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RPW: Wasn't Mr. King Senior -

VJ: Very much a part of that same -

RPW: - part of that same -

VJ: Very much a part of it, and I personally feel that he would still be, but for the stature and place in the sun that his boy has in the area of civil rights. But I think that Hartsfield's modus operandi was to call these ~~him~~ selected Negro leaders, who pretty much controlled what happened in the Negro community - they could keep John Doe quiet, if John Doe was talking out of line -

RPW: Could they - was this a vote delivery that was involved here?

VJ: Whatever the vote delivery here - but it 's always been my opinion that the Negro leaders delivered the vote, but never delivered much in return to the Negro voters by way of compensation.

RPW: You mean, it wasn't a bribed vote, it was a vote in terms of what seemed to be mutual interests - is that it?

VJ: That's right - you take a relatively moderate stand - in other words, that you don't cry nigger, nigger - or with Hartsfield it was Negro policeman who were limited in their arrests to Negroes, - but in 1948 - I forget the year now - the mere appointment of Negro policemen or the advocacy of Negro policemen, was a major advance to some extent. Now, I think that Mayor Hartsfield could not very well operate as mayor of Atlanta in 1964, because he would be certainly disillusioned - once he called the traditional Negro leaders for delivery on a particular project, i.e., demon-



strations, that he would find that they do not - they cannot control

RPW: Well, didn't mayor find that out?

VJ: He found that out - he found out that he could not, no more, operate like Hartsfield. He found out, even prior to his election, though he had the backing of the traditional Negro leaders, that there were some young in the Negro community here who, number one, rebelled and repudiated the established Negro leadership, and in a few weeks were able to deliver to another candidate ten thousand votes or more that were traditionally - but for the rebellion and repudiation - have gone right along with the traditional or established Negro leadership.

RPW: Now, what happened to the splintering of the present day Negro leadership in Atlanta and elsewhere? There's a problem of control and unity in the Negro leadership.

VJ: Well, I think that, as in most situations, the young people, as they become more exposed to education and educational opportunities, as they become more aware of what's going on in their society, and as they attempt to project themselves, to project their ideas, - I think it's kind of a natural - there's a natural repudiation on the part of the whole people who have been in power for so long, that they think that the young folk ought to wait their turn -

RPW: You were talking this morning of your participation in the summit conference in Atlanta last year, before the disturbance in the city and you diagnosed for me the splits

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in the summit group - would you do that again please?

VJ: Yes. I think that basically in the Atlanta summit leadership conference, that there are three basic groups. We have the direct actionist - those people who feel that demonstrations per se are necessary, not only to dramatize the situation but to shake the so-called power structure out of its apathy and out of its intransigence and out of its adamancy with regard to the status quo. I think also that there is a second group, the moderates, who believe in selective direct action, who believe in concerted direct action at a particular target at some time that negotiation with that particular target or with the people who control that particular target has failed. I think also that these moderates believe in, prior to an onslaught of demonstrations or direct action, they believe in taking the approach of discussing first what the problem is, what the people involved - a sort of sustained process in negotiation or what have you - and that at such time as that has failed, then I think they would take the position that negotiations are the only way to solve the issue.

RPW: Let me ask a question here - the second group - the moderates - are they moving in terms of limited objectives each time - is that the idea?

VJ: Yes - I think they take the position that -

RPW: Despite the limited objective - is that it?

VJ: That's right - that none of these situations are all or nothing, that you might have to make a concession here, but this con-



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cession here is necessary so that you might be able to move onto another front necessarily, that you cannot in your petition ask for everything, necessarily, but that you - that it's important that you concentrate on a target until such time as you have completed this, and then you move to B. Now third, I think the third group, which would be the established leadership, puts some faith in the conference table. Everything can be worked out - and I think that they use the term worked out because over the years things have been worked out - generally been worked out, not necessarily to the disadvantage of the Negro, but oftentimes they have - get themselves to maintain things as they - on the status quo basis. I think that the magic of the whole thing is to find some formula whereby you give vent to each of the procedures, of the three groups. I think maybe there's room for all of these things to operate, but I think that you have to assess it, like a quarterback assesses moving his team toward the goal line - Roy Wilkins made some reference to this in his speech to the annual dinner of the Southern Regional Council - there are times when it's appropriate for the quarterback to do a quarterback sneak, and other times when he needs to kick on third down. But it does not mean necessarily that he will field goal from his own two yard line.

RPW: Who are the people and which organizations are identified  
three  
in the Southern Conference with these/positions - how do you align  
them - or the persons up - or organizations up - in front of these  
three positions?

VJ: I think that Jim Foreman, who is executive director of student non-violent coordinating committee, ~~whit~~ would stand out as the leader of the action group, the first group that I mentioned. He's joined in that group by the committee on appeal for human rights, who is presently led by a young fellow named Larry Fox, a student at (Mohawk ? ) College - the committee on appeal for human rights is a continuation of the student coalition of the schools here, that led to the sit-ins of 1960. I don't think that the committee on appeal has the kind of creative and imaginative leadership that its first leaders had. I think that the students, they suffer some frustration from what their older brothers or their classmates in high school who were a year or two ahead of them did. And they too want to join the crusade, but I think they have not quite realized that the situation in 1964 and 1963 is not as it was in 1960. And the novelty of the sit-ins is not the same - or the uniqueness of the sit-ins is not the same as in 1963 or 1964, as they were in 1960. And then I think that your moderate leadership in Atlanta would come from - I think that you would really have to put the SCLC - Southern Christian Leadership Conference - to some extent, though not wholeheartedly, in the group with the direct actionists.

RPW: What about the NAACP, with which you are associated?

VJ: Well, I think NAACP is pretty much the - would have to be classed in the moderate group. They did here advocate the sacrifice - or at least an economic boycott for Easter as an appropriate direct



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action technique. I think that for all practical purposes that the local branch of the NAACP here, under the leadership of Dr. C. Miles Smith, would have to be classed as a - as moderate in this classification, as would the Urban League. Clarence Coleman, who is a co-chairman of the Southern Conference, and also director of the Southern Region Area - comprising several states in the South in the National Urban League - I think that they too would have to be classed as moderates. Now, I would put the Atlanta Negro Voters' League, which historically in Atlanta has been a very powerful influence - I think that we would have to class them as a part of the established leadership, led by Colonel Walden, C.E. Scott of the - editor of the Atlanta Daily World, who believe that if you go to the white people, and sit down and talk with them, that these things can be worked out. I think, however, also, that they have come to realize that this is not enough. It takes more than just sitting down and talking to get the kind of results. Now, the one thing I - one area where I think that the Southern leadership has failed, and that is that there has been some failure to realize the powerful tension - or certainly if they realize it, to implement this realization, and to - the mobilization of the real political power and political strength of Negroes in this town. You have an all-citizens registration committee, which does registration and voting, but registration and voting in the Negro community has never been a completely total Negro project. Preachers preach about it, people talk about it, and - but it has never been a total - and I'm

sure that this is not being achieved in many other communities.

RPW: What about this thing that you mentioned this morning about the split in the summit conference, that Mr. Walker, Gerard Walker, had a memorandum -

VJ: Y. Walker, my friend and one in whom I have -

RPW: - for provocation of a little bloodshed to point things up.

VJ: Yes - Y. Walker, my good friend and one for whom I have the utmost respect for, but one whom I reserve the right to disagree with - in his battle plan had something to the effect that we need to create an incident, and we need to show the policemen to be exactly what they are - bad and mean and evil. And there was something in his plan whereby there was a need to deliberately provoke them into action.

RPW: Provoke the Negro policeman into action against Negroes -

VJ: No, no, no - this is - I'm sure this does not relate to the Negro policemen -

RPW: They were there - they were a spearhead -

VJ: They were there. I'm not sure why - I haven't given this any thought - but this was a part of the astuteness of the local police force here, Chief Jenkins - who is the chief of police force here - to thinking that the use of Negro officers would have some disconcerting effect on the demonstrators, that they might not act quite as bad. Whether this proved to be true I am not in a position to say.

RPW: It removes one grievance, though, doesn't it?



VJ: Well, it's kind of difficult to raise the issue of police brutality, because I think if by nature the Negro policemen are in sympathy with what the Negro demonstrators are doing, but by the same token they have their responsibility to do their duty, and if, given orders to arrest, they have some responsibility to do just that.

RPW: But no ~~rough~~ roughing up -

VJ: Of course not. And I doubt seriously if you'd find any real instances of Negro policemen roughing up demonstrators.

RPW: Did you find any instances of white policemen roughing up demonstrators in this last affair?

VJ: There were reported instances. I cannot attest one way or the other as to the accuracy of the instances, because I did not see them. I think that only those persons who were present could attest to that. I can speculate, however, that the very presence of Negroes attacking the systems could engender some sort of retaliatory efforts on the part of white policemen.

RPW: If a memorandum exists to provoke roughing up, isn't it likely that somebody, Owens, provoking roughing up?

VJ: I beg your pardon?

RPW: Isn't it likely here that the policy provoking roughing up has been discussed, that you may very well find an individual provoking some roughing up even against himself?

VJ: I think so. He may provoke it as a part of - well, I think it's deliberate, and I think that this is an error. I think that

the protest is enough, that you don't have to deliberately provoke policemen to do oftentimes things that they might want to do, but would not do by exercising some restraint under normal circumstances, and I think you push them. Now, it needs to be pointed out that - and I think that the demonstrators saw the fallacy of this position, of deliberately provoking the police. And there were indications that they had refrained from so doing.

RPW: How serious - and I mean the word serious here - but how serious is the divergence of view, the fractures, not merely in the Atlanta conference but in Negro leadership in general? How much of a problem is it?

VJ: Well, I don't see it as a terrible problem because I think that no group or organization has any monopoly on the panacea. I think that each group can show where its particular method or its particular emphasized method has worked in a given situation. I think the problem that the civil rights organizations have is that of assessing a particular situation for exactly what it is, and on the basis of that assessment to determine what is the appropriate action that can possibly bring about the quickest possible result, that being desegregation.

RPW: Human nature being what it is, isn't there bound to be an element of a mere struggle for power too in all these matters?

VJ: I should think that you can never subtract the glow aspect of it, or the struggle for power, or the struggle to take credit for that which has been accomplished. And I'm not sure that this



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is not healthy.

RPW: It's awful human anyway.

VJ: That's right. People are people. And people want credit, oftentimes people want credit when they're not due it. And I just know what you do about a situation is quite human, and it's likely to recur again and again.

RPW: There's one thing - speaking historically - that always, so far as I know, in revolutionary situations - the leader - the single man has emerged, and taken charge. He has dominated the scene. Now, there's no single man who has emerged to dominate or to control, to be the focus of the Negro movement - using that general term rather than civil rights - the general focus for Negro revolt, resistance, unrest, movement, whatever you choose to call it. The nearest person is Martin Luther King, but he is far from having an undivided support. He's the whole movement.

VJ: Well, I think there's no unanimity necessarily, but I think that even those people who would disagree with Dr. King's method of operating, will acknowledge that he is the titular head of the rights party, so to speak. And I think that the Negro movement has historically had a one person who was a rallying cry. Frederick Douglas in the abolitionist times, or - and in the post Civil War period, he had two people to rise to national prominence - prominence immediately following the turn of the century - DuBoise and Booker Washington - where you had conflicting views, and then following DuBoise and Washington, certainly there was James Wadon

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Johnson, who served for a long time as executive secretary of the ATP, and rising in the late '30's was Charlie Huston, who was really the brain trust of the students under the 14th Amendment, and during the war Walter White, who was a rallying cry, and after Walter White, Thurgood Marshall.

RPW: And A. Phillips Randolph.

VJ: A. Phillips Randolph historically, yes, is considered even today I think a - and is in my opinion, the elder statesman of the movement.

RPW: Well, now here's a of what appears to be a decisive conflict, and the focal leader has not emerged. This may be another difference from all previous such movements. But the resistance to Dr. King is very great in some quarters, as we know - very great.

VJ: That's right - it's quite great -

RPW: People are stuck with him because there's nobody else to take his place - put it that way.

VJ: Of course, in my personal opinion I think that - and I think that history will prove me - will bear me out ultimately - that Roy Wilkins, who is quiet, very efficient, extremely able and capable man, who in NAACP circles and nationally and internationally is respected as an able leader, will probably come out as one of the unsung heroes of the Negroes' cause. He leads and heads the largest and most powerful civil rights organization - to some extent whose name itself perpetuates a kind of head, but I'm not sure that necessarily Roy is associated as the leader. I wish he were, because I



think that he actually is. In my opinion I consider Roy my leader, and I consider Roy more important to civil rights movement in many aspects than Dr. King. You need to understand that I say this because I have an NAACP background and have been working on Mr. Wilkins' staff. But I am not so blind as to not be able to recognize the real value that Dr. King has played in this movement, and that is of rallying Negroes - I think you have to have a rallying cry - you have to have the cheerleader, the man out front who's going to get the crowds in, and who's going to inspire them. I think that it was very appropriate that at the Washington March that Dr. King be last because he was the personification of the emancipated, he was the Moses, he is the Moses for this era.

RPW: What do you think of Bide Ruston as a leader?

VJ: I think that Bide Ruston is probably a good thinker and a good organizer, but not a leader in the true sense of the word. He's the administrator, the man who implements.

RPW: Do you know the story which is fairly common that he was respected and called the great organizer of the March on Washington to close ranks?

VJ: Well, I'm not terribly familiar with that.

R PW: and to protect him they  
the indispensable  
said he is Mr. March on Washington, he is/~~an essential~~ organizer, and  
to cover up and to protect him, to prevent a split of the whole program -

VJ: I'm not aware of that.

RPW: This is one of the tales one hears, you know.

VJ: I'm just not aware of it. I understand he's a very competent

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man, with very definite ideas.

RPW: Also one of the things one hears is this, that his presence in the boycott - the school boycott - that one of the causes of the split among the various organizations that were supporting the boycott -

VJ: Well, I have some hesitance to express myself on that, because I - this is really the first time I've heard this.

RPW: Well, it's a story one hears, you know, in conversation.

VJ: I am not terribly disturbed at the competition, by the numerous organizations that are now on the scene, because I think that they all have a role to play. I think that the NAACP plays a major role, I think that in the field of guarding and protecting and defending the Negro rights in this country, and will always be.

RPW: Here's the old - historically speaking - there's always been this moment of a vast number of organizations supporting the principles operating in a social movement - by and large there's always been one that achieved - almost always achieved dominance, in order to carry things through to a settlement. Now, the question is whether the Negro movement can proceed without one policy achieving dominance. Of course this may be different again from your previous situations, and history may show things that I don't know about offhand this way, where you have a multiplicity of forces. This is and there's no single

VJ: Yes - that's why you have so many churches. And they all have



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their role to play here, and I think that they all satisfy a certain notions and attitudes that people have. It gives people a legitimate place to express -

RPW: This is more like the rise of the rebel

Russian revolution, where one thing takes over - one element takes over.

VJ: Well, there is no taking over here, but I think there is a sharing of responsibility more than anything -

RPW: As of the moment.

VJ: - as of the moment. The next two years - I don't know - heroes are created in strange fashions -

RPW: They certainly are.

VJ: (both talking together) I'm not sure that going to jail will create the next national hero. Are we at the end?

RPW: End it up.

(end of tape)