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8 Racism and Xenophobia

Racism in Europe: unity and diversity
MICHEL WIEVIORKA

Observing growing racist tendencies that affect most European countries, an increasing number of scholars feel an urgent need for a comparative reflection that may bring answers to a central question: over and beyond the empirical evidence of differences, is there not a certain unity in contemporary racism in Europe? Is it not possible to elaborate a reasoned set of hypotheses that could account for most national racist experiences in Europe, while shedding some light on their specificities?

European unification, in so far as it exists, and the growth of racism are obviously distinct phenomena, and it would be artificial to try and connect them too directly. The most usual frame of reference for any research about racism and race relations remains national. And even the vocabulary or, more deeply, the analytical and cultural categories that we use when dealing with this issue vary so widely from one country to another that we meet considerable difficulties when trying to translate precise terms. There may be large differences in language, and words with negative connotations in one country will have positive ones in another. Nobody in France, for instance, would use the expression *relations de race*, which would be regarded as racist, although it is commonly employed in the United Kingdom.

The key preliminary task, therefore, is not to contribute direct empirical knowledge about the various expressions of racism in Europe, as can be found, for instance, in the important survey of 'Racism and xenophobia' published in 1989 by the European Community (CCE 1989). Nor is the initial task to compare elementary forms of racism, such as harassment, stereotypes, discrimination or political racism in a certain number of countries, in order to prove that they are more or less similar, or that they follow a similar evolution

Rather the problem is primarily conceptual. If we want to test the idea of a certain unity of contemporary racism in Europe, we must elaborate sociological and historical hypotheses, and then apply them to the facts that we are able to collect. Thus the most difficult aspect of a comparative approach is not to find data, but to organize it with well-thought-out hypotheses.

My own hypotheses can be formulated in two different ways, one of which is relatively abstract and the other more concrete.

RACISM AND MODERNITY

An initial formulation of the problematic, in effect, consists in the construction of a global argument enabling us to demonstrate that racism is inseparable from modernity, as the latter developed from European origins, and from its present crisis (Wieviorka 1992a). Racism, both as a set of ideologies and specious scientific doctrines, and as a set of concrete manifestations of violence, humiliation and discrimination, really gathered momentum in the context of the immense changes of which Europe was the centre after the Renaissance. It developed further in modern times, with the huge migrations, the extension of trading relationships, the industrialization of Western society and colonization. But racism, in its links with modernity, cannot be reduced to a single logic, and even seems to correspond to processes which are sometimes so distinct that numerous demands are made for the discussion of racisms in the plural. This in fact gives rise to a debate the terms of which are badly posed. It is effectively possible to set up an integrated, global argument in which the various forms of racism, including anti-semitism, find their theoretical place, and which goes in the direction of a sociological, even anthropological, unity of racism. One can also consider each of these forms in its historical specificity, which goes in the opposite direction. Both approaches are legitimate and complementary, but since we are thinking here about the unity of contemporary forms of racism in Europe, it is clear that we should privilege the former. This leads us to distinguish four main lines of argument which cross the space of racism in its relation to modernity.

In the first instance, as the companion of modernity triumphant, racism is universalist, denouncing, crushing and despising different identities – hence the apparition of inferior 'races' as an obstacle to the process of expansion, in particular colonial expansion, or destined to be exploited in the name of their supposed inferiority.

Next, linked to processes of downward social mobility, or exclusion, racism is the expression, as well as the refusal, of a situation in which the actor positively values modernity, but lives, or is afraid he/she will be exposed to a form of expulsion which will marginalize him/her. The actor then assumes a reflex or an attitude of 'poor white', particularly common in contexts of economic crises or of retraction from the labour market. Racism here is a perversion of a demand to participate in modernity and an opposition to the effective modalities of its functioning.

A third line of argument corresponds not to a positive valorization of modernity, the rise of which must be ensured, or from which one refuses to be excluded, but to appeals to identity or to tradition which are opposed to modernity. The nation, religion and the community then act as markers of identity, thus giving rise to a racism which attacks those who are assumed to be the vectors of a detested modernity. The Jews are often the incarnation of these vectors, as are, in some circumstances, those Asian minorities who are perceived as being particularly economically active. Finally, racism can correspond to anti- or non-modern positions, which are displayed not against groups incarnating modernity, but against groups defined themselves by an identity without any reference to modernity. It expresses, or is an extension of, intercultural, intercommunity, interethnic or similar tensions.

It is therefore possible to represent the space of racism around four cardinal points:

<div align="center">

Modernity against identities

Identities against identities   Identities against modernity

Modernity against modernity

</div>

In a space of this type, the racist actors do not necessarily occupy one single position, and their speech and their behaviour are frequently syncretic and vary over time. There are even sometimes paradoxical mixtures of these various positions, when people, for instance, reproach a racialized group with symbolizing at the same time modernity and traditional values which they consider deny modernity: in the past, but also today, Jews, in many cases, fulfil this double function (Wieviorka 1992b). They are hated in the name of their supposed identification with political power, money, the mass media and a cosmopolitan internationalism, but also because of their difference, their visibility, their nationalism and support or belonging to the state of Israel, or because they flaunt their cultural traditions or their religion.

This theoretical construction of the space of racism may help us to answer our question. In effect, it enables us to read the European experience, and above all its recent evolution. The latter has long been dominated, on the one hand, by a racism of the universalist, colonial type and, on the other hand, by oppositions to modernity which have assumed the form of anti-semitism; today, much more than previously, it is directed by the fear or reality of exclusion and downward social mobility, and on the other by tensions around identity and vague fears of which the most decisive concern the question of belonging to the nation.

FORMATION AND RESTRUCTURATION OF THE EUROPEAN MODEL OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The argument outlined above can be completed by a much more concrete historical analysis of the recent evolution of most of the major western European countries. The latter, throughout this century, and up to the 1960s or 1970s, can be defined on the basis of a model which integrates three elements which are then weakened and destructured, reinvigorating the question of racism.

The era of integration

In most western European countries, racism, before the Second World War, was a spectacular and massive phenomenon, much more widespread than today. Colonial racism postulated the inferiority of colonized people of 'races', and modern anti-semitism gave a new and active dimension to former anti-Judaism. This is why we must introduce a sense of relativity into our perceptions of contemporary racism. This is why we must also think in terms of periods, with the idea of a certain unity in time for the phenomenon that we are discussing. This idea means not that there is no continuity in racist doctrines, ideologies, prejudice or more concrete expressions, but that a new era in the history of racism began with the retreat, as Elazar Barkan (1992) says, of scientific racism, the end of decolonization, and, above all, the 'economic crisis' that has in fact meant the beginning of the decline of industrial societies.

Until that time, i.e. the 1960s and 1970s, most European countries had succeeded, to a greater or a lesser extent, depending on the country, in integrating three basic components of their collective life: *an industrial society, an egalitarian state* and *a national identity*.

Most European countries have been industrial societies: that is, they have had a set of social relations rooted in industrial labour and organization. From this point of view, they have been characterized by a structural conflict, which opposed the working-class movement and the masters of industry, but which extended far beyond workshops and factories. This conflict gave the middle classes a possibility to define themselves by either a positive or negative relationship towards the working-class movement. It brought to unemployed people the hope and sometimes the reality of being helped by this movement. It was also the source of important political debates dealing with the 'social question'. Furthermore, it influenced intellectual and cultural life profoundly, and acted as a point of reference for many actors, in the city, in universities, in religious movements and elsewhere.

European countries, and this is the second basic component of our model of analysis, have also been able to create and develop institutions which aimed at ensuring that egalitarian treatment was imparted to all citizens as individuals.

The state has generally taken over various aspects of social welfare and security. It has become a welfare state. The state also introduced or defended a distance between religion and politics. Although countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece have recently experienced dictatorial regimes, states in Europe have generally behaved, since the Second World War, as warrants for democracy.

Lastly, most European countries have given a central importance to their national identity. This identity has usually included two different aspects, sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary. On one hand, the idea of a nation has corresponded to the assertion of a culture, a language, a historical past and traditions, with some tendencies to emphasize primordial ties and call for a biological definition loaded with racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism. On the other hand, the nation has also been defined in a more positive way, as bound to the general progress of mankind and to universal values that could be defined in economic, political or ethical terms. In this last perspective, a nation is related to reason, progress, democracy of human rights.

Industrial society, *state* and *nation*: these three basic elements have never been consonant with their highest theoretical image. One can easily show the weakness of the working-class movement in some countries, or its constant subordination to political forces, the limits of the welfare state everywhere in the past, and the domination of the reactionary and xenophobic aspects of nationalism in many circumstances. Moreover, some European countries have defined themselves as bi- or plurinational. But since we recognize these limits, and since we recognize many differences between countries, we can admit, without the danger of creating a myth, that our three basic elements are typical of European countries until the 1960s and 1970s. Not only have they characterized three countries, but they have also been relatively strongly articulated, so much so that various terms are used to express this articulation: for instance, integration, nation state and national society. We must be very cautious and avoid developing the artificial or mythical image of countries perfectly suited to the triple and integrated figure of an industrial society, a two-dimensional national and a modern and egalitarian state. But our representation of the past is useful in considering the evolution of the last twenty or thirty years, an evolution which is no doubt dominated by the growing weakness and dissociation of our three basic elements.

The era of destructuration

All European countries are experiencing today a huge transformation which affects the three components of our reflection, and defines what I have called, in the case of France, '*une grande mutation*' (Wieviorka 1992c).

Industrial societies are living their historical decline, and this phenomenon should not be reduced to the spectacular closing of workshops and factories. More important in our perspective is the decay of the working-class movement as a social movement. In the past, the working-class movement was, to various

degrees, capable of incorporating in a single action collective behaviour corresponding to three major levels. There could be limited demands, struggles based on the professional defence of political demands, dealt with by the institutional system, and, at the highest level of its project, orientations challenging the control and the direction of progress and of industry. These orientations are quite out of place today: the working-class movement is breaking up, and this decomposition produces various effects (Touraine *et al.* 1987). Among workers, there is a strengthening of tendencies towards corporatism and selfishness – those workers who still have a certain capacity of action, because of their skill or their strategic position in their firm, develop struggles in the name of their own interests, and not in the name of more general or universal ones.

Sometimes workers' demands can no longer be taken up by the trade unions, which have been considerably weakened. This can result in violent forms of behaviour, or in spontaneous forms of organization, such as the recent 'co-ordinations' in France, which are easily infiltrated by extremist ideologies.

In such a context, the middle classes no longer have to define themselves by reference to class conflicts, and they tend to oscillate between, on the one hand, unrestrained individualism and, on the other, populism or national populism, the latter being particularly strong among those who experience downward mobility or social exclusion. These two distinct phenomena are closely related to social and economic dualization. In the past, most people could have a strong feeling of belonging to a society, 'down' as workers, or 'up' as elites or middle classes. Today, a good number of people are 'in', and constitute a large middle class, including those workers who have access to jobs, consumption, health or education for their children, while a growing proportion of people are 'out', excluded and marginalized.

Such an evolution may lead to renewed expressions of racism. Those who are 'out', or fear to be, have a feeling of injustice and loss of previous social identity. They think the government and the politicians are responsible for their situation, and may develop populist discourses and attitudes in which antimigrant or ethnic minorities racism can take place. They then impute their misfortune to migrants, even if these migrants share the same experience. And those who are 'in' may develop more subtle forms of racism, trying to secure themselves with a colour bar or by individual or collective behaviours that create social and racial segregation and build symbolic but also real barriers. Furthermore, the logic of segregation, particularly at the political level, is always likely to become indistinguishable from a national and populist form of discourse which amalgamates the fears, anger and frustrations of the excluded and the social self-centredness of those who wish to defend their status and their way of life. This merging therefore gives a result which is only paradoxical in appearance, since it results in an identical form of racism in those people who have experienced living with, or close to, immigrants or similar categories of

people, and in those who have not actually done so, but who have heard about it through the mass media or from rumours.

A second element of destructuration deals with the state and public institutions, which encounter increasing difficulties in trying to respect egalitarian principles, or in acting as welfare states. Everywhere in Europe, the number of unemployed people has grown, creating not only a great many personal dramas, but also a fiscal crisis of the state. The problems of financing old-age pensions, the health-care system, state education and unemployment benefits are becoming increasingly acute, while at the same time there is a rising feeling of insecurity which is attributed, once again, to immigrants. The latter are then perceived in racist terms, accused not only of taking advantage of social institutions and using them to their own ends, but also of benefiting from too much attention from the state. At the same time, the ruling classes have been tempted since the 1970s by liberal policies which in fact ratify and reinforce exclusion and marginalization.

The crisis of the state and the institutions is a phenomenon which must be analytically distinguished from the decline of industrial society and the dualization which results from its decline. But the two phenomena are linked. Just as the welfare state owes a great deal, in its formation, to the social and political discussions which are inseparable from the history of the working class, which is particularly clear in the countries endowed with strong social democracy, so too the crisis of the welfare state and the institutions owes a great deal to the destructuration not only of these discussions and conflicts, but also of the principal actor which informed them, the working-class movement.

A third aspect of the recent evolution concerns the national issue, which becomes nodal – all the more so as social issues are not politically treated as such. In most European countries, political debates about nation, nationality and citizenship are activated. In such a context, nationalism loses its open and progressive dimensions, and its relationship with universal values, and is less and less linked with ideas such as progress, reason or democracy. National identity is increasingly loaded with xenophobia and racism. This tendency gains impetus with the emergence or growth of other identities among groups that are defined, or that define themselves, as communities, whether religious, ethnic, national or regional. There is a kind of spiral, a dialectic of identities, in which each affirmation of a specific identity involves other communitarian affirmations among other groups. Nationalism and, more generally speaking, communal identities do not necessarily mean racism. But as Etienne Balibar explains, racism is always a virtuality (Balibar and Wallerstein 1988).

This virtuality is not nurtured uniquely by the presence, at times exaggerated and fantasized, of a more or less visible immigration. It also owes a considerable amount to phenomena which may even have nothing to do with it. Thus national identity is reinforced in its most alarming aspects when national culture appears to be threatened by the superficial and hypermodern character of an international culture which originates primarily in America, by the

political construction of Europe or, again, by the globalization of the economy.

At the same time, it becomes more and more difficult to assert that society, state and nation form an integrated whole. Those who call for universal values, human rights and equality, who believe that each individual should have equal opportunities to work, make money and then participate fully in cultural and political life – in other words, those who identify themselves with modernity – are less and less able to meet and even to understand those who have the feeling of being excluded from modern life, who fear for their participation in economic, cultural and political life, and who retire within their national identity. In extreme cases, social and economic participation are no longer linked with the feeling of belonging to a nation, the latter being what remains when the former becomes impossible. Reason, progress and development become divorced from nation, identity and subjectivity, and in this split, racism may easily develop.

In the past, industrial society often offered workers disastrous conditions of work and existence. But the working-class movement, as well as the rulers of industry, believed in progress and reason, and while they were opposed in a structural conflict, this was precisely because they both valorized the idea of progress through industrial production, and both claimed that they should direct it. The nation, and its state, as Ernest Gellner explains (1983) were supposed to be the best frame for modernization, and sometimes the state not only brought favourable conditions, but also claimed to be the main agent of development. Nationalism could be the ideology linked to that viewpoint, and not only a reactionary or traditionalist force. Today, waters divide. Nationalism is mainly expressed by social and political groups frightened by the internationalization of the economy and culture. It is increasingly differentialist, and racism develops as social problems such as exclusion and downward mobility grow, and as anxiety develops in regard to national identity.

THE CATEGORIES OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF RACISM

The argument outlined above is historical and sociologial in nature, but a closer examination of the contemporary phenomenon of racism requires explicitness in the instruments and, therefore, the categories of analysis of racism properly speaking (Wieviorka 1991).

The two logics of racism

Contemporary sociological literature increasingly insists on the idea of changing forms of racism. Some scholars, relying on American studies, oppose the old 'flagrant' racism to the 'subtle' new versions (Pettigrew 1993). Others

emphasize a crucial distinction, which could, in an extreme interpretation, lead to the idea of two distinct kinds of racism. Following authors such as Martin Barker or Pierre-André Taguieff, we should distinguish between a classical, inegalitarian racism and a new, differentialist one (Barker 1981; Taguieff 1988). The first kind considers the Other as an inferior being, who may find a place in society, but the lowest one. There is room for inferior people in this outlook, as long as they can be exploited and relegated to unpleasant and badly paid tasks. The second kind considers the Other as fundamentally different, which means that he/she has no place in society, that he/she is a danger, an invader, who should be kept at some distance, expelled or possibly destroyed. The point is that for many scholars the new racism, sometimes also referred to as cultural racism, is the main one in the contemporary world, while the inegalitarian one becomes secondary.

As long as this remark is intended as a statement of historical fact, based on the observation of empirical realities of present-day racism, it is acceptable. But it must not take the place of a general theory of racism. First, cultural or differentialist approaches to racism are not new. It is difficult to speak of Nazism, for instance, without introducing the idea that anti-semitism in the Third Reich was deeply informed by these approaches. Jews were said to corrupt Aryan culture and race, and the 'final solution' planned not to assign them to the lowest place in society, but to destroy them. Second, the opposition between the two main logics of racism should not conceal the main fact, which is that a purely cultural definition of the Other, as well as a purely social one, dissolves the idea of race. On one hand, Claude Lévi-Strauss is not a racist when he emphasizes cultural differentiation. One is a racist only when there is any reference to race in a cultural opposition, when beneath culture we can, explicitly or implicitly, find nature: that is, in an organicist or genetic representation of the Other as well as oneself. On the other hand, when the Other is defined only as socially inferior, exploited or marginalized, the reference to race may disappear or become, as William J. Wilson suggests (1978), less significant.

In fact, in most experiences of racism, the two logics co-exist, and racism appears as a combination of them both. There are not two racisms, but one, with various versions of the association of cultural differentialism and social inegalitarianism. The general analysis that has been presented for contemporary Europe helps us to refuse the idea of a pure, cultural racism, corresponding to a new paradigm that would have taken the place of an old one. The sources of European contemporary racism, as I have suggested, are in the crisis of national identities and in the dualization of societies, which favour a differentialist logic. But they are also connected with phenomena of downward social mobility and economic crisis, which lead to populism and exasperation and have an important dimension in appeals for an unequal treatment of migrants.

Two main levels

As I have indicated in my book *L'espace du racisme* (Wieviorka 1991), we may distinguish four levels in racism. The way that experiences of racism are articulated at the different levels where they act may change with their historical evolution. Our distinction is analytical, and should help us as a sociological tool.

A first level refers to weak and inarticulated forms of racism, whatever they may consist of: opinions and prejudice, which are more xenophobic and populist than, strictly speaking, racist; and diffuse violence, limited expression of institutional discrimination or diffusion of racial doctrines, etc. At this first level, racism is not a central issue and it is so limited, quantitatively and qualitatively, that I have chosen to use the term *infraracism* to characterize it.

We may speak of *split racism* at a second level, in reference to forms of racism which are still weak and inarticulate, but stronger and more obvious. At this stage, racism becomes a central issue, but does not give the image of a unified and integrated phenomenon, mainly because of the lack of a strong political expression.

We may speak of *political racism*, precisely, when political and intellectual debates and real political forces bring a dual principle of unity to the phenomenon. On one hand, they give it an ideological structure, so that all its expressions seem to converge and define a unique set of problems; on the other hand, they offer it practical forms of organization.

At the fourth level, we may call *total racism* those situations in which the state itself is based on racist principles. There is nowadays no real threat of total racism in our countries, and we may now simplify the distinction into four levels of racism by reducing them to two main ones, the *infrapolitical* level, including infra and split racisms, and the *political* one.

We can now come back to our general analysis of European contemporary racism and be more precise. This rise of the phenomenon, following what was previously said, is due to the evolution of three basic elements, and to their destructuration. We may add that it appears first at an infrapolitical level, and that it then ascends to the political level, with variations from one country to another.

In certain cases, a rather important political party appears and develops quickly, as in France with the *Front National*. In other cases, such a party appears but quickly declines, which means not that racism necessarily stays at the infrapolitical level, but that it informs political debates without being the flag of one precise strong organization – this could define the English experience. But above all, the analytical distinction into levels enables us to introduce a central question: is there not throughout Europe the same danger of seeing political actors capable of taking over and of directing infrapolitical racism?

On the one hand, we observe in several countries the growing influence of

groups of activists and which may occupy an important space in political life. The French *Front National* appears as a leader in Europe, and sometimes as a model, but other parties or movements should be quoted too: the *Deutsche Volksunion* and the *Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* in Germany; the FPÖ (Freiheidlich Partei Österreich) in Austria, which gained 22.6 per cent of the votes in the November 1991 elections in Vienna; the *Vlaams Blok* in Flanders, with twelve members of Parliament since November 1991; and the Italian Leagues.

One must be careful, however, not to exaggerate. The more extreme-right parties occupy an important place, the more they appear as populist rather than purely racist. Racism, strictly speaking, is only one element, and sometimes a minor one, along with strong nationalism or regionalism. Moreover, political and electoral successes force these parties to look respectable, and avoid overtly flagrant expressions of racism.

On the other hand, racism appears in non-political contexts, when prejudice and hostile attitudes to migrants develop, when social and racial segregation is increasingly visible (which is the case in France, where the issue of racism is constantly related to the so-called urban crisis and 'the suburban problem'), when violent actions develop, sometimes with a terrorist aspect, when various institutions including the police have a responsibility for its growth, when discrimination is obvious (for instance, in relation to housing or employment), and when the media contribute to the extension of prejudice. In such a context, all the European democracies have to face the same problem. There is a growing opportunity for extreme-right forces to capitalize on fears, frustrations, unsatisfied social demands and feelings of threat to national identity. Even worse, there is a danger that these forces will introduce new elements into infrapolitical racism. This is the case in France, for instance, where popular racism is strongly hostile to migrants, to black people and to gypsies, rather than to Jews, and where the *Front National* tries constantly to instil anti-semitism.

More generally, there is still a real distance between infrapolitical and political racism, and this means that racism is not so much a widely extended ideology offering people a general framework in which to interpret their own lives and personal experiences, but rather a set of prejudices and practices that are rooted in these concrete lives and experiences, and which could possibly evolve.

In the present state of things, the development is dominated by a process of populist fusion in which popular affects and political discourse converge, but which, paradoxically, protects our societies from extreme and large-scale racist episodes. However, populism is never a stable phenomenon and is always potentially open to more frightening processes.

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The liberal retreat from race since the Civil Rights Act
STEPHEN STEINBERG

Racial backlash was not an affliction only of the political right [in the USA]. As early as 1963, the *Atlantic Monthly* published an article entitled 'The White Liberal's Retreat'. Its author, Murray Friedman, observed that 'the liberal white is increasingly uneasy about the nature and consequences of the Negro revolt.' According to Friedman, a number of factors contributed to the white liberal retreat. For one thing, after school desegregation came to Northern cities, white liberals realized that the Negro was not just an abstraction, and not just a Southern problem. Second, the rise of black nationalism exacerbated tensions with white liberals, especially when they were ejected from civil rights organizations. Third, escalating tensions and violence tested the limit of liberal support. As Friedman wrote: 'In the final analysis, a liberal, white, middle-class society wants to have change, but without trouble' (Friedman 1963).

and blacks. As an example, Friedman cited Nathan Glazer's laudatory review of Nathaniel Weyl's *The Negro in American Civilization*. Weyl cited the results of IQ tests to argue that 'a large part of the American Negro population is seriously deficient in mental ability', and warned against the dangers of 'random race mixing without regard to learning ability'. According to Friedman, Glazer was critical of Weyl's biological determinism, particularly his reliance on African brain-size data, but nevertheless declared that Weyl 'is clearly free of any prejudice and deserves credit for having raised for public discussion crucial aspects of the Negro question which receive little discussion in academic and liberal circles, and which are usually left in the hands of bigots and incompetents' (quoted in Friedman 1963). Then Glazer posed the rhetorical question that leaves the answer to the racialized imagination: 'What are we to make of the high rates of [Negro] crime and delinquency, illegitimacy, family break-up and school dropout?'

As Friedman observed, there was nothing new in the tendency for white liberals to withdraw support from the liberation movement – essentially the same thing had happened during Reconstruction. In both cases, liberals demonstrated a failure of nerve, and nudged blacks into curbing their demands. Friedman described the situation in 1963 in these epigrammatic terms: 'to the Negro demand for "now," to which the Deep South has replied "never," many liberal whites are increasingly responding "later"' (Friedman 1963).

It did not take long for the intensifying backlash and the liberal retreat to manifest themselves politically. The critical turning-point was 1965, the year the civil rights movement reached its triumphant finale. The 1964 Civil Rights Act – passed after a decade of black insurgency – ended segregation in public accommodations and, at least in theory, proscribed discrimination in employment. The last remaining piece of civil rights legislation – the 1965 Voting Rights Act – was wending its way through Congress and, in the wake of Johnson's landslide victory, was assured of eventual passage. In a joint session of Congress on voting rights in March 1965 – the first such session on a domestic issue since 1946 – President Johnson had electrified the nation by proclaiming, in his Southern drawl, 'And we *shall* overcome.' As a senator from Texas, Johnson had voted against anti-lynching legislation. Now, in the midst of a crisis engineered by a grassroots protest movement, Johnson embraced the battle cry of that movement as he proposed legislation that would eliminate the last and most important vestige of official segregation.

In retrospect, Johnson's speech represented not the triumph of the civil rights movement, but its last hurrah. Now that its major legislative objectives had been achieved, not only the future of the movement, but also the constancy of liberal support, were thrown into question. By 1965, leaders and commentators, both inside and outside the movement, were asking, 'What's next?' However, this question had an ominous innuendo when it came from white liberals. In *Why We Can't Wait*, published in 1963, Martin Luther King provides this account of his appearance with Roy Wilkins on *Meet the Press*