whom thirty millions the world over worship and adore as GOD - FATHER DIVINE. The local citizens plainly showed their eagerness to get their first view of that Great Personality Whose recent activities in Ulster County has [sic] actually baffled them. There He was, standing against the rail on the deck just below the pilot-house, wearing a neat grey suit and a pearl-grey felt hat."

At 2 p.m. the followers assembled and, led by an equestrian unit, a band and Father Divine's familiar blue Rolls Royce, they set off in cars and on foot, carrying banners and flags, to 67 Chapel

Street:

"As the parade proceeded up the long hill Father frequently looked around to view the long line of marchers. At other times He would wave His Hands and smile sweetly down on the thousand who perched themselves on roofs and in windows or lined the streets along the route ... "

Newsreel cameras and press photographers followed the marchers as they spilled into the grounds of the Kingston extension and relaxed on the lawns. After a banquet meeting, games and swimming in the open-air pool, the city followers gathered for the return home. As the boat slipped its moorings, the followers on the quay joined those on the steamer in singing softly, "Father, I surrender":

"The Followers on land as well as on the boat, and even the boat itself seemed to move in perfect rhythm as the songs and songsters floated away in the distance and everyone on the dock prepared to depart for their various places of abode and voice their opinions of what had taken part in their midst on this day." 9

After the fanfare of this picnic pilgrimage, Father Divine announced his new ambitions for the upstate purchases. He proclaimed that he would soon "unfold a model community"¹⁰ and his lawyer, Nathan Kranzler, told the press that within the next few months two thousand followers would be settled in the "Promised Land", to join the seven hundred that he said were already there.¹¹ Arthur B. Ewig, a Kingston lawyer who had helped Father Divine in several transactions, told reporters that Father Divine planned to set up a chain of industrial plants in upstate New York which would be run by the followers and supply the Movement's needs. With its own farms and factories the Movement aimed to become a self-sufficient community.¹²

There were other signs of the Movement's plans for the area. Arthur M. Madison appeared before the New York State Welfare Board to apply for a charter for a home for small children at the Peace Mission extension at Saugerities;¹³ and it appeared that the Movement

intended to transfer its headquarters to Kingston and make this the centre for the Peace Mission's Righteous Government work.¹⁴ Father Divine encouraged the followers' participation. "If you love me as much as you say you do," he told the believers, "let your love and devotion become practical, profitable and good-for-something" by going out to the Promised Land and helping its development: "when you are willing to contribute without reservation all of your physical and spiritual strength in working for the glory of the Kingdom, without selfish thoughts of monetary rewards or wages you will be repaid."¹⁵

The followers greeted the "Promised Land" scheme with immense enthusiasm. They formed groups to settle in Ulster County and organised skilled followers to repair and renovate the properties. Soon the "Promised Land" extensions became hives of activity. Each weekend followers travelled from New York City to help decorate and redesign the properties for communal living.¹⁶ The unmistakable Peace Mission mottoes began to appear on the buildings and in the fields - "Peace" painted in bold, white letters on the side of barns; "Father Has Come" marked on boulders; "Father Is A Live Wire" and "You Are Now Working Out Your Own Soul Salvation" newly adorning pig pens and chicken runs.¹⁷

Father Divine issued advice to his followers on how they should run their new settlements. They should turn the land to full production and they should aim to make their farms into clean and efficient communities:

"My Religious Conviction is that every farmer should produce all of the food stuff that he can. He should cultivate the land and cause men to be more practical and profitable and renovate old run-down buildings and improve their surroundings to exterminate all undesirable insects and animals from their communities, that we might have better sanitary conditions in which we live." 18

Arthur M. Madison explained in more detail:

"Acreage must be productive to the fullest degree, not only crops, but stock such as cows, hogs, rabbits, poultry etc., all produce to be distributed at a minimum price. FATHER wants a-full and a-plenty for all." 19

There was no lack of voluntary labour and enthusiasm for the task. After a slow start, fields were cultivated and, at harvest time, followers travelled out from New York City to help gather the crops. Some farms grew fruit, vegetables and raised livestock; and a Peace Mission trucking service transported surplus produce from two of the farms to the city extensions returning with furnishings and personal goods for the faithful in the "Promised Land".²⁰

Some of the believers preferred more familiar economic enterprises. A number of Peace Mission businesses opened, principally in High Falls. Mother Divine ran a sewing shop here before her illness;²¹ and, in January 1937, a Peace Mission Department Store opened in the town. Other shops followed: a tea room and restaurant in mid-1937²² and, in September 1937, a Peace Grocery Store selling "in the form of greatly reduced prices, strictly fresh meat and eggs right from the farm." John Lamb told the city followers how a group of Ulster County housewives clubbed together to hire a vehicle to drive over twenty-five miles especially to buy at the Peace Grocery at bulk bargain prices.²³ By 1938 a sizeable part of High Falls' Main Street shopping thoroughfare was dominated by brightly painted Peace businesses.²⁴

There was a Peace Hotel in High Falls, too, which was operated, before her desertion, by Faithful Mary. A large, rambling building, the hotel housed two shops, two large dining rooms and accommodation for one hundred and twenty people. Lodging was offered to visiting followers and strangers alike for two dollars a week and meals were available at the usual Divine prices of fifteen cents each. The

hotel was designed primarily for the use of followers coming to upstate New York from the city as a temporary home before joining one of the "Promised Land" communities.²⁵

In 1937 more large properties were acquired. In March the Peace Mission bought Greenkill Park at Eddyville in Ulster County. This one hundred and seventy-seven acre estate was formerly a privately owned summer resort and it included a seven hundred room hotel, forty bungalows and out-buildings, a nine-hole golf course, ten tennis courts, a ballroom, stables, and swimming pool. Father Divine informed the press that the building would be remodelled as an educational centre for the Peace Mission, providing teaching and boarding facilities for all his younger followers. The first hundred pupils, he declared, would be selected from his eastern city extensions, and the existing Peace Mission educational staff would be transferred to Greenkill Park as the nucleus of the new school faculty. The school, he explained, would be ready for the opening of the autumn term and ultimately, he said, it was hoped to house and school all the children in the Movement.²⁶

To celebrate the purchase, Father Divine led two thousand followers on a long and lazy boat excursion from New York City to upstate New York in July 1937;²⁷ and, after visiting the "Promised Land" estates, a follower wrote in the New Day:

" Heaven on Earth

Let me tell a Wondrous Story,
Of a trip to Heaven on Earth;
To the Promised Land in Kingston,
Where all men receive new birth.

Ate with Christ as Father's table,
Slept beneath our Savior's roof,
At Stone Ridge with Father's Angels,
In GOD'S Holy House of Truth.

Yes, and walked with God at Greenkill,
Father's Paradise on land,
Nestling in the heart of Nature,
In the Hollow of his Hand.

Majestic hills, Palatial Hotel,
Music by Father's Own Band;
Woods to roam in, Lake to swim in,
Spacious Dining Room most grand.

Words cannot describe the blessings
Waiting for God's Children dear,
At Divine Park in Nature's Playground
Father's Happyland of Cheer." 28

But such delight was not shared by the citizens of Ulster County itself. There was considerable opposition to the Movement's entry into New Paltz in 1935 and, in an effort to improve local relations, Father Divine was obliged to approach the editor of the New Paltz News to assure him that the followers would be an asset to the community.²⁹ In Kingston, apprehensions grew rapidly after the Peace Mission's massive pilgrimage in August 1936. According to the local Sherrif, Abram Molyneaux, the citizens objected to the sudden intrusion of fantastic zealots and "strangers" from "all over"; and he raised the spectre of racial conflict. He warned that if Father Divine "really brings thousands of Negroes up here and tries to get some of them jobs in Kingston, I look for trouble." Molyneaux told reporters that he had already heard rumours that people owning property near the Peace Mission farms were planning "some kind of Ku Klux Klan, to put him out of business, and they seemed to want to know what I would do about it." In each case, he declared, "I was careful to let them know that I am sworn to uphold the law."

Kingston lawyer, Arthur B. Ewig, debunked the rumours. He felt that Father Divine was "a little too ambitious, perhaps" but he commended Father Divine's ideas and conduct. Once the Movement began spending money in the area, he argued, opposition would crumble. Traders, he suggested, were already willing to do business with Father Divine and his followers, even if they did not like this to become public knowledge.³⁰

But Ewig was a little sanguine. Fears grew about the Movement's

possible political influence in the area and, in the spring of 1937, Sherrif Molyneaux again gave encouragement to local apprehensions when he published a statement claiming that Father Divine had threatened to "get him with votes". He declared that complaints were continuing to come into his office about the Peace Mission's settlement in the county. This time, John Delay, Father Divine's real estate agent, tried to assuage local anxieties. Father Divine's only interest in Ulster County politics, Delay said, was to "command the respect of officials for himself and his work." As for his property investments, Delay felt that local people ought to appreciate rather than deplore Father Divine's work. "He is the only one," Delay said, "who takes large and small properties and remodels them, pays cash and buys locally." In Delay's view, Father Divine was doing a lot of good for "his people and for the country". His goals were to be commended: "he is out to bring all the business and manufacturing to the country that he possibly can. His aim is to give everyone work."³¹

But farmers resented the Movement's expansion in Ulster County. They feared the purchasing power that allowed the followers to take advantage of the depressed rural land market.³² In the business community, there was concern that a large settlement of predominantly black religious zealots would ruin the county's summer hotel and boarding house business and crush the tentative revival in the residential property market.³³ A Kingston real estate dealer complained:

"You can't sell real estate up here any more. People won't buy a house in the country because they are afraid they'll wake up some morning and find a heaven next door. Father Divine is the only person you can sell land to." ³⁴

In April 1937 fire swept through a twenty-two room, two-storey extension, Divine Terrace, near New Paltz. Fifteen followers

jumped to safety from the windows, but the fire brigade was hampered by a lack of water and the intense heat from the roaring interior. Father Divine hurriedly travelled upstate to inspect the damage and to re-house the followers. But the building had been burnt to a shell. In accordance with Father Divine's teaching, it had not been insured.³⁵

Fire brigade officials, who investigated the cause of the blaze, believed that it had been accidental. John Lamb maintained that it had been arson; and he revealed that the Ulster County "heavens" had received numerous threatening 'phone calls which he believed to be part of a plan to force the Peace Mission out of the district. But Lamb declared that the followers would not be intimidated. Father Divine would rebuild the extension and "there will be many more wonders worked in the country." Lamb also warned that the Peace Mission maintained an "intelligence organisation" to collect information on suspected arsonists. Madison informed the press that Father Divine would soon obtain all the available property in the unsettled parts of the country: "we will build warehouses, canneries, model dairy farms and our long-term program calls for making our own clothing and motor cars."³⁶

But these were hollow claims. For, after the initial purchases in the "Promised Land" there were few further acquisitions of farm land. Nor were any commercial and industrial premises bought. The idea of moving the Peace Mission's headquarters out of New York City was stillborn;³⁷ as was Father Divine's ambitious project to establish a Peace Mission school at Greenkill Park. A reporter who visited the Greenkill estate in November 1937 wrote that the main house was used solely as a weekend resort by the followers; its golf course lay neglected; the land was uncultivated; and the followers bought all their provisions in Kingston.³⁸

The hostility of local residents in upstate New York played its part in discouraging development. Official pressure also dampened Father Divine's expectation of rapid acceptance in upstate New York. The State Welfare Board rejected Madison's application for a children's home in Saugerities;³⁹ and, in 1937, the Kingston District Attorney, Cleon B. Murray, opened an investigation into the Movement's Ulster County operations. Although apparently little of consequence emerged, Faithful Mary's appearance as a witness embarrassed the upstate followers when her allegations against Father Divine received wide publicity in the Ulster County press.⁴⁰

The Movement's upstate investments also attracted the attention of Harry M. Hickey, the Internal Revenue Collector in Albany (N.Y.). Since title to the Movement's property was recorded in the names of believers who did not necessarily have much part in directly paying for it, a tax anomaly arose. While the title-holders legally owned the properties, none of them had, of course, paid federal taxes on their personal income and assets commensurate with such purchases.

Undeterred by the idiosyncracies of the Peace Mission's financial arrangements, Hickey imposed arbitrary tax liens against seventy-two followers reported to be living in fourteen Ulster County communities. The largest liens were against Anna Reed for \$28,461 and Charlotte Becker, for \$15,354: both resident at Greenkill Park. In September 1937, Hickey told journalists that the investigation was continuing; although he had not yet decided whether or not to impose a tax lien against Father Divine himself.⁴¹

Father Divine had testily denied that the Peace Mission's properties were tax-exempt when, earlier that year, the purchase of Greenkill Park had first aroused rumours.⁴² Now, the suggestion that the followers were wealthy tax defaulters caused the New Day to reply that the upstate properties had not been bought with large amounts

of money, deceitfully hoarded by individual believers, but with scores of small sums of money "most certainly saved out of [the] small annual income or wages" of a "number of the followers."⁴³

Claiming that the followers' assets were not large enough to warrant the payment of heavy taxes, the alleged tax defaulters took their cases, in late 1937, to the Board of Tax Appeals for re-determination.⁴⁴

But local opposition, and official investigation were not as crippling to the fortunes of the "Promised Land" settlements as was the Movement's failure to make the settlements profitable: a failure that was due to the state of the rural economy; Father Divine's lack of strong leadership; and the limits of his followers' skills.

Father Divine spoke of the land as a place where it was possible for all people to work out, in full, the possibilities of his message of self-reliance, hard work, co-operation and abundance. In the summer of 1938 he told the crowds at a Rockland Palace rally:

"Now back to the farms the public should return, for thousands and thousands of idle land are doing nothing for GOD nor for man ... while thousands and thousands of people in the City of New York can hardly get a breath of fresh air, there are plenty of places in the country." ⁴⁵

Father Divine's image of the land as a place for self-respecting labour and prosperity was, by no means, unique. For many years, the land and homesteading had exercised a fascination among Americans - despite the fact that the small farm was always vulnerable at times of agrarian depression and technological change. Indeed, rather than deterring interest in the land, hard times had tended to increase the demand for land and inflame a back-to-the-farm enthusiasm. So strong was this faith that Franklin D. Roosevelt, while governor of New York, had been attracted to the idea of using the State's tax-delinquent agricultural properties for subsistence homesteads; and

early New Deal legislation had sought to rehabilitate the family farm.⁴⁶

Father Divine and his leading followers, however, intended the Promised Land farms to be far more than subsistence homesteads. Arthur Madison said that they should be regarded, in their economic organisation, as "a sample of what must be done universally"⁴⁷ demonstrating, in a practical way, the prosperity that was possible from an economic order geared to maximum production and minimum prices.

Ironically, it was precisely this economic situation - low prices born of tremendous crop and livestock surpluses - that American farmers had been trying to escape ever since the collapse of world markets following the First World War. Father Divine told the followers to return the land to full production at precisely the time when the national government, under the press of agrarian distress and unable to devise a method for expanding markets to absorb the excess, was turning to restriction and price levies as the only way back to agricultural stability and farm security.⁴⁸

A journalist in the World Herald wrote lyrically of the contrast between the Movement's "Promised Land" settlements, overflowing with an abundance of all good things, and the scarcity of crops and livestock throughout America enforced by the New Deal's agricultural programme:

"How marvellous it is to see the great increase in production in the 'Promised Land': the size of the vegetation and the multiplication of the livestock, the abundance of milk from contented cows, the increase in eggs from happy hens, the tremendous growth of peaceful pumpkins and the unlimited promise of what is yet to come." ⁴⁹

But this was less an accurate observation than an optimistic aspiration: for, not only were the Movement's rural economics hopelessly unrealistic; but, in truth, after the first flush of

enthusiasm, the followers demonstrated a complete inability to make the "Promised Land" bloom.

Attracted by the appeal of rural life, those who settled in the "Promised Land" were mainly middle-aged folk who had spent most of their lives in work that ill-prepared them for the mixed farming of New York State.⁵⁰ Even those who had worked the land in the South would have been unfamiliar with the crop techniques necessary to success. The Righteous Government Department espoused the idea of classes on agricultural education.⁵¹ But Father Divine never gave his followers in the "Promised Land" either regular advice or realistic goals to pursue; and no attempt was made to overcome the considerable problems that stood in the path of agricultural viability.

The lack of a substantial number of men in the Movement was a particular problem. Although the equality of the sexes was generally acknowledged within the Peace Mission, Father Divine believed that there were some tasks that women should not do. At a Peace Mission Righteous Government Forum, where the followers discussed equal rights legislation, Father Divine said: "there are some things men, I feel, should do. There are some things out of line for women to do."⁵² The cultivation of the land required manual labour and involved heavy tasks. While co-operative efforts eased the workload, and the care of livestock, especially poultry, was less exhausting, it is possible that the followers viewed ploughing, sowing, harvesting and general farm maintenance as men's work. Men guided the horse-drawn ploughs, hoed in the fields and drove the farm wagons in the newsreels filmed at the Movement's upstate farms.⁵³ Yet men were in a minority in the Peace Mission; and it is possible that women followers, most of whom had spent their working lives as domestics, were unable, by themselves, to exploit the land to the

full.

Furthermore, because the farms, like all the Peace Mission's enterprises, were self-regulating, no system of common agricultural planning, buying and marketing was devised to encourage the farms to operate as a true collective.⁵⁴ In 1936 Hasbrouck Manor had been grandly designated the rural production headquarters of the Promised Land⁵⁵ and, in time, some land was tilled and produced modest crops. Fruit, eggs and milk were sent to the Peace Mission's city extensions for sale. But there was never enough produce to supply the upstate extensions, let alone the city ones, on a substantial basis, and the New York City Board of Health intervened to forbid the unauthorised delivery of "Kingdom" milk. Without greater organisation, practical and theoretical expertise and investment, Father Divine's farms were unable to supply the Movement's needs on a self-sufficient basis. In New York City, virtually all the Movement's meat continued to be bought from wholesale butchers.⁵⁶

The followers' inability to make the upstate settlements productive augured badly for their ability to effect any more ambitious economic plan. This ~~must~~ was tacitly acknowledged by Father Divine's leading advisors in 1937. For the first (and only) time, there was a suggestion that the Movement was considering a change in its economic organisation. John Lamb informed reporters that the Movement would welcome outside investors to join the believers. They would not be obliged to become followers; only to show an interest in the Movement and be prepared to make some "individual sacrifices". The rewards would be substantial. The followers, Lamb said, would not seek wages, but would be "content to live in a spirit of cooperation and heavenly exhaltation."⁵⁷

Lamb's invitation suggested that he, at least, realized that the Movement's programme of warehouses, canneries, model farms and small

industry required expertise, money and planning that was beyond the ability of those in the Movement. There were risks involved in entrusting the Movement's affairs to outsiders who had scant commitment to Father Divine and the followers.⁵⁸ Perhaps in a more favourable setting and at a time of greater confidence within the Movement, Father Divine and his leading followers might have been prepared to take those risks; but, Lamb's remarks aside, no further mention was made of the idea. By the end of 1937, Father Divine had little inclination to implement his original intentions in the Promised Land.

In the summer of that year, Supreme Court Justice Philip J. McCook placed an injunction forbidding the sale, assignment or transfer of any of the Peace Mission's properties, pending the full trial of Verinda Brown's suit.⁵⁹ The court order discouraged innovation, reorganisation and development in the "Promised Land."

In public, of course, Father Divine kept up a pretence of confidence. In 1938, he told Robert S. Bird of the New York Times and Jack Glenn of the March of Time film unit that the "Promised Land" would remain a nucleus of the Movement "until all of the politicians and those who are in authority will be obliged to sit up and take notice, and take cognizance of that which I AM doing, that they might do the same for the benefit of many."⁶⁰ But, by then, the Peace Mission's upstate properties were being used mainly as showpiece vacation resorts for the city faithful.

As early as July 1937, an advertisement in the Peace Mission press invited readers to "Spend Your Vacation in the Promised Land!" at the Movement's "Beautiful Estates" at Stone Ridge, High Falls, Saugerities, Krumville, Samsonville, New Paltz, Kingston and Greenkill Park. The "Evangelical Amusements" open to the visitor included:

fishing, swimming, tennis, baseball, hand ball, hiking, and cricket. "All Races. All Colors. All Religions. All Nationalities" were welcome, but "only modest and moral persons" would be accepted. Visitors were required to avoid smoking, alcohol, "vile, profane and indecent language" and to observe the segregation of the sexes. The bookings were made through Father Divine's headquarters at 20 West 115th Street.⁶¹

Indeed, the various farms and homesteads in the "Promised Land" probably depended on the influx of paying guests to meet their own bills. It was a measure of the lack of innovation in upstate New York that the followers there increasingly relied on the type of economic activity that they had followed in Harlem: namely, rented accommodation and small, cut-price businesses.

The original vision of the "Promised Land" as a perfect Peace Mission community could not be fulfilled. But from 1937 onwards, Father Divine seemed to believe that the mere splendour of the properties and their pastoral setting was impressive enough to warrant the continued loyalty of his followers and the respect of the outside world.

Amid the trials and tribulations of the closing years of the decade, no opportunity was lost to publicize the wonders of the "Promised Land". In the Harlem extensions, newsreels were shown of the properties upstate,⁶² and uplifting eulogies were delivered by upstate followers. At the Peace Mission's "Great Easter Demonstration" in 1937, Brother Joseph, said to be one hundred years old, sang, danced and "roused the great assembly to shouts of delight" with his descriptions of the "Promised Land" where one of the farms was said to be under his management.

According to a Peace Mission journalist:

"He drew the picture of abundance and freedom and joy so graphically that the surge of the thoughts and longings of the Multitude to reach that new Mecca of a Paradise-on-Earth could be almost physically felt." 63

The concerns of prestige now came to dominate the purchases made in upstate New York. Of course, some of Father Divine's earlier purchases had been bought for their grandeur rather than their utility - Greenkill Park, known for a brief time as the "Universal International Headquarters" and dedicated with extravagant publicity in 1937, was more splendid than practical.⁶⁴ But Father Divine's preoccupation with the symbols of wealth, status and respectability became the dominant feature of his property interest by the end of that fateful year for the Movement.

Late in 1937, he opened negotiations for the purchase of a beautiful, four-storey, twenty-seven room stucco Clubhouse, known as the Artists' Colony, at Milton-on-Hudson. Local residents, horrified by the news, tried to raise money to buy the mortgage and prevent the sale. But the attempt failed and, in May 1938, the Peace Mission acquired the property.⁶⁵ Two months later, the Peace Mission announced that a group of twenty followers had purchased the estate of Howland Spencer at Krum Elbow, Lloyd, Ulster County. The five hundred acre estate stretched down to the west shore of the Hudson River opposite President Roosevelt's Hyde Park estate, and included orchards, vineyards, twenty-eight buildings - including a mansion, boathouse, tenants' houses and garages - as well as a private dock on the riverbank. Acquired for a price of between forty and fifty thousand dollars, the Krum Elbow estate was an impressive purchase.⁶⁶

At Krum Elbow, Father Divine said, his followers would exemplify a "divine, modern, mystic standard of living." His sole interest, he said, lay in "improving, renovating and expanding the property [so] men of all races, creeds and political faiths can

always work there and be free and never become public charges."⁶⁷

At the opening dedication of the Artists' Colony extension Father Divine told his audience:

"We have a simple rule. My mission is to renovate and improve all this as regards morally, intellectually. Let us do the same things sociologically. This material building, for instance, is an outward expression of the reality of God's blessings and how He will multiply them ... Our homes must be made fit places in which to live. Men must become independent, self-respecting." ⁶⁸

Father Divine made a point of inviting people in public office to visit his upstate properties. Sylvanus H. Hart from the New York State Department of Licences spent five days in the "Promised Land" in 1939; five New York City police officers enjoyed the followers' hospitality while on a bear hunting expedition in upstate New York; and Reverend John H. Johnson and a party of clergymen were escorted to the Peace Mission's upstate properties in 1940.⁶⁹

The purchase of property continued at an accelerating rate. With Father Divine's encouragement, the followers began to search for exclusive residential properties beyond Ulster County. In May 1939, a group of believers bought a sixteen room frame house with three acres of terraced grounds in the fashionable Park Hill district of Yonkers, Westchester County (N.Y.); and, in the following month, the residents of Sutton Manor, a residential section of New Rochelle, learnt with astonishment that Father Divine's followers had bought the imposing 'Child's Mansion' at 176 Farrugut Circle, including access to the private residents' beach on Long Island Sound. In both cases, white followers had conducted all the transactions with the real estate firms, and neither the agents nor the local residents realized that the buildings were intended for the followers of Father Divine until cars loaded with black followers bearing brooms, mops and dusters, arrived to clean and

prepare the buildings.⁷⁰

Both of these houses were dedicated by Father Divine as "model homes". At the banquet to dedicate the Yonkers home in April 1940, Father Divine told the believers:

"We want model homes throughout this land and country as a sample and an example; where those who are not married will live as they should and those who are married will live as they should, but live in all decency and honesty to each other and to each and everybody by living soberly, righteously and godly." ⁷¹

By this time Father Divine had moved far away from his most ambitious vision of the "Promised Land." The Movement had demonstrably failed to build a self-sufficient, model Peace Mission community; yet it was possible for him to boast that, in the "Promised Land", "even common laborers [and] domestic workers [were] coming into possession of their Rightful inheritance and living in Splendor."⁷² The Peace Mission could now lay claim to an impressive list of investments in upstate New York,⁷³ and, by 1940, some of its difficulties were over.

In 1939, after a two-year campaign to collect tax arrears from believers holding title to Ulster County property, the Inland Revenue closed the case after the followers agreed to pay over three thousand dollars in settlement.⁷⁴ Hostility toward the followers was easing. Ulster County residents were becoming reconciled to the followers' presence and even complimented some of them on their honesty and peaceful diligence. In High Falls, town officials were sufficiently impressed by the Peace Mission's businesses to invite the followers to co-operate in plans for the town's development.⁷⁵ In Yonkers and New Rochelle, the whites living in the neighbourhoods around the Peace Mission's extensions, resigned themselves to the followers' settlement: prepared to tolerate them as long as they were unobtrusive.⁷⁶

The retreat from ambitious vitality to cautious consolidation in the "Promised Land" duplicated the course of the Peace Mission's political and economic campaigns of the late 'thirties. Indeed, in late 1939, Father Divine published in the Peace Mission press a new "Model Plan for an International Utopia" that provided an ideological justification for the Peace Mission's obsession with the accumulation of property and marked the end of the original Righteous Government campaign. Whereas, just three years earlier, the Peace Mission demanded sweeping changes in government and international affairs as the basis for the evangelisation of mankind, now, at a time when "undisciplined principles and precepts" were undermining civilisation, Father Divine insisted that the foundations of an international utopia would be laid in a more mundane and domestic fashion, in the followers' homes and work:

"It is for this cause that MY followers are exhibiting Model Homes that first depict purchases made for cash. They liquidate all liens, mortgages, or any other binding instrument that may be attached to the purchased property. They pay their taxes and all current bills. They do not allow their properties to run down, but keep them up to par, constantly developing and expanding activities to beautify their estates and increase their energies to make them profitable and practical." 77

It was to this dreary, respectable, insular conformity that the Peace Mission was finally reduced - at least to justify itself to its critics. Only the re-opening of the troublesome Verinda Brown suit in the New York Supreme Court late in 1939, disrupted the Movement's complacency and re-fired Father Divine's old contempt for the "corrupt" and "unrighteous."

The Verinda Brown suit brought a fresh wave of adverse publicity for the Movement that reached a peak in March 1940 when Supreme Court Justice Dineen gave judgement. After dismissing the case against the seventy-eight followers involved in Verinda Brown's action, Dineen ruled that Father Divine must repay all the money that she had entrusted to his care.⁷⁸ In a curt rejoinder, Father Divine said that he would not pay or recognize the judgement: "I always reverse every malicious and prejudicial decision and I will reverse this one, or when I get through there will not be many judges living."⁷⁹ In October 1940, however, the Supreme Court dismissed his appeal and, in the following March, Supreme Court Justice Philip J. McCook, who had heard much of the early evidence in the Verinda Brown suit, granted an order for Father Divine's arrest. McCook noted:

"Were this a poor preacher I might be disinclined, in the exercise of discretion, to authorise so drastic a remedy as civil arrest. Being convinced, however, that he has access to money or property sufficient to satisfy his creditors, but has succeeded in evading collection of his debts, a quite different situation is presented. The ends of justice in this event require that every weapon of the law be employed to prevent continued flouting of the mandates of the court. Should the judgement debtor prefer to go to jail than submit and pay, that will be his affair." 80

On March 7 1941 Father Divine was arrested and held in custody while his attorney arranged bail, pending a further appeal. Father Divine submitted smilingly to his temporary confinement and issued a prepared statement in defiance. Proclaiming that he stood for the payment of all just debts, he attacked the judgement against him as "obtained through deceit, perjured testimony and conspiracy." Asserting that Dineen had exonerated him of any charge of embezzlement, larceny, fraud or deceit, he said that he would not allow his followers to pay a penny to the "frauders, perjurers, exploiters and blackmailers."⁸¹

But, within a year, his defiance forced him into a more drastic course. Having exhausted the appeal procedure, Father Divine left New York for Philadelphia to evade both payment and arrest.⁸² The man who had promised to make his followers into honest, law-abiding citizens, himself fled the judgement of the law.

It was not a course happily taken. In 1942 New York City sheltered twenty-seven extensions compared to Philadelphia's four;⁸³ and, from 1938 to 1941 Father Divine's New York City followers had made several investments in Harlem for the Movement's benefit. They had bought two brownstones on Madison Avenue as a private residence for Father Divine; and they had also taken out a five year lease, with an option to buy, on the Rockland Palace ballroom.⁸⁴ Despite Father Divine's enforced absence from New York, it was not until 1944 that the Movement reluctantly transferred its headquarters from there to Philadelphia.⁸⁵

Still, Philadelphia was a natural sanctuary. Father Divine had held two major rallies in Philadelphia after his followers had opened an expensive, new extension there in August 1939. Since he rarely travelled outside New York State, these visits were a measure of Philadelphia's importance to the Movement.⁸⁶

Moreover, the move to Philadelphia, by cutting Father Divine off from the largest number of his ghetto supporters, accelerated the Movement's withdrawal from ghetto concerns and intensified its preoccupation with its own prosperity. The Peace Mission now settled into that respectable and sequestered way of life that Sara Harris and Kenneth Burnham described in 1953 and 1963.

The number of rented extensions and small businesses operated by the followers fell rapidly and the Movement's economic interests became concentrated in property. By 1953, when the Peace Mission's headquarters moved out of the Philadelphia ghetto to Woodmont, a

beautiful estate in an exclusive residential suburb, the business side of the Movement comprised a number of legally accredited property corporations and partnerships. The Peace Mission was now largely confined to the extensions that were owned by the followers. Most of the upstate New York properties were retained and the house at Sayville was maintained as a shrine; but of the Harlem extensions of the nineteen 'thirties, only the Madison Avenue brownstones remained. By then, Kenneth Burnham observed, the acquisition and renovation of property had acquired the status of a sacred duty.⁸⁷

This consolidation of wealth was matched by the strengthening of autocracy and hierarchy within the Peace Mission. Badly shaken by the disruptions and challenges of the 'thirties, Father Divine ensured his survival, in the 'forties and fifties, by stifling dissent and fostering an elaborate status hierarchy within the Movement based on complete obedience to his word.

The secretaries remained the group closest to him; but, between them and the rank and file, Father Divine introduced three uniformed corps of followers. Kenneth Burnham wrote that, in the 'fifties, about half of the "attendants" at the Peace Mission's meetings wore special uniforms. The "Rosebuds", a group of young, white women who formed an entourage for Father Divine, wore dark red jackets emblazoned with the letter 'V' (for virtue) and navy skirts. They conducted youth meetings, served as a choir, composed plays, planned marching formations and choreographed "interpretative dancing" for special occasions. Their equivalents among the male believers were known as the "Crusaders". Identified, on formal occasions, by their dress of powder-blue tuxedo coats, white shirts, black ties and dark trousers, the "Crusaders" served as a choir, devoted all their time, energy and money to the Movement; and provided "readers" for the central ritual of public readings of the New Day to visitors and

outsiders. The third group, the "Lilybuds", wore green jackets. They were mainly older, black women believers. They formed the majority of the "attendants" and their main role was in testifying. Each of these groups had its own written declaration of purpose and belief to which the novitiate vowed allegiance.⁸⁸

In the later years, the uniformity and stratification of the Movement was accompanied by a softening of doctrine. Although the Peace Mission preserved the disciplines of the "evangelical life", it abandoned its controversial rulings on medical care and family obligations. "Church By-Laws" now made it obligatory for followers to provide for the support of their dependants; and it was possible for ailing believers to seek medical care within three days of an illness. In the late 'forties, a United Peace Mission Nurses group was formed to care for elderly followers.⁸⁹ There was no more striking instance of this relaxation of doctrine within the Movement - and of Father Divine's virtually absolute control over the Peace Mission - than his unexpected re-marriage in 1946.

Peninah had died of cancer in 1941; but it was not until five years later that Father Divine acknowledged her death. Then he also announced his marriage to Edna Rose Ritchings, a white Canadian follower, aged twenty-one. He told his shocked followers that Peninah had asked him to take away her spirit and place it in a young and attractive body that would please him more than her old and wretched physical form. The new marriage, he said, would be a living example of the beauty of inter-marriage between black and white and serve as a weapon in his fight for higher standards: "I married to propagate virtue and holiness and move discrimination off the face of the earth."⁹⁰ After a flurry of protest from the believers, the marriage was accepted.

Few new converts were attracted to this comfortable, monolithic

and introverted group. Burnham knew of only two in the two years that he closely observed the Movement.⁹¹ Although some of the children of the white followers found the Peace Mission attractive, there were very few young, black followers. Sara Harris observed that most of Father's black followers had joined him in the Depression, and that the white followers, although not so numerous, were the most emotionally dependent on the Movement. In 1965, when Father Divine died, and the new Mother Divine took his place at the head of the Peace Mission, claiming to be his reincarnation, the Movement had, at the most, an international following of ten thousand⁹² converts.

The Peace Mission had thus come full circle. From the outward-looking, confident, mass-movement of the 'thirties, it had retracted to a smaller group not unlike that first household at Sayville, although, of course, far wealthier and more disciplined.

Even today the Peace Mission still offers some black and white Americans a way of life that they find more fulfilling than any they might make in the larger society: self-renunciation, an absence of social or racial distinctions, and the companionship and support of a disciplined, collective life. Its most favoured members may even be, in Father Divine's words, "living in Splendor". But the present-day Peace Mission is but the ruins of a greater ambition that had failed: for Father Divine had promised the people of Harlem in 1932 that he would bring them:

"Rest from your lacks, wants and limitations.
Rest from your sickness and diseases. Rest
from your oppressions and depressions ...
Rest from your segregation and discrimination." 93

When Father Divine left New York City in 1941 little had fundamentally changed for the people of Harlem. In 1940, the New York Urban League calculated that, despite the up-turn in the national economy, forty per-cent of black New Yorkers still relied on home or work relief for their survival and they were being released from the rolls at a far slower rate than white workers in the city.⁹⁴ For those who found work, the nature of their employment remained much the same. Most blacks still relied on the worst-paid work of the metropolis: domestic and personal service and unskilled general labour.⁹⁵ Social conditions in Harlem were desperate. The 'thirties witnessed the consolidation and spread, rather than the dismantling, of the black ghetto and, in the judgement of the Citizen's Housing Council in 1939, Harlem was "New York City's Community Problem No. 1."⁹⁶ A City-Wide Citizens Committee on Harlem, set up in November 1941 to "stimulate united action ... to improve conditions for the Negro in New York City", demanded better housing at lower rentals, more health care, improved educational and recreational facilities and greater opportunities for blacks in employment.⁹⁷

The Peace Mission's work had but a small impact. It is, of course, impossible to know how many Harlemites benefited from its cheap food and shelter, especially in the early years of the Depression, when the provision of home and work relief was inadequate and hamstrung by bureaucracy, inhumanity and discrimination. But, as both the local and national administrations proved themselves responsive to the needs of the black community, most of the unemployed came to rely on relief for their survival.

It was also on local and national government that the people of Harlem came to depend for some amelioration of their living conditions. Whether because of liberal humanitarianism; to stave off more drastic political developments, or merely because the

Northern migrations had made blacks a substantial, even decisive, part of the electorate, Roosevelt's administration gave blacks more practical help and public recognition than any administration since Southern Reconstruction.⁹⁸ With federal funds, the reform administration of Mayor La Guardia in New York completed a model housing project in Harlem, two new schools, a new health centre and an extension to Harlem Hospital.⁹⁹

Neither Roosevelt nor La Guardia made any wholesale assault on discrimination, segregation and inequality, in work and living conditions. Indeed, in some respects, their administrations perpetuated racial injustices.¹⁰⁰ But the New Deal gave encouragement to the formation of industrial unions which, for the first time, organised substantial numbers of blacks alongside their white work-mates.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Roosevelt, La Guardia and State Governor Lehman, by their implicit acceptance of blacks as an inseparable part of the American community, their sympathetic attitude to black grievances and their willingness to appoint blacks as public officials and advisors, inadvertently encouraged the rise of indigenous pressure groups in Harlem which, precipitated by Depression distress and bent on breaking down discrimination and improving the economic, social and political status of blacks, succeeded in winning small, but significant, gains: in political representation; employment opportunities; a fair share of public works; and legislation against job discrimination.

Father Divine's prescription for the elimination of Harlem's social ills was compounded of a rigid sexual morality and a boundless faith in the curative properties of self-reliance and self-discipline. Although it may have restored the self-confidence of those who imbibed it willingly; it could no more provide the black community with the quality of environment, education and opportunity

that it needed than protect the followers from the physical illnesses that the Movement misguidedly attributed to sin. Economically, the Peace Mission relied on "harmonious co-operation": a judicious combination of self-help, self-sacrifice, co-operation and self-interest. It afforded some protection to those in domestic service where unionism and government regulation did not reach; and through a policy of low prices and good service in business, it made no little profit for itself. But its success was at the cost of further depressing an already overcrowded ghetto market and threatening the organisation of labour in Harlem.

With its claim to have found the secret of prosperity, peace and immortality through the reconciliation of faith and science, the Peace Mission attracted many converts and enjoyed much early success. It was even bold enough to offer its precepts to the nation and the world as the fulfilment of the promise of the American Constitution and the proper foundation of any Righteous Government. But this bid for political leadership was both its greatest ambition and also its most spectacular failure.

In its aspirations for an end to war, racial discrimination and economic inequality, it shared much in common with Communists, Socialists and social reformers of all persuasions. It was also able to find common ground with parties and pressure groups in Harlem on particular issues. While its dedication to pacifism and democracy militated against a revolutionary course, the Peace Mission, in its enthusiasm for political discussion and voter education, came close to becoming a force for reform at the polls. But, for all Father Divine's pretensions to modernity and his reverence for the ideals of American democracy, he neither understood nor accepted the manner in which politics was conducted. The justice of his cause would brook no negotiation or compromise: those who refused to

endorse him thus convicted themselves as "corrupt" and "unrighteous". He condemned appeals to sectional interests and the resort to direct action as divisive. He saw politics not as a matter of power, but as a question of the integrity and exemplary character of the politician and the justice of his cause.

The business of politics in Harlem was very different. The increase in Harlem's black population during the 'twenties encouraged black politicians both to seek control of local party organisations and to press for black political representation in the state and national legislatures. The Depression-born Harlem pressure groups brought race and class interests firmly into Harlem's political life and, along with the trade unions, made direct action very familiar to Harlemites. It was to leaders willing to exploit black political power and the tactics of direct action to serve black social and economic demands, that local allegiance was increasingly given.

Notable among these leaders were the pastors of some of Harlem's most influential churches, who turned their backs on the conservatism of the church to pursue social change. Mostly young and educated in the North, they were, like Father Divine, determined that religion should prove itself of practical, as well as spiritual, benefit. Nor was their commitment to action directed by Christian principles any less profound than those of Father Divine. Reverend John H. Johnson wrote that human nature "does and can change" and that he had no time for:

"... those who say that under the skin, man is a beast; that he likes to fight and therefore we can never do away with war ... those who will tell you that there are too many people in the world and therefore we shall always have slums and unemployment ... those who maintain that men of different races will always dislike each other and view each other with fear and suspicion." 102

But he, Reverend William Lloyd Imes, Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Jnr. and others accepted that such changes came gradually and through the this-worldly means of organisation, pressure, negotiation and compromise. It was by such means that Reverend John H. Johnson came to the attention of Mayor La Guardia and received several influential appointments, including the chairmanship of the Advisory Committee on Negro Problems in the City's Emergency Relief Bureau. It was also by such means that Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Jnr. was elected first to the City Council in 1941 and secondly, to the United States Congress in 1944.¹⁰³

Even before he inherited his father's pastorate in 1937, Adam Clayton Powell Jnr. had taken part in several community campaigns, but it was his leadership of the Greater New York Coordinating Committee from 1938 - 1941 that brought him firmly into the public eye. He pastored the largest congregation in Harlem. He was young, charming, eloquent and, above all, politically astute. By careful cultivation of alliances among Communists, nationalists, trade unionists, regular politicians and the traditional black leadership; and by his outspoken advocacy of direct action; he established himself as Harlem's leading spokesman by the end of the 'thirties.¹⁰⁴

In many ways, Powell Jnr. and Father Divine were alike. Both were supported by large congregations and both were supreme egoists, for whom the ghetto was the ideal place for the exercise of their considerable talents for self-advertisement and self-aggrandisement. But, at the moment when self-righteousness, dispute and prosecution forced the Peace Mission to withdraw from the turmoil of Harlem; to seek comfort in the "Promised Land"; and to retreat into pious respectability; Adam Clayton Powell Jnr. enjoyed his first great triumph. In 1941, the year that Father Divine crept out of Harlem, Powell directed a Coordinating Committee boycott against the Fifth

Avenue Coach Company and the New York Omnibus Company. The boycott, conducted in conjunction with a Transport Workers Union strike, succeeded in forcing the companies to both recognize the union and hire blacks as drivers and mechanics.¹⁰⁵

In the same year, the threat of direct action also proved successful at a national level. Previously, black leadership had relied on civil libertarianism and reference to the civilised virtues of blacks (tactics which bore much resemblance to Father Divine's) to secure redress for black grievances. But the N.A.A.C.P. had begun to use the threat of the black vote in the 'twenties; and, in 1941, veteran Socialist and trade unionist, Asa Philip Randolph, elbowed the establishment aside to threaten President Roosevelt with a gigantic, all-black "March on Washington" unless the President ended segregation in the armed services and halted discrimination in the recruitment of labour for defence industries. Not all the Movement's demands were met, but the threat of direct action proved sufficient to persuade Roosevelt to issue his Executive Order 8802 which established the Fair Employment Practices Committee.¹⁰⁶

This was the new pattern of black leadership that the Depression and the New Deal encouraged. It emphasised economic issues; sought political power; opted for mass organisation and direct action; and relied on government regulation to break down discrimination and improve the social and economic status of blacks.

There were, of course, limits to what such leadership could accomplish. The black vote, although significant, was still not large enough to force the major political parties to take the drastic steps necessary to dismantle segregation and discrimination.¹⁰⁷ The craft unions still largely excluded blacks from skilled employment; and even those unions who wished to enlarge black employment opportunities were hampered by the resistance of some employers

and some white unionists.¹⁰⁸ The war economy encouraged a new migration of blacks into the cities of the North and West; and, as the ghettos once more began to swell, so the traditional areas of black employment declined.¹⁰⁹ It was soon to become clear that the degree of economic regulation and the scale of reform of the New Deal era was woefully inadequate to cope with the problems of the ghetto. Nevertheless, it was in militancy and the quest for economic and political power that urban blacks now put their trust: and the gap between their aspirations and their everyday reality grew wider.

In 1940, the New York Urban League warned:

"Listening sympathetically to complaints day in and day out, one is forced to wonder how long this condition can be endured; whether the lid may not soon blow off in open revolt; and just when those responsible for this state of affairs - whether employers or officers of our city and state governments - may act to avert a recurrence of the Harlem eruption of 1935." 110

In 1943, the fresh eruption that the Urban League feared occurred. Incensed by rumours that a black soldier had been shot by a white policeman in an argument in a Harlem hotel lobby, about three thousand young blacks smashed store windows, pelted the police with stones and plundered the stores just as they had eight years before. Six people died, nearly five hundred were arrested and about half a million dollars worth of damage was done.¹¹¹

The riots of 1935 and 1943 presaged those of the 'sixties. There was no concerted assault on whites and no attack on significant centres of economic and political power; nor did the rioters and their sympathisers openly express admiration for any brand of radicalism that might have explained their actions. The pattern of the rioting, with the police and the stores as the targets, suggests a ritual rejection of white control and an affirmation of

the black community. The riots suggest a view of life as a trial of strength; and the determination of the rioters to take for themselves the social and economic status denied them by society. They seem to be the most militant expression of that inchoate race and class consciousness that first emerged in the Depression; which carried Adam Clayton Powell Jnr. to the United States Congress in 1944; and against which the Peace Mission had struggled in vain.

To accept that the Peace Mission failed to impose its moral order on the city and to acknowledge that, even in Harlem, most people found the Movement's prescriptions ultimately inadequate for the task of change, is not to say that the Movement's values and organisations were a collective fantasy.

The Peace Mission was part of a sectarian tradition in black religious life that, for many years, provided some blacks with a way to survive and progress, especially at times of severe social and economic strain. In the towns and cities of the South and North this tradition, through different versions of the Holiness disciplines and a variety of assurances of sainthood, tried to keep alive the aspirations of its members for social and economic improvement. The Peace Mission's tenets of the "evangelical life" were, like other versions of the Holiness disciplines, intent on encouraging the social cohesion and economic prosperity of its adherents. The Peace Mission's economic success is evident; but even the less closely regulated Pentecostal congregations seem to have achieved a degree of social and economic mobility. Congregations that, forty years ago, met in storefronts and were composed almost entirely of poor blacks, now boast church edifices and numbers of comfortably prosperous worshippers.¹¹²

It is possible that the values expressed most coherently in the disciplines of the black sects had a wider, if more diffuse influence, in the black community than is measurable. But just the number of Pentecostal adherents should give pause to sociologists who insist that most black ghetto dwellers are only interested in conspicuous consumption;¹¹³ and encourage historians to consider the progressive aspects of the maligned storefront church.

The Peace Mission was also only one of a number of black movements that drew from black sectarianism a promise of liberation and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Millennial and messianic hopes played an important, if neglected, part in the emigrationist movements at the turn of the century and, later, in Garvey's U.N.I.A. The large followings of both the Peace Mission and the Nation of Islam testify to the continuing appeal of millennialism. But the discussion of the black millennial movements has largely been the prerogative of academics who have treated them in isolation and blurred both their context and their continuity.¹¹⁴ They have also slighted black millennialism as merely the product of social and cultural deprivation.

The history of the Peace Mission demonstrates, however, that, although they were formed in crisis, the black millennial movements represented an attempt to make a recalcitrant world anew: to both preserve the social and cultural values of the past and invigorate black aspirations for the future.

The black sectarians and the black millennial movements demonstrate the ways in which the folk consciousness could be modified to deal with life in the urban ghetto. Although the Peace Mission also proves that there was much in the folk consciousness that stood in the way of blacks taking full advantage of the strategies for change offered by the Northern cities, there is,

nonetheless, the suggestion that the black sectarian and millennial movements are part of a painful process of adjustment by which the folk tradition might be reconciled with modern forms of political and economic organisation. Other movements in Harlem during the 'thirties suggest this adjustment. Sufi Abdul Hamid and Kiowa Costonie can be regarded, perhaps, as both the descendants of the "conjure man" and the precursors of the black trade unionist.

The way in which an urban black American consciousness has been forged is both beyond the scope and capabilities of this thesis. It calls for a great deal of new research into post-Emancipation Southern life; into the social and economic history of blacks in the small towns and cities of America; and the patterns of black migration. It is hoped, however, that this study has demonstrated that such research is both necessary and worthwhile.

This thesis has, in general, regarded the Peace Mission as a movement reflecting the black American consciousness: but, as befits the study of an inter-racial movement, it has tried to avoid racial parochialism. The history of the Peace Mission demonstrates the indebtedness of the black American consciousness to wider American beliefs, just as it demonstrates that the black American perception has a human meaning that made it accessible to whites.

For many years, scholars of black American social movements have tended to define the movements as either "integrationist" or "nationalist" in their approach to American society.¹¹⁵ The Peace Mission Movement, however, defies such stark categorisation. It sought neither to "integrate" its adherents into the existing American society nor to raise the banner of race. If it represented any particular group's special needs and aspirations, it represented those of the rural migrant to the city: a need that transcended matters of race in the common experience of many migrant people.

More than this, the problems that the Peace Mission sought to resolve were broader than those of integration versus nationalism. It sought, rather, a profoundly American dream: the salvation of American society, rather than the salvation of a special group of its citizens. It sought the revitalization and fulfilment of the American democratic ideal; and thus its adherents were black and white; wholly committed to egalitarianism and the "non-recognition" of race.

It is impossible to read contemporary, and even subsequent, comment about Father Divine and the Peace Mission without detecting white condescension and black shame¹¹⁶ (although there were exceptions among both friends and critics): as if the Movement was no more than a minstrel show, amusing to whites but embarrassing and damaging to black self-esteem. It is to be hoped that this thesis will have shown that, whatever the Movement's short-comings, it does not deserve relegation to that particular ghetto. It was both the subject of immense enthusiasm and the target of deserved criticism. At the moment of the industrialised world's greatest crisis, it offered peace, prosperity and human dignity. It merits no-one's condescension and it need cause no-one shame.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Burnham, op.cit., Appendix C, 151.
2. Hoshor, op.cit., 28; and Parker, op.cit., 285-286.
3. This speech is quoted in the Righteous Government Platform's "ECONOMIC" section. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
4. Title to the property was recorded in the names of individual followers or groups of followers. Names of leading disciples appeared on some of the title deeds. Peace Branch, said by William Lesselbaum in court, to be Father Divine's "financial secretary", was recorded as the co-owner of the Saugerities farm. St. Mary Bloom, who provided the bail money to free Father Divine from jail in 1937, held the title to the Marbletown farm. In due course, however, other less prominent believers were cited as title-holders, New York World Telegram September 10 1936; and Parker, op.cit., 285-286, 293.
5. New York Times April 30 1936. His attempt to lease the airport also failed. Ibid. August 21 1936.
6. Spoken Word 2 (77), August 22 1936.
7. Parker, op.cit., 288.
8. New Day 1 (15), August 27 1936. 3,500 tickets at \$1 each were sold for the steamer trip. But when the two boats seemed dangerously overcrowded, Father Divine ruled that those followers who had not yet settled their just debts or who had not returned or paid for goods they had stolen must return their tickets. As a result, the "Calvert" travelled half-full. Parker, op.cit., 290-291.
9. Only one minor incident marred the day. An American Legionnaire was so incensed to see a follower carrying a large 'Stars and Stripes' embroidered with the words "Peace, Father Divine is God" that he telephoned the police to have the flag removed. Fair Angel was told by the police to return the flag to the steamer and, later, the police insisted on confiscating it. New York Times August 21 1936. The excursion is reported in New Day 1 (15), August 27 1936.
10. Parker, op.cit., 294-295.
11. New York Times August 21 1936.
12. New York World Telegram September 10 1936.
13. Madison said that the home would be registered in Mother Divine's name as "Peninah's Home, Inc." Parker, op.cit., 295.
14. New York Post April 17 1936.

15. Parker, op.cit., 288.
16. McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 52-53.
17. Father Divine's deal, March of Time, no. 8, 4th year (1938), pt. 2.
18. New Day 2 (32), August 11 1938.
19. World Herald 1 (14), February 18 1937.
20. At Olivebridge, the followers cultivated one hundred acres and kept five hundred chickens, nine cows and some horses. New York World Telegram September 10 1936; and Parker, op.cit., 293. An article in the World Herald commended the trucking service as approaching "the ideal unselfish service." The four brothers involved - Faith Confidence, Joseph, Tommy and Moses, worked all the week in city jobs and devoted their weekends to travelling to and from the "Promised Land" transporting produce and goods for the believers. The article said: "The brothers are mentioned because among them there exists the most wholesome, perfect and wonderful fellowship which one could imagine and which does not exist outside of Heaven." The service was entirely free: "Even the eggs and other products they bring down to sell they pay for in cash as they pick them up and sell them for the same price, making no profit and not even expense for the trip out of it." World Herald 1 (37), July 29 1937.
21. New York Post April 22 1937.
22. The tea room was reported to be thriving as it was the only restaurant in High Falls. New Day 1 (26), September 16 1937.
23. Ibid., and 1 (40), December 23 1937.
24. According to Robert S. Bird, the followers also ran a barbershop and a candy store on High Fall's Main Street. New York Times August 7 1937.
25. New York Age May 15 1937.
26. New York Times March 20 1937.
27. Ibid. July 9 1937. Another boat excursion to Greenkill followed in September 1937. "Sidelights" of this second trip are reported in New Day 1 (26), September 16 1937.
28. Ibid. 1 (23), August 26 1937.
29. Father Divine told the editor that during his time in Sayville he had spent one hundred dollars a day on food and provisions with local merchants. Spoken Word 2 (5), November 16 1935.
30. New York World Telegram September 10 1936. Apparently, the K.K.K. had been active in the area a few years earlier. New York Times April 25 1937; and Hoshor, op.cit., 253.

31. World Herald 1 (21), April 8 1937. Delay was probably a Father Divine follower. He said of the Peace Mission: "I am proud of it and am proud to tell any person in Ulster County. My way of living is as good as any other man's." Ibid. His real estate agency advertised in the Peace Mission press. One such advertisement read: "Peace. For Farms, Boarding Houses, Summer Homes and Waterfront Properties - In Vicinity of FATHER DIVINE'S Promised Land - see JOHN DELAY, realtor, Rosendale, Ulster County, New York. Special attention given to FATHER DIVINE CHILDREN. I Thank You, FATHER." New Day 1 (15), August 27 1936.
32. The Depression exacerbated a long-term agricultural decline in New York State. Since 1880 the rate of abandonment of farm lands there had averaged 100,000 acres a year. Ekirch, op.cit., 117.
33. Harry G. Lemothe, president of Kingston Chamber of Trade said that his members were "strongly opposed to Father Divine's plan to make Ulster County into a 'model paradise'." County interests and the New Paltz Chamber of Commerce also lodged formal objections to the Peace Mission's application to open a children's home at Saugerities. New York Times November 18 1936 and April 27 1937.
34. New York World Telegram May 4 1937.
35. The building, bought in November 1936 for \$7,000, had been recently renovated at a cost, it was said, of \$15,000. New York Times April 25 1937.
36. New York Sun April 26 1937; and New York Times April 26 and April 27 1937. In November 1937 fire destroyed an eighty-room house that was part of the Greenkill Park estate. Officials gave up their attempt to investigate the cause of the blaze when they found that the followers were unable to give a clear account of the fire. John Delay believed that the damage was accidental. Ibid. November 8 1937.
37. Righteous Government Forums were held at the Kingston extension, but little more was organised. Ibid. July 11 1937.
38. Ibid. November 8 1937.
39. Parker, op.cit., 295.
40. New York Times April 29 1937; and New Day 1 (36), November 25 1937.
41. New York Times September 23 1937.
42. World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937.
43. New Day 1 (28), September 30 1937.
44. New York Times December 22 1937.
45. New Day 2 (32), August 11 1938.

46. Ekirch, op.cit., 116-118.
47. World Herald 1 (14), February 18 1937.
48. Schlesinger Jnr. Age of Roosevelt : vol. 1., 107-113, 180-182; and op.cit., vol. 2, 56-60, 66-67.
49. The writer added: "Truly this is a Wonderful vision of a country where we NOW have a Righteous Government, under the Rule of GOD, Himself, FATHER DIVINE. Thank You, FATHER, for these great Blessings." World Herald 1 (3), December 3 1936.
50. The lawyer who represented thirty-eight of the followers at the Board of Tax Appeals in 1937 said that the majority of them had been domestics before moving to the "Promised Land." New York Times December 22 1937.
51. At a Righteous Government Board meeting on January 15 1937 it was decided to lay plans for the agricultural education of the believers. But aside from occasional columns of farming advice published in the New Day little was done. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937. For an example of a page of farming advice see: New Day 1 (9), July 16 1936. This page discussed: soil erosion; grain mixtures; summer pasture; fruit disease; forestation; ploughing and the care of work horses.
52. It was apparent that Father Divine was referring specifically to heavy, manual tasks, as he had no objection to women in professional positions. In fact, he said, "in different fields of our legal activities we may find, women can fill certain legal and official duties the same as men." Ibid. 2 (16), April 21 1938.
53. Father Divine's deal, March of Time, no. 8, 4th year (1938), pt. 2.
54. Father Divine refused all responsibility for the economic affairs of the upstate premises. When the Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corporation of Kingston contacted him concerning the electricity supply to a Peace Mission property in the area, Father Divine told the manager to write to the followers resident at the house: "I wish to say, these places are owned and operated by those within, in charge. Although they are responsible and reliable tenants, I AM not responsible ..." New Day 1 (8), July 9 1936; and Parker, op.cit., 286.
55. New York Post April 17 1936.
56. Parker, op.cit., 290.
57. New York Times April 27 1937.
58. Years before, Marcus Garvey had been faced with similar problems. In order to overcome the lack of expertise among his black adherents, Garvey had hired white captains and engineers to man the U.N.I.A's Black Star Line. Martin believes that these outsiders contributed to the Line's failure by a combination

of ineptitude, thievery and sabotage. Martin, op.cit., 150-167, especially 166-167.

59. New York Times August 19 1937.
60. New Day 2 (35), September 1 1938. Bird wrote an account of the Peace Mission's upstate expansion, entitled "Divine Movement Waxes", for the New York Times. He was clearly impressed by the Movement's purchases. New York Times August 7 1938.
61. World Herald 1 (37), July 29 1937.
62. See, for instance: New Day 2 (5), February 3 1938; and 4 (32), August 8 1940.
63. World Herald 1 (20), April 1 1937. See also followers' accounts of the "Promised Land" at a Righteous Government Forum in New York City in New Day 1 (26), September 16 1937. Boat trips were arranged to the "Promised Land" for the city followers. An advertisement for one of these trips is in Ibid. 2 (28), July 14 1938. In late 1937 a truck from one of the upstate farms, decorated with pumpkins, turnips and corn and carrying a crate of chickens, joined the Peace Mission's parade through New York's Lower East Side. Ibid. 1 (32), October 28 1937.
64. Father Divine sent invitations to the opening ceremony to several leading public figures including President Roosevelt; Governor Lehman; V.F. Ridder of the State Welfare Board; and District Attorney Cleon B. Murray. He invited their attendance "as an endorsement to the act of MY endeavors to bring about a moral betterment." None attended. World Herald 1 (32), June 24 1937; and 1 (37), July 29 1937.
65. New York Times August 9 1938; and New Day 2 (19), May 12 1938.
66. The purchase caused a considerable press stir. Spencer was a political opponent of Roosevelt and journalists speculated that political spite inspired Spencer's decision to sell to Father Divine's followers. Spencer denied this and said that he had made his decision after visiting a number of the Peace Mission settlements in upstate New York. He told a journalist: "His [Father Divine's] places are kept in remarkable order. They are clean, well-provided. His followers are earnest, hard-working people. I was impressed." New York Times July 29 and July 30 1938; and Time August 22 1938. It was this property exchange that led the March of Time film unit to visit the upstate premises. Father Divine's deal, March of Time, no. 8, 4th year (1938), pt. 2.
67. New York Times July 30 1938.
68. Ibid. August 9 1938. Father Divine was extremely anxious not to offend the sensibilities of his illustrious neighbour. When the followers subsequently considered purchasing the seven hundred acre Vanderbilt estate adjoining the President's property, Father Divine wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt to ask

- "whether or not it would be entirely agreeable to you." President Roosevelt asked Father Divine to respect his wish that the estate should be used as a national arboretum, because of its many fine trees, but the purchase plans collapsed when the estate's owner, Mrs. Van Alen refused to sell to the believers. Father Divine's correspondence with the President's wife and private secretary appear in Ibid. August 17 1939.
69. New Day 3 (44), November 2 1939; 3 (50), December 14 1939; and 4 (22), May 30 1940.
 70. New York Times May 1, May 2, June 16 and June 19 1939.
 71. New Day 4 (16), April 18 1940. Father Divine's speech was in keeping with his new preoccupation with wealthy respectability; but it also served more immediate purposes. In both towns, local residents had tried to use zoning laws, that forbade rooming houses in residential areas, to prevent the followers from settling there. The believers denied that the premises would be used as rooming houses; and the attempt to prevent them settling in the area collapsed. In an attempt to improve relations with the neighbours, Father Divine sent them engraved invitations to the banquet dedication ceremonies in each town. New York Times May 1, May 16, May 22, June 16, June 17 and November 27 1939.
 72. New Day 3 (32), August 11 1938.
 73. Estimates of the number of premises varied. G.G. and G.B. Johnson believed that there were perhaps as many as forty Peace Mission premises in Ulster County alone by 1940; fifteen of which had been added since 1937. R.S. Bird, writing in the New York Times in July 1939, put the figure at thirty. Claude McKay thought that there were about twenty communities in the "Promised Land." New York Times July 2 1939; Johnson and Johnson, Father Divine Peace Mission, God in business (In Johnson and Johnson, op.cit., Appendix C), 3; and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 53.
 74. New York Herald Tribune June 24 1939.
 75. New Day 2 (17), April 28 1938; and McKay, Harlem, Negro metropolis, 53.
 76. New York Sun November 20 1939; and New York Times November 27 1939.
 77. New Day 3 (47), November 23 1939.
 78. The decision is reprinted in full in Ibid. 4 (11), March 14 1940.
 79. New York Times March 19 1940. The court house was picketed by Father Divine's followers and letters defending his integrity were sent by loyal believers to Dineen. New Day 4 (12), March 21 1940.

80. New York Times October 29 1940 and March 1 1941.
81. Ibid. March 8 1941.
82. Harris, op.cit., 83.
83. Burnham, op.cit., Appendix C, 151-152.
84. New York Times August 4 1938; and New Day 4 (17), April 25 1940. A group of followers also bought the Assissium Institute in Harlem for a price, it was said, of \$35,000. The premises, formerly used by a missionary order, included dormitories, community rooms, dining facilities, a gym, a library and a laundry. New York Times September 27 1941.
85. New York Post January 3 1944.
86. New York Times September 4 1939 and October 29 1940; Chronology of Negro history, n.d. (In Works Progress Administration in New York City, op.cit., microfilm reel 2, Schomburg Collection); and Burnham, op.cit., 120.
87. Burnham, op.cit., 5-6, 46, 88, 114-116, 120; Appendix A, 145-146; and Appendix B, 151-154. The trend toward legal incorporation became apparent in 1940 when the lease for the Rockland Palace ballroom was taken by a group of believers incorporated as Palace Mission Inc. New Day 4 (17), April 25 1940.
88. Burnham, op.cit., 118-119; and Appendix F, 165-177. Sara Harris devoted a chapter of her book to "Father's Rosebuds". Harris, op.cit., 229-236.
89. According to Burnham, the Peace Mission was never again entangled in court cases involving family desertion after the 'thirties. Burnham, op.cit., 91, 118; and Appendix H, 186-187.
90. The marriage ceremony was performed by a Baptist minister in Washington D.C. Banks, op.cit., 59, 61; and Harris, op.cit., 189-201. Burnham reported that very few defections followed the marriage. Burnham, op.cit., 111.
91. Ibid., 122.
92. This estimate is based on the number of paid subscribers to the New Day as sworn by the paper's proprietors before a Public Notary in October 1961. Banks, op.cit., 61; and Burnham, op.cit., 123.
93. World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.
94. New York Urban League, Annual report, 1940, 1. The city, as a whole, was slow to pull out of Depression unemployment. There were 375,000 unemployed in New York City in 1941. Capeci Jnr., op.cit., 61.

95. The Employment Review of the New York State Employment Service reported that of nearly twenty thousand blacks that it had placed in work in 1939, almost 90% were placed in domestic work, 1% in clerical jobs and 1.5% in unskilled, general occupations. Lester B. Granger, Negro worker in New York City, New York, 1941, 31. See also Frost, op.cit., 4, 23-24, 28-32. The most notable experiment in the expansion of job opportunities for blacks came in the Civil Service and in public employment in the city. Capeci Jnr., op.cit., 7; and Granger, op.cit., 25.
96. Citizens Housing Council of New York, op.cit., 1; and Frost, op.cit., 1,5-6.
97. The Committee, two hundred and fifty strong and acutely conscious of America's entry into the Second World War, was motivated by a concern to "fulfil the promise of equality of opportunity and true democracy for the Negro people." City-wide Citizens Committee on Harlem, Story of the City-wide Citizens Committee, passim.
98. Meier and Rudwick, From plantation to ghetto, 238-240.
99. Capeci Jnr., op.cit., 7.
100. In the area of housing, for instance, the federal housing agencies supported and strengthened the trend toward residential segregation and, in New York City, La Guardia contracted the notoriously discriminatory Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to construct "Stuyvesant Town", a model housing project in lower East Manhattan, that subsequently excluded black tenants. Capeci Jnr., op.cit., 13-15; and Meier and Rudwick, From plantation to ghetto, 240. See also: Wye, The New Deal and the Negro community: towards a broader conceptualisation, op.cit., 621-622; and Wolters, op.cit., passim.
101. Meier and Rudwick, From plantation to ghetto, 242.
102. John H. Johnson, Harlem, the war and other addresses, 109-110.
103. For a summary of the involvement of Harlem's leading pastors in community campaigns for more and better jobs, tenants' rights, relief provision, better schools, recreational facilities and improved health care, as well as their more particular, political interests, see Welty, op.cit., 248-254.
104. For accounts of Powell Jnr's career as a maverick politician and community leader see Capeci Jnr., op.cit., passim, especially 18-30; Neil Hickey and Ed. Edwin, Adam Clayton Powell and the politics of race, New York, 1965, 40-87; and Claude Lewis, Adam Clayton Powell, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1963, passim, especially 40-50. For Powell's own account, see Powell Jnr. op.cit., 85-103.

105. Gary Hunter, op.cit., 279-280; and Capeci, op.cit., 56.
106. Herbert Garfinkel, When Negroes march : the March on Washington Movement in the organisational politics for F.E.P.C. Glencoe, Illinois, 1959, passim.
107. The black vote was not strategically important until 1948. Then President Truman appealed for the support of the black electorate and made civil rights issues a critical factor in the Presidential elections. Meier and Rudwick, From plantation to ghetto, 248.
108. Julius Jacobson, Union conservatism - a barrier to racial equality (In Julius Jacobson ed. Negro and the American labor movement, Garden City, New York, 1968, 1-26) 7 - 21.
109. Sidney M. Peck, Economic situation of Negro labor (In Jacobson, ibid., 209-231) 212-213.
110. New York Urban League, Annual report, 1940, 1.
111. Capeci, op.cit., 100-147.
112. Shopshire, op.cit., 97-99, 154-155, 200.
113. See for example, the portrait of the black American ghetto dweller in Glazer and Moynihan, op.cit., 34-35.
114. Brotz, op.cit., Essien-Udom, op.cit., and C. Eric Linwin, Black Muslims in America, Boston, Massachusetts, 1961, concentrate on the racial ideologies of black millennial movements.
115. The introduction to Bracey Jnr., Meier and Rudwick, op.cit., xxv-lx illustrates this preoccupation.
116. James Baldwin wrote that, as a youngster, he was proud of Joe Louis, but ashamed of Father Divine. Baldwin, Nobody knows my name, 72. While in a recent academic study of blacks in America, Mary Ellison described Father Divine as "illogical, illiterate and naive" and the Peace Mission Movement as a practical but "strange phenomenon." Mary Ellison, Black experience : American blacks since 1865. London, 1974, 133.

Appendix

The Righteous Government Platform as contained in the World Herald 1 (10), January 21 1937.

FATHER DIVINE'S PEACE MISSION MOVEMENT

International Righteous Government Convention, New York City,
January 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1936 A.D.F.D.

PLATFORM

(COMPLETE TEXT)

Including all Amendments adopted to date

PREAMBLE

PEACE TO ALL! We, the Inter-racial, Inter-national, Inter-religious, Interdenominational, and Non-partisan Co-workers of FATHER DIVINE'S PEACE MISSION and its Department of Righteous Government, greet all mankind with PEACE. In the Light of this New Day and Dispensation in which we are now living since the advent of FATHER DIVINE - Whom twenty-two million have recognized as their Saviour come to Earth again in Bodily Form, - we are advocating RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and Truth in every walk of life. Therefore we request the cooperation of all Governments in LEGALIZING these QUALITIES, and the participation of all right-thinking people in Universalizing a RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT.

For this cause we are assembled in a great International Righteous Government Convention in New York City these three days, the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth of January, 1936, A.D.F.D., with Delegates from many different Countries and States. The Righteous Government Department of FATHER DIVINE'S Peace Mission Movement has adopted

a Platform embodying some of the more important issues of its Righteous Stand. This Platform which has been verified and endorsed by FATHER DIVINE with His Personal signature, we are privileged to present to you as follows.

In presenting RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT to the world at large nothing more fitting or far reaching could be said than what has already been Said by Him who is Founder of it, Who has already ... to every field of life by establishing it in the lives of twenty two million Followers living in practically every Civilized Country on Earth. A few of His Personal Words on the subject, as He addressed thousands of His Followers recently in New York City, were as follows:-

"It has been through the Ages, that Religion and the Religious Teaching have caused men to be submissive, meek and obedient if they were Religious, but obedient to wickedness, obedient to dishonesty, obedient to unrighteousness. Therefore it profited you nothing to be Religious and obedient. What profit would it be to us to-day to bring you into the Spirit and the action of Righteousness, unless we have a Righteous Government? That is why there are so many of the different individuals that have resorted to violence, and refused to accept of the Teaching of Religion."

"They have striven to keep the CHRIST from the Political world. Through the different religions you have been taught that Religion and Politics will not mix, but I am privileged to Say, without the true concept of CHRIST and the recognition of HIS PRESENCE among the Politicians, the world will continue to be filled with corruption, and it is a matter of impossibility to receive your deliverance saving through this great Conversion."

"RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE shall become to be a Living Reality, and shall be established universally through Legality, and every nation, language, tongue and people shall accept it as the Fundamental."

We believe in these Words because we are among the millions that have already been impregnated with these Qualities by FATHER DIVINE. Through the New Dispensation of GOD on Earth in Bodily Form, we already have a RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT, for RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH are now Reigning in us where unrighteousness, injustice, and untruth once held sway. Therefore we set forth some of the

Principles of Righteous Government already established in our midst, and some of the issues involved, that they may be legalized universally.

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PRINCIPLES

That the whole human race is essentially one and, "Of one Blood GOD formed all nations," has been attested both by Scripture and by Science. The Righteous Government of FATHER DIVINE'S Peace Mission stands for and actually produces such an organisation of Society. It is founded upon the recognition of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of GOD. Its Watchword is PEACE, and it actually establishes PEACE among the nations by eradicating prejudice, segregation and division from among the people and promoting the welfare of every living creature. From this angle we emphatically protest against the persecution of the Jews in Germany and all other Countries, and the oppression of all minorities.

This Movement stands for and demands an EQUAL OPPORTUNITY for every individual without regard to race, creed or color, in accordance with the declaration made in the Constitution of the United States, that all men are created equal. It stands for the Life and Teaching of JESUS the CHRIST exactly as He lived it.

We realize that the division of Society into Political Nations has led through the Ages, to continuous warfare and widespread poverty and distress. Therefore we do not identify ourselves with any Nation or people, but we do endorse and support the Constitution of the United States as the Foundation for all Governments to build upon. Under the Constitution of the United States all men can worship GOD according to the dictates of their own conscience and are guaranteed the right to individual liberty. This has been indicated by FATHER DIVINE as a Divinely Established Order for the coming of the

Kingdom of God on earth.

On every hand however, tendencies can be seen that are undermining the individual liberty and equal rights guaranteed by the Constitution. They are creeping in behind prejudicial and discriminatory Laws and Ordinances; through the New Deal Legislation, and through such Laws that deprive the individual of the right to sell his goods for little or nothing if he chooses; through the Compulsory Insurance Laws; the intimidation of Workers by the Labor Unions; the Laws imposing Compulsory Medical Treatment, and the like. Concerning the preservation of the Constitution from these reactionary tendencies, FATHER has recently Said:

"There is an issue today observed, that had not been observed so vividly as it is now ... Laws and by-laws of practically every kind have arisen through the prejudiced representatives of Politics among the Politicians that are actually undermining the Constitution of our great Country. Just think of Laws that are not according to the Constitution, and brought about UNDER the Constitution, which are in complete violation of the Constitution. If GOD would allow it to continue, they would eventually undermine the Constitution completely, and the Government of our Civilization would be a failure."

On these issues we stand uncompromisingly for the rights of the common people, and FATHER'S Activities continue silently and unceasingly to eradicate such autocracy. Much of it has already been eliminated. He is Speaking continually in Deeds and Actions more than in words, but at various times He vividly stresses these issues to the Masses, in Words. Concerning the Compulsory Insurance issue, He has Spoken emphatically. When one of His Followers and her bondsman, operating a small industry, asked Father the question, "Must we take out Compensation Insurance, as four of us in the Shop will have to sign up as partners; if we do not they will not give us licenses." FATHER Replied:

"We will have what we want to have just the same, if we have to get it just the same as the bootleggers

and moonshiners do. If they do not give us the right to do what is right without Compensation Insurances, we will BREAK the LAW. If they do not allow us to have licenses by the Law without taking out insurances, we will run our industries without the Law, we will break the Law and do it anyhow without any licenses - they just as well know we will not take out any insurance compensations."

AGAINST OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEF

"It is not justifiable to try to force someone against their Religious Belief, and our Religious belief is that we should not take out insurances, and we will not do it. We are willing to get licenses as required by law for anything that is necessary to have licenses for, in a legal way, for the maintenance of the City Government, but in regard to insurance compensations and such as that, we will not tolerate it, for it causes men to mistrust GOD, and is not according to our Teaching, and is in violation to our Religious belief. For this cause we take a stand in opposition to such, but we will get licenses if they choose to give us licenses according to the regulation of the law ... for the maintenance of the City Government, and up-keep of the other necessities ... Official duties etc. for the City, but not insurances to mistrust GOD and visualize disappointments, failures, accidents, and disasters. As far as taking out insurances, we will not tolerate it, and I would tell the PRESIDENT so."

On another occasion when the question of Compulsory Medical Treatment was brought to an open issue by the Authorities, FATHER addressed His Audience thus:

"According to the Law of our State in which we are now living it is a misdemeanour for a mother or parent of children under the age of sixteen, not to have a physician when the cases have been diagnosed as essential for a physical examination and for a physical operation. But I put forth a Commandment as for a legal proceeding, to go in the Statute Book parallel with that which for parents sets up their obligation, and a penalty for not having a physician."

"If for any cause My Spirit and My Mind, and My Impersonal Presence, cannot reach your afflicted or sick children or those that are concerned, and heal them, you can have a physician and SHOULD have one. But remember, the physicians must guarantee the cure and guarantee the life and health of the individual ... This is a Law within a Law, and I put it forth as a rebuttal to that of medical science. If they will try to bind mankind in their rulings, THEY must be subject to a ruling also."

"The physicians and doctors must guarantee a cure, and a complete cure, and the lives of the individuals. If not, they will be held responsible, and sued for the death of the person or persons. Remember, this is RIGHTEOUSNESS, and JUSTICE and TRUTH, and we must HAVE it. If we cannot get Justice on the side of the common people, we will not give it to the Officials. The Law is not worth a dime, that is not giving equal rights on either side. The Movement is right, but there is another side to it that has been overlooked, and I am here for the common people. For the Masses collectively and universally, I Stand."

"Thousands of people are homeless, thousands of them are motherless and fatherless, yea even family-less. It is indeed Wonderful! Whole families have died by operations. Whole families have been forced to have physicians and still they died, after the physicians and hospitals had taken all their money. It is indeed Wonderful!"

"When the physician takes charge of you physically, he must guarantee your health and complete happiness, and cure from that affliction and all of the diseases for which they are treating you - if GOD will permit. This is not confined nor bound to this State alone but any State or Country that makes it punishable by Law for a person not to have a physician. Hence, this Amendment I request for the Statute Books, as applicable to any person or persons that would be so involved and to all that are concerned, wheresoever such laws are enacted."

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

We are unalterably opposed to such unjust Laws and such infringements on the rights of the common people, and we ask all Legislators and all right-thinking people to cooperate with us in breaking them down. But there is a far more important issue by which the rights of millions are being undermined. We refer to the oppression and intimidation of Workers, by the Labor Unions. This we will not tolerate. The unjust and autocratic rules these Officials and Organisations have usurped over the Masses, must cease. Extracting hard-earned money from the Workers in the form of heavy Membership fees and giving them nothing in return; fining them for the slightest violation of Union Rules; attempting to regulate the personal affairs of individuals on the job; limiting Union Workers

to so many hours a day and five days a week, yet giving them no assurance in return, of even that amount of work - such outrages must cease. A rule that does not work both ways cannot be endorsed. RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE must be observed by all. Speaking to thousands of His Followers in New York City on this subject, FATHER DIVINE Said Personally:

"At this juncture, I further wish to convey a Thought to the Public at large, for which I may have an occasion to call together about fifty thousand, for the purpose of universally establishing same, and that is this: Practically all of the different Unions, they think they have dominion over the people, and force them to work or force them not to work, and yet give them nothing. I have Risen to PUT IT DOWN. Every Union in the United States of America must deal JUSTLY among the people, or else I will STRIKE on them! Just as they have been striking, I will call the Laborers together to strike on the Unions. It is indeed Wonderful! If you belong to a Union, the Unions must have a Law to see that you get so much work, if you must pay your Union dues. If they cannot and will not guarantee you five days work a week, why then you should withdraw from the Unions. It is indeed Wonderful! That is the mystery! That is, if you desire to have the VICTORY!"

"Why should the Unions try to control the people and put them in Slavery? They must deal JUSTLY and it may undoubtedly be a battle on hand. In the places where they work in different Factories, talking about the Unions coming in and snatching men and women up from their work, when they are working getting an honest living! It is Wonderful! I will call a STRIKE on UNIONS if they will not deal justly. That is what I will do! I will call a strike on the Unions! They have oppressed the widow and the orphan, and the hireling in his wages, long enough. It is indeed Wonderful! Going under the name of Unions, and will not guarantee work for the people!"

"Every Union that tries to bind the people and put them back in slavery, and prohibit them from working when they are trying to get an honest living - if they do not pay their dues how DARE they put their hands on an individual! Now tell them I Said KEEP THEIR HANDS OFF! This Country does not belong to the Unions, it belongs to GOD. It is indeed Wonderful! The very IDEA, talking about going into men's shops where they have paid for, and paid taxes in this City and pulling men and women out of the jobs. I will PUT A STOP TO IT! Now tell them I SAID it, and I MEAN IT!"

"Who are they that you should pay money to, anyway? What have THEY to do with it! ... Talking about a man cannot work unless he belongs to a Union, and then joining the Union, and they will not give him work to

do! If the Union does not guarantee five days to the week work according to their regulations, according to other workers five days week, why I will withdraw you all from the Unions. I mean what I am TALKING about! ... We are going to have WORK! We are going to have WORK with or without the UNIONS, and if the Unions interfere, we will withdraw from the Unions and we are going to WORK ANYHOW! That is what we are going to do! I hope there are some representing every Union, under the sound of My Voice - every Union in the United States of America. I want them all to hear it."

"If the Labor Unions that limit Workers to five days a week will guarantee the Workers five days' work each week, and will guarantee to pay them what they are demanding from the employers when they call them out on strike, we will endorse them. Otherwise, we will not tolerate them."

In the cause of RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH, we demand that such infringements on the Constitutional rights of the people be eliminated. We request the Law-makers to make Laws and provide machinery to enforce the laws, to safeguard the rights of the common people, and we ask all law-abiding and right-thinking persons to cooperate in observing all Righteous and Just Laws.

We do not mean to say that men can be made RIGHTEOUS, JUST and TRUTHFUL by Law for "It is not by power nor by might but by My Spirit, Says The Lord." It was not the Law that caused millions of people to return stolen goods, to pay up old bills, to become honest, competent and true and be law-abiding citizens when they were just the opposite before they knew FATHER DIVINE - it was His SPIRIT and MIND entering into them. However, the time is at hand for RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH to be LEGALIZED, and for those that are unrighteous, unjust and untrue and will not observe the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the LAW, to be designated as criminals. Therefore we demand the following:

RIGHTEOUS DEMAND

1. Immediate repeal of all Laws, Ordinances, Rules and Regulations, Local and National, in the United States and elsewhere, that have been passed contrary to the Spirit and

meaning of the Constitution of the United States and its Amendments.

2. Immediate Legislation in every State in the Union, and all other States and Countries, making it a crime to discriminate in any public place against any individual on account of race, creed, or color; abolishing all segregated neighborhoods in Cities and Towns. Making it a crime for landlords or hotels to refuse tenants on such grounds; abolishing all segregated schools and colleges, and all segregated areas in Churches, theatres, public conveyances, and other public places.

3. Immediate destruction by both Nations and individuals of all firearms and instruments of war within their borders saving those that are used for law enforcement. The true Followers of FATHER DIVINE will refuse to fight their fellowman for any cause whatsoever.

4. Legislation making it a crime for any Newspaper, Magazine, or other Publication to use segregated or slang words referring to race, creed or colour of any individual or group, or write abusively concerning any.

5. Repeal of all Laws or Ordinances providing for Compulsory Insurance; Employers' Liability, Public Liability, or any other form of Compulsory Insurance.

6. Abolishment of Capital Punishment in all States and Countries.

7. Legislation in every State and Country where Laws or Ordinances now exist requiring children or adults to submit to vaccination, operations, or treatment by Physicians - the new

Legislation to impose equally binding obligations upon the Medical Authorities and the Physicians. From the moment the Authorities or Physicians take charge of the patient physically, they must guarantee a complete cure, and guarantee the life of the individual, or be liable for damages in the event of his death.

8. Legislation to abolish lynching and outlaw the members of lynch mobs, in all States and Countries.

9. Legislation making it a violation of the Law, to withhold any kind or classification of work from any Civil Service employee on account of race, creed or color - provided he or she is qualified to do such work.

10. Immediate return to owners of all stolen goods or their equivalent, not only by individuals but by Nations - this to include all territories taken by force from other Nations.

11. Legislation making it a crime for any employer to discharge an employee, even through a subordinate, when even circumstantial evidence can be introduced to show that it was on account of race, creed or color.

12. Legislation establishing a maximum fee for all Labor Union Memberships, causing them to accept all qualified applicants and give them equal privileges regardless of race, creed, color or classification; also providing that any Labor Union which limits the hours and days of work per week, must guarantee at least that much work per week to its members, and if it calls a strike pay its Members while they are out of work, the full amount they are demanding from the employers, otherwise all

obligations for dues must cease.

13. Immediate repeal of all Laws and Ordinances, Governmental Rules and Regulations, requiring individuals to designate themselves as being of a race, creed or color in signing any kind of papers; this to apply especially to Immigration, Citizenship, Passport or Legal Papers.

14. Legislation making it unlawful for employers of skilled or unskilled technical or professional help, to have different wage scales or salaries for what they term different races, creeds or colors; or to discriminate in any way in the hiring of help.

ECONOMIC

The RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF FATHER DIVINE'S PEACE MISSION, basis its Plan for universalizing prosperity upon the Fundamental Principle Personified in FATHER DIVINE, that has made millions prosperous. It has taken HIS Followers off the Relief and made them independent, thus saving the Government millions. Not one of His True Followers would accept of Relief in any form, or even so much as go on the Relief Rolls in order to get a job. We demand the abandonment of the Governmental regulations requiring the people of America to declare themselves destitute and go on the Relief Rolls, in order to get jobs.

The DIVINE PLAN calls for EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF OPPORTUNITY, and giving every man a chance to be independent, but not so much charity. In the experience of millions who have accepted FATHER DIVINE, all economic and employment problems have been solved, and they are actually enjoying the ideal conditions others are striving for. He has made it possible for those who are cooperative and meek, especially in this Country to live well on five dollars a week or less. He has further

supplied them with part-time jobs at least to earn an independent living while causing them to desire to serve their fellowmen in all their working hours. Speaking of His Personal Activities in New York FATHER Said:

"I have been feeding the Unemployed in a number around about from two thousand five hundred to three thousand a day, but this is not My great Aim in Life. This is not the greatest expression. The greatest expression according to My Version, is to help you to be INDEPENDENT. I will cut out so much feeding of the unemployed as I have been. I have opened ways and means whereby you can get jobs, whereby you can be independent, self-supporting and self-respecting. That is what I am desiring to see you all do and be."

"Therefore, I have made the way possible for the last three years or more, in the City of New York and elsewhere, that you might be able to get by, at from four to five dollars a week and be independent. If you come here, or go any place and get a meal for ten or fifteen cents, you do not have to feel as a beggar. You can feel INDEPENDENT, for that is the price - or those are the prices for the meals in all of our Connections, not only here in New York City but all the way across the Country, in all of the places - fifteen cents is the maximum fee for a meal - I wish to further announce ... hereafter our Barber Shops will not charge but Ten cents for a hair cut for men, and Five cents for a Shave ... We shall make similar cuts in the dress shops in proportion, and in the grocery stores, and other expressions of our Industries."

Naturally the cost of these facilities is greater than the income from them, and no man could continue indefinitely to carry them on, but as they are the Gift of GOD to mankind they are amply provided for. FATHER DIVINE takes no collections, accepts no donations or financial support whatsoever, and has never been known to do so. On the contrary, He is constantly giving.

Another of His Personal Activities for the benefit of the Masses has been a free Employment Agency. After operating His Own Private Agency free for many years, He recently opened up a Public Agency to get at the intolerable conditions in the Employment field.

Regarding these conditions, He recently Spoke as follows:

"I call your attention to an incident just happening now here in your midst which I am in, and that is this - I took over and opened up 'The Busy Bee Employment Agency'. The Law has been for years that the employees and the employers are supposed to pay ten percent to the Agency ... but I learned since I have been in it that the employers will not pay a penny. They have been forcing the employees to pay their ten percent and the employers not paying anything. It is indeed Wonderful! But I will not have it that way, longer."

"That is one of the outrages that has been manifested or concealed here ... where they would force the employees to pay their fees, but would not force the employers who have millions to pay a fee. Many of them did not have bread to eat, neither a place to sleep, seeking work to be honest, competent and true, and yet if they got a chance to get a position they could not have it unless they paid their fees, yet the millionaire that was hiring them as an employer, they would not charge him a penny. It is indeed Wonderful!

"In every little simple expression, you can see the outward expression of the oppression of those who are as the hireling and the fatherless, the poor and the needy, the laboring class of people. It is indeed Wonderful! As I Said some time ago, when I am participating with My Comrades, the Communists, whether they know it or not they are fulfilling the Scriptures more than many of the Preachers and those that are called Religious ... I will get you positions if you are competent. If you have good references I will get you POSITIONS, FREE of CHARGE. I will let you go FREE - the employee - but the employers can pay their fee."

Following FATHER'S Example, others of FATHER'S Movement endeavoured to open licensed Employment Agencies and cooperate in the same work of helping the Masses, but the Commissioners showed every evidence of a desire to uphold and perpetuate the old system of squeezing small sums out of the poor and letting the employers go free and they would not grant licenses. FATHER Spoke in this regard as follows:

"It has been distinctly discerned that wheresoever there is an application put in for an Employment Agency, the prejudicial Officials in connection with the Administration, are trying to keep My Co-Workers or anyone who is connected with Me, from having an Employment Agency. It is because they know within themselves I will cut the cost of living. They know I am here as a help for the meek and lowly. They know that I came as a swift witness against those who will oppress the widow and the fatherless, and will not come nigh Me. They are trying to keep My Connection out of it. I will put it THROUGH if I have to put them OUT of OFFICE!

That is what I WILL DO! Everyone, who comes in opposition, everyone who will rise in an endeavour to oppose My Endeavors, I shall put them to an open shame. Every prejudicial Official who is in the Commission and connected in any way in this Administration, who desires to prohibit Me from having an Employment Agency Personally, I shall put him out of Office. There are thousands of people out of work, without food and shelter and I can see the oppressed - the widows and the orphans, the hireling and his wages, and I will bring swift judgement to the offender."

Unlike other Plans that have been declared economically unsound and impractical on account of the tremendous expenditures involved, the Divine Plan requires nothing that is not already available. It is based on cooperation, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, and the recognition of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of GOD. Wealth, if it is to continue to exist and prosper in this New Day, must be continuously used for the benefit of humanity, and not for selfish gains. If all idle plants and machinery, and available lands now costing billions in taxes and upkeep, were immediately made available to the Workers, they would soon become profitable, and the eleven million now said to be unemployed in the United States, would soon be employed. The Divine Plan means work, and MORE WORK, With PRICES of Commodities reduced to a MINIMUM.

As a Sample and as an Example of how Wealth should be used, FATHER is buying large tracts of land in one of the best parts of the State of New York and making homesites available to the people free. Speaking along this line at His Righteous Government Forum in New York City recently, FATHER Spoke the following Words to the Masses assembled:

"The Earth is The Lord's and the fullness thereof, but yet He does not claim everything Personally. The communistic ideas must be endorsed - I mean to Say many of them. At the Day of Pentecost they had all things in common did they not? I am not asking you all to buy, neither to help Me buy a piece of property. I have purchased the property - several places - and they are all free and clear. If perchance you have the means, or will have the means to build a home, the ground, the land, the lots, will be given to you free of cost, and

you will have your deeds for them without a string tied to them. This is an abstract expression of the Communistic idea, making all things common, claiming nothing for yourself as an individual, refusing to hoard up riches for yourselves for a selfish purpose, but give everybody a chance to enjoy some of it."

The Followers of FATHER DIVINE in every Community, State, Province, Colony and Nation, have the opportunity of becoming an example for all Governments, by cooperative living and a universal pooling of all of their interests. They can become an independent unit even as those in New York City, according to the Example set by FATHER'S Personal Activities. He has made living accommodations of the best, available in the world's most expensive City, for from one to two dollars a week: bountiful meals of high quality for ten and fifteen cents, with Dress Shops, Tailor Shops, Grocery Stores, Bus Lines, Boat Excursions, Special Trains, and other facilities, available at similarly low prices.

Advocating EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF OPPORTUNITY; a chance for every man; plenty of work with good wages; prices reduced to a minimum, and all of the advantages for the Masses, we are now enjoying these things and we know they can be enjoyed by all. Therefore we request the following:-

NECESSARY LEGISLATION

1. Legislation prohibiting Employment Agencies from collecting fees or remuneration in any form from employees, but authorizing them to collect the present legal fees in full, from the EMPLOYERS; also the establishment of a minimum wagescale prohibiting Agencies from sending out Workers for less than their respective minimum rates.
2. Government Control of all idle plants and machinery, tools and equipment, where owners are unwilling to operate them at full capacity; such facilities to be made available to workers

on a cooperative non-profit basis under supervision of Government experts with temporary provision for materials. Workers will be paid a living wage until income exceeds expenses, then the wagescale to be increased and maintained at as high a rate as conditions permit. The Owners would have the privilege of operating the plants at any time they are willing and able to operate them at full capacity until some arrangements are made for change of ownership.

3. Immediate abandonment of the Government Regulation requiring individuals to be on the Relief Rolls in order to get work on Relief Projects.

4. Immediate provision under Government supervision, of work on useful projects, for every unemployed worker, according to his qualifications, with suitable pay for amount of work accomplished. Expenditures for many such projects such as high speed tunnels, express highways, or whatsoever it might be, could quickly be regained by tolls, as in the case of the Holland Tunnel in New York City.

5. Immediate abandonment by all States and Countries of Government crop control, destruction of foodstuffs and other products, and the establishment of an efficient and equitable distribution system. The spectacle of hungry people in a Land of Plenty is worse than uncivilized.

6. Laws to be altered so that EQUAL OPPORTUNITY is allowed to all, that every worker be allowed access to the land, to the tools and materials needed for the carrying out of his individual talent, for the welfare of himself and of Society.

7. Abolition of all tariff schedules and obstacles to free trade among the Nations. Trade among all the peoples of the Earth should be left as free as is now the trade among the various States of the American Union.
8. Legislation limiting the amount of profit to be made on any article or product, but leaving the individual free to sell it for as little as he chooses.
9. Government to print its own money and make it illegal to hoard it. Government to redeem all its bonded debts and to lend the money to the cooperative non-profit enterprises; abolish all interest and make it a criminal offence to take usury or interest, or to receive dividends that exceed $3\frac{1}{2}$ percent, or money without labor performed or practical service rendered.
10. Government operation and ownership of the financial system.
11. Legislation making it a criminal offence for any individual to spend money except for the necessities of life, while he owes a just debt to any other individual or organization. The Followers of FATHER DIVINE Will not owe another, and will not buy on the installment plan.
12. Immediate destruction of all counterfeit money by those who have acquired it, rather than attempting to pass it on; and a change in the currency to eliminate all counterfeits in circulation. The Followers of FATHER DIVINE destroy all counterfeit money they find in circulation, at their own expense, rather than passing it on to another.

Father said in a recent message:

"Now in reference to counterfeit money. Whensoever one has a counterfeit dollar, a counterfeit fifty dollar bill or counterfeit of any denomination of a bill or money, it matters not what it is, if it would be a thousand dollars, if you find out that it is counterfeit, this counterfeit expression should be destroyed. If someone else happens to pass a counterfeit dollar on you, destroy it immediately. If you find that it is a counterfeit dollar and you are convinced that it is counterfeit, you should destroy it, for it is false, therefore you should destroy the false."

It is not claimed that the recommendations contained in this Platform will solve every economic problem of the world at large, but the Fundamental Principle WILL. In FATHER DIVINE is found the solution of every problem that may arise. Neither is it claimed that Legislation alone can solve the problem, but as we have already stated, RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH must be Legalized, and all unrighteousness, injustice and untruth, outlawed.

The Principles advocated are just a few of those that FATHER DIVINE has established in the lives of millions. They have changed underworld characters into upright citizens. They have changed dishonesty and good-for-nothingness into honesty, Competence and Truth, making millions prosperous and independent of Relief, causing them to return stolen goods and pay old bills they never intended to pay. Thus, FATHER has saved the Government, Public Utilities, Companies, Department Stores and Businesses as a whole millions of dollars annually, and caused millions to seek Justice through Righteousness when they might have sought it in unrighteousness, through force of arms.

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POLITICAL

Speaking of Politics and Politicians and His participation with them, FATHER has Said:

"They have striven to keep the CHRIST completely out of Politics, telling you GOD and Religious People would not be in Politics; in the corruptibleness of the Politicians and the wickedness of the wicked; He would not function in their expression - but He came among them to convert them. For this cause I am and have as much right in Politics as I have in the Church, and really I have MORE right in Politics than I have in the Church. As Politics elects officials to rule the people, GOD must be in it, as GOD must rule THEM. If GOD doesn't Rule them, you are ruined."

"RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH among the Politicians must be LEGALIZED. Non-partisanship is the great expression through which GOD can express. Even though you be of a special Party, as I Said, the other evening, your only hope of expressing TRUTH, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and JUSTICE, is to have non-partisan ideas and opinions - the same as a family; you may be of one family but you are not qualified to be an Official elected by the people to serve the people unselfishly, unless you leave that idea of your immediate family and serve all humanity."

The Followers of FATHER DIVINE belong to no one Party or Organization, though they may cooperate with many, under FATHER'S Leading, in the cause of RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH. They vote for the Candidate who is best fitted to fill the Office, regardless of his Political Affiliation, if they are convinced that he will deal Justly, with TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS. If his public or private life have ever shown prejudice, bigotry or discrimination; vice, crime, or opposition to the Reign of CHRIST; if his record shows tendencies of selfishness, graft, greed or Political Corruption, they don't want him in Office regardless of his promises. A very efficient Research Department is maintained in the Righteous Government Program, to gather this information and record the stand of the Officials of our City, State and Federal Governments on the various issues, and this information is available to all.

Through the RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT'S Political Activities FATHER has qualified many thousands to Register and vote intelligently, who never had voted and never WOULD have voted otherwise, and many more are being qualified now. Those who needed citizenship papers and had no means to pay for them, FATHER has paid the fees Personally, provided they enter the Country legally. When the Lower Courts and the Board of Elections of New York refused the New Names of the Followers, FATHER carried them through the Supreme Court and had them legalized. The Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Lower Courts and now it is legal to register and vote in any name under which a person is known, regardless of how peculiar it may sound to the Officials. FATHER has caused millions to take a new interest in Voting in the cause of RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT, and though HE insists that they follow their highest intuition as to who they vote for, they would move as a unit as His Slightest Command, or upon His Endorsement of a Candidate. Even without His Spoken Word, they are unified in the one Spirit and Mind, to vote the right man INTO Office and the wrong man OUT. This will be done anyhow, for FATHER'S mind and Spirit have access in the hearts and minds of the Masses.

For the advancement of RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE and TRUTH in the Political world, we request the following:

1. That all Candidates including Candidates for President, be nominated entirely by the people, and that they be required to meet specific requirements, to prove their qualifications for Office, not as Politicians but technical experts.
2. Immediate abandonment of the Political patronage system and appointment of all Civil Service employees strictly according to their qualifications and service

and their standing on the list, without regard to party, race, creed or color, and without the intervention of Political Leaders.

EDUCATIONAL

Through the Educational Program of the Righteous Government Department, those of the Masses who are not already qualified are being qualified to pass the literacy tests to register and to vote intelligently, to pass Civil Service examinations, and to fill any Office they might be called upon to fill. They are attending the Evening Schools in such numbers, the local Schools in the City of New York have not been sufficient to accommodate them and extra facilities have been provided in the Kingdom and its Extensions, Private Schools have been established under the direction of Regular Teachers, to care for the needs of those who are otherwise engaged during school hours, and there are many such Schools throughout the Country.

For the advancement of real education and culture among the people, we request the following:-

1. The doors of all educational institutions be open and free to all for Universal education, with equal rights for all to higher technical and professional training.
2. The abolishing in all Educational Institutions, and from books used for Educational purposes in such Institutions, of all references to racial conflicts or differences, and national glory through military feats, etc., with Legislation making it a misdemeanor for any Educator to teach such in his Classes.
3. The abolishing of the conventional form of greeting, "H-e-l-l-o," from all Educational Institutions, and substitution of the word "PEACE". We also request the

cooperation of the Telephone Companies in this respect,
that a generation with peace on its lips, instead of what
war has been said to be, may come into being.

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In concluding our Educational Platform, we could not do better
than to quote the Words of our Beloved Saviour FATHER DIVINE, who has
come to us again in this New Dispensation, bringing "Peace on Earth",
and "GOOD Will to Men", whom we have recognized as the identical
CHRIST with All Power and Dominion, Reigning now and forevermore as
the "Everlasting FATHER and the PRINCE of PEACE" in BODILY FORM.

He has Said:

"We will get just what we demand from every angle
expressible, and we shall get it through Legality
by the BALLOT, and not by the BULLET. For this
cause I have encouraged and Stirred the Nation with
the desire and ambition to seek a better education,
that you might be qualified to pass the literacy test
in whatsoever State you are living, that you might
be able to go to the Polls and cast your ballots on the
day of Election, and vote IN that one you are
convinced will deal justly, and vote OUT the unjust
Official ... We will use the legal and political
GUNS, but refuse to use those that are, the
expressors of destruction, for we are not conceivers
of destructive ideas and opinions. Therefore, we
will not resort to violence through destroying mankind
nor the visible things that pertain to this life, but
we will destroy every endeavor or act of unrighteous
Official and put them out of Commission that they
might have no longer an existence among the people in
un-Righteousness and corruption."

"RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE must become to be a
Living Reality, and as I have brought it thus far
through Legality, it shall be universally established ...
and every nation, language, tongue and people shall
accept it as the Fundamental."

AMENDMENTS

Section on Principles - No. 8-A.

Legislation imposing the penalty for first-degree murder on all members of lynch-mobs killing or fatally injuring any person, together with a fine of ten to twenty thousand dollars to be paid by the County wherein the lynching occurs, to the estate of the injured or deceased person.

In bringing forth this Amendment and Speaking particularly of the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill, FATHER Said:-

"I just wish to Say in reference to the "Anti-Lynching Bill", if this is not inserted in it, it is not severe enough - this of Which I am about to say was and is - if one person will murder a man without the Law, he is subject to punishment to the extent as being termed a murderer ... If two men will commit the same crime - many of them have been charged as a murderer, and received the same penalty. This should be in the "Anti-Lynching Bill". Every man in a lynch mob should be convicted as a murderer - not one alone, but every one, for they are all murderers, and if we would tolerate it they would continue to indulge in wholesale murder by getting together by the hundreds and by the thousands. Therefore I Say, the lynch mob does murder. It is an organization, an organized body of murderers. Every member of a lynch mob that would lynch a man should go to the same place wheresoever men are supposed to go when they commit that crime."

Educational Section. No. 3-A.

The adoption of a Universal Language by all nations, languages, tongues and peoples - all Governments to assist in establishing it by including it in the courses of study in all Public Schools and Colleges.

Concerning the Subject FATHER has Personally Spoken as follows:

"For the purpose of bringing all men together, I came to convert all of the systems. There shall be no division after-a-while in language. There shall be ONE LANGUAGE. Now isn't that Wonderful! Firstly, it was essential to eradicate and abolish divisions among us as races, creeds and colors supposedly, but for the Perfect Work to be accomplished there will not even be divisions in systems, languages, tongues nor people, for they all shall understand each other with the one language we are speaking."

"Now I did not Say especially, it must be broken English as I am speaking, but whatsoever Language Divine LOVE and GOD'S omniscience finds sufficient and quite efficient for the purpose, will be adopted, and all people shall talk it. I am not especially trying to justify the American language as broken English, neither am I especially trying to adopt it as the international language but as a representation of RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH and JUSTICE I am seeking a language to be spoken that will be of more effect and more suitable for all nations, languages, tongues and people."

WE THANK YOU FATHER!

RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT.

FATHER DIVINE'S PEACE MISSION MOVEMENT.

Verified and endorsed by:

Rev. M.J. Divine [signature]

(Better known as FATHER DIVINE.)

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The March of Time film documentaries were viewed at the British Film Institute.

Wherever possible the original hard back edition of a work has been used and is cited in the bibliography. But because of the difficulty of obtaining such editions in this country, reprints and paperback editions are cited where they have been used.

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