

No Big Shift Is Foreseen in Policy of the Urban League

By THOMAS A. JOHNSON

The philosophical thrust of the National Urban League — toward an economically strong black community integrated into the general society—will not be radically changed by the death on Thursday of Whitney M. Young Jr., the organization's best-known executive director.

This was the contention of a number of black leaders, scholars and activists yesterday who both agreed and disagreed with the Urban League's philosophy.

Those in the diverse group, reached in several cities, were just as certain that in order to maintain the league's special position on the national scene Mr. Young's successor would have to be "militant enough for blacks and safe enough for whites."

Mr. Young had the rare skill of bridging the communications gaps between whites and blacks.

Discussion Revived

In addition, those interviewed yesterday revived a frequent discussion among blacks these days on whether many black leaders are often too charismatic to encourage the growth of second-line leaders.

The executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Roy Wilkins, who stood firmly with Mr. Young in advocating racial integration, said yesterday:

"Basically the league must continue to advocate integration. In the racial situation in which we black people find ourselves in America, there is only one path to be followed. It has been found that integration is the way in which a 10 per cent minority gets along with a 90 per cent majority."

Comments on Ideas

Mr. Wilkins, who considered Mr. Young as a "general who understood what goals and tactics were," added that his philosophy did "not preclude race pride, individuality, the teaching of racial history, the infusion of a sense of dignity and equality in the race as a whole and youth in particular."

"It does not preclude the maximum use of black political power nor the building of black economic strengths," Mr. Wilkins said. "It does preclude extravagant rhetoric and suicidal tactics."

Dr. Charles Thomas, a founder and former chairman of the Association of Black Psychologists, said in Los Angeles that a successor to Mr. Young would have to "understand that young blacks are saying that forced integration is no better than forced segregation."

"They want the right to make the choice for themselves," he said.

Young as Fund Raiser

In Atlanta, William Strickland, the director of Policy Studies at the Institute of the Black World, suggested that Mr. Young had maintained "that special kind of relationship with white-funding sources that made the league successful."

"Now, the danger is that if they find someone too bland the league could die with blacks and if he's too militant, the funding sources would dry up," Mr. Strickland said.

Leroy Ramsey, a history professor at Hofstra University in Hempstead, L. I., said Mr.



Associated Press

Whitney M. Young Jr., right, in Lagos on Tuesday. From left are Sir Mobolaji Bank-Antony and his wife and Mrs. P. Oluwole. Occasion was a party given by Sir Mobolaji.

Young had a personality and persuasiveness that made him able "to carry the organization — the organization did not carry Whitney Young."

Dr. Arthur C. Logan, a partner in the Upper Manhattan Medical Group and a long-time personal friend of Mr. Young, disagreed.

He said that Mr. Young's successor came both out of his own abilities and his building "into his organization a philosophical approach to building strengths in black areas that can be followed up on."

Among his achievements, Dr. Logan said, was "the building of a strong, committed board of directors with large numbers of competent black and white people—strong enough to recover from his loss, stagger but not collapse."

Editor Comments

The editor of The Black Scholar, Robert Chrisman, who was reached in Sausalito, Calif., felt that Mr. Young had succeeded in building an organization strong enough to function as "his own living monument."

The success of the league, however, Mr. Chrisman said, will be determined by the "amount of positive support it receives from Richard Nixon."

"The league's strategy is to achieve power through negotiations, however, Nixon is not negotiating in good faith with black people," Mr. Chrisman said.

He added that real power for blacks could not be gained through community improvement programs but rather through land redistribution, black ownership of land and control of industries and distributorships.

"None of the Presidential Administrations have been interested in building real economic power bases for black people," Mr. Chrisman said.

Leadership Question

Mrs. Barbara Wheeler, an instructor in "The Black Experience" at Columbia University, expressed concern that "black leadership has not been concerned enough with grooming other people to take over their jobs."

"Even in the most sophisti-

cated of the black groups we do not work out processes for the transfer of authority as we should," she said.

"It seems that every generation of blacks must start all over again from scratch — it seems we waste a whole generation by starting fresh every time a new person takes over."

Mrs. Wheeler contended that when black leaders did not share their responsibilities with lower-echelon associates, they hindered the growth of younger leaders and "burned out a lot of good, older people."

Roy Innis, the executive director of the Congress of Racial Equality, who was reached in Los Angeles, found common ground with Mr. Wilkins and Dr. Logan in the belief that civil-rights groups do indeed serve as training grounds for new leaders.

Says Leaders on Rise

"The fact that there is no widely publicized heir apparent to Whitney Young," Mr. Innis said, "might indicate that there is no secondary leadership being developed, but we can point to many persons in many groups who are developing."

"I would just bet that across the country, there are people in local leagues or outside just like Whitney was in Omaha or Atlanta."

Professor Ramsey insisted, however, that "no organization is enough of a training ground for black leadership as it should be." He said black youths want to "respond to their times" and that organizations were generally too bound by ideological commitments to interest young black activists.

Dr. Thomas saw a "tremen-

dous need for training of secondary leadership, otherwise we will always be in trouble." The psychologist said that many newly formed organizations of black professions were attempting to get away from charismatic leadership toward administrative leadership.

"It all points to a need for a consortium of talent," Dr. Thomas said.

Dangers Cited

Noting that many of the nationally known black political, government, religious as well as revolutionary public figures had come out of the ranks of the N.A.A.C.P., Mr. Wilkins spoke also of dangers inherent in incumbents training successors.

"In organizations like ours," he said, "where there are politics, politics, politics, any indication of the top man retiring would mean that in the interim your workers would spend so much time politicking for successors or particular types of policies that your organization would have little or no effect as a group."

And Mr. Chrisman advanced a reason for "the charismatic" quality of many black leaders. He said: "One reason is that they are speaking with more truth and more power to basic issues of America than any other groups or individuals. White leadership is so often packaged like a can of Right Guard that it has nothing to do with truth or humanism."

Harold R. Sims, the league's 35-year-old deputy executive director, was named acting executive director Thursday, pending a selection of a permanent head by the league's board. Mr. Sims came to the league 18 months ago.