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BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS DURING THE EISENHOWER YEARS

*David J. Garrow**

Professor Burk, in publishing a revision of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Wisconsin, says his book is “an account of the racial policies of the Eisenhower administration and an effort to explain why particular approaches were adopted by the executive branch in the 1950s and others were not.”¹ At that rather modest level, Burk’s volume is an adequate and workmanlike discussion of a half-dozen different policy subjects—desegregation of the armed services, racial issues in the federally-controlled District of Columbia, integration of the federal work force, equal employment rules for federal contractors, and discrimination in federally-assisted housing—plus a recounting of the Eisenhower administration’s major civil rights events: the *Brown* decisions, the Little Rock crisis, and the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960. However, it is not thoroughly researched, nor a notable improvement over previous scholarly surveys of civil rights developments of the 1950’s. Besides offering a critique of the Burk book, this essay will explore how some newly released documents shed light on the political relationship between black America and the Eisenhower administration, and particularly on some unusual financial arrangements involving the White House and Adam Clayton Powell.

I

Burk devotes only a modest effort to providing any analytical or thematic overviews of the Eisenhower administration’s civil rights policies. When he does voice such conclusions, however, they are well-supported and accurate. He correctly identifies “a consistent pattern of hesitancy and extreme political caution in defending black legal rights” by Eisenhower’s executive branch, and notes that “[m]uch of the blame for the administration’s excessive

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1. R. BURK, *THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION AND BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS*, at vi (1984).

caution lay squarely with the President himself.”² Burk gives two major reasons for that stance. Most important was Eisenhower’s own conservative racial attitude; as Burk points out, yet fails to emphasize fully enough, “Eisenhower publicly waffled on the basic issue of the morality of segregation.”³ Second, there was Eisenhower’s “strong aversion to the use of federal power as a coercive instrument” generally.⁴ In combination, Burk says, these two significant influences left Eisenhower and his administration “incapable of moving beyond symbolism to an open confrontation with racial inequalities.”⁵

The “symbolic” nature of the Eisenhower administration’s few racial initiatives is a point that Burk makes repeatedly, but with only a pro forma citation of some of the traditional works on “symbolic politics.” In that standard usage, a political actor employing “symbolic” conduct is seeking to convey the appearance of action, so as to reassure some constituency, rather than pursue any truly substantive policy. To say that the Eisenhower administration’s racial policies were largely symbolic in this sense would be fully consistent with the historical record that Burk recounts. Burk also seems, however, to have another and much more original idea of symbolism. In his concluding paragraph, Burk suggests for the first time the idea that the long-term effect of the Eisenhower administration’s passivity on civil rights was to strengthen Americans’ supposedly prevailing assumption that the pursuit of racial equality would be relatively painless. That implicit reassurance, Burk seems to say, was the worst possible preparation for America’s racial future. The 1960’s brought home to all the fact that racial change would be far more problematic and painful than most Eisenhower administration policymakers supposedly assumed in the mid-1950’s.⁶

Burk would have been well-advised to devote far more attention to fleshing out the idea that the Eisenhower administration did a very serious disservice to the subsequent course of American race

2. *Id.* at 263.

3. *Id.* at 193.

4. *Id.* at 16.

5. *Id.* at 127.

6. *Id.* at 266. Burk seems to believe, as he indicates several times, that Eisenhower and those around him believed in “the idea of an affluent, color-blind, democratic society” and assumed that it could be achieved without federal intervention. *Id.* at 127. Burk is on firmer ground, however, when he describes how Eisenhower and several top aides and close friends vocally opposed some forms of racial equality and harbored clearly racist thoughts. Although Burk is likely off-target in attributing any clearly thought-out egalitarian or even “color blind” ideals to either Eisenhower or most of his top aides, that point is neither necessary nor essential to his nascent argument about the longer-term effects of the administration’s racial stance.

relations. From events large and small—particularly the administration's very grudging role in *Brown I* and its hesitant, tardy intervention in Little Rock—one could build a powerful argument that the administration's conduct gave important indirect assistance to the segregationist backlash that emerged as so powerful a political force across the South between 1955 and 1959. This point has often been made about President Eisenhower's equivocal remarks about *Brown*, but Burk could well have applied the point far more broadly. Similarly, he also could have expanded considerably, and interwoven with that theme, his description of the administration's indecisive support of what appeared to be the most politically uncontroversial civil rights initiatives, defense of the right to vote. As Burk notes, administration advocacy of voting rights statutes and support for a relatively powerless Commission on Civil Rights allowed Eisenhower to convey the appearance of taking meaningful civil rights initiatives while his administration's actual priority was to avoid civil rights involvement as much as possible and keep racial matters on the back burner for the indefinite future. Essentially the same strategy was pursued by the Kennedy administration until events in the late spring of 1963 forced it to change course.

Burk unfortunately does not consider such broader themes. He ends his brief, concluding description of the largely "symbolic" nature of Eisenhower administration policies by suggesting that they postponed and misled America about the inevitably traumatic racial changes that lay ahead, and in so doing helped produce a "bitter harvest of hypocritical national self-deception."⁷ He treats this point so tersely, however, that even the careful reader has to work hard to extract Burk's likely meaning.

Burk is to be commended for adopting a clearly and deservedly critical attitude towards Eisenhower's racial policies, especially at a time when most recent scholarship on the Eisenhower administration is turning strongly commendatory and even some apologies for its civil rights conduct are being authored.⁸ Another important theme, which Burk alludes to only in passing, would be a direct treatment of how that executive branch abdication of racial responsibility contributed so heavily to passing the initiative to the judiciary, particularly the Fifth Circuit.

If Burk does an adequate though unprovocative job of docu-

7. *Id.* at 266.

8. See F. GREENSTEIN, *THE HIDDEN HAND PRESIDENCY* (1982); M. Mayer, *Eisenhower's Conditional Crusade: The Eisenhower Administration and Civil Rights, 1953-1957* (1984) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University). See also Mayer, *With Much Deliberation and Some Speed: Eisenhower and the Brown Decision*, 52 *J.S. HIST.*, Feb. 1986, at 43-76.

menting executive branch civil rights actions under Eisenhower, he does not even begin to describe the administration's dealings with black political and civil rights activists. He seems relatively unfamiliar with the original sources that could have given him a much richer understanding of the black political scene in the 1950's. A full understanding of administration policy cannot be achieved without a well-versed appreciation of the larger political context. In particular, Burk seems relatively unfamiliar with the importance of the major strategic concern that privately divided America's black leadership in the late 1950's, the question of whether civil rights proponents should continue to depend upon the lawyer-led litigation approach that had produced *Brown*, or whether mass boycotts and demonstrations could play an equal role in advancing black freedom. While the *Brown* triumph had pointed most strategically minded activists in the first direction, the remarkable success of the mass-based Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott of 1955-56 gave great heart to those activists, particularly long-time Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters President A. Philip Randolph, who believed that the black masses, acting for themselves, could do as much as the courtroom efforts of a lawyerly elite.

Burk's relative blindness to important political themes such as this stems largely from his failure to draw on the archival papers of the major black groups of that time. Nor did he consult the major black newspapers and periodicals—*Jet* magazine, the *New York Amsterdam News*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*—that are truly invaluable sources for understanding the black political world of the 1950's. Although his bibliographical essay makes passing reference to the value of both types of sources,⁹ the book reflects no actual use of them. Burk also did not interview any sources, nor did he apparently make much use of the Freedom of Information Act to obtain unreleased federal documents dealing with civil rights in the 1950's. Use of these sources would have helped produce a far richer and more original book.

Burk's research shortcomings contribute substantially to his less than adequate treatment of the major black political initiatives of the late 1950's. He devotes hardly a paragraph to the important 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom,¹⁰ organized originally to put pressure on Eisenhower to speak out against southern segregationist attacks upon black activists; gives only a few sentences to the sole meeting, in June 1958, that the black leadership had with the Presi-

9. R. BURK, *supra* note 1, at 270.

10. *Id.* at 220; Martin Luther King, Jr., et al. to Dwight D. Eisenhower (Feb. 14, 1957, GF 124-A-1, Box 912, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS) [hereinafter DDEL].

dent; and hardly mentions two significant but often-ignored national demonstrations in the nation's capital, the 1958 and 1959 Youth Marches for Integrated Schools.¹¹ These inadequacies not only lead to a seriously deficient portrayal of the political pressure that black leaders were attempting to place on the administration, but also lead Burk to understate the concern that often existed within the Eisenhower White House about the danger of public political embarrassment to the President by the black leadership, and the strategies for minimizing that danger adopted by Eisenhower's aides.

By early 1957 a number of significant black leaders, including A. Philip Randolph, NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins, New York Democratic Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., President of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which had sustained the famous boycott of that city's municipal buses, all were becoming concerned about the administration's attitude toward the black leadership. Despite four years in office and a landslide 1956 reelection victory that had included substantial black support,¹² President Eisenhower had yet to meet with any significant group of America's black leaders. That failure, coupled with a strong upsurge in white terrorist violence in Alabama in late 1956 and early 1957, led King and several dozen other Southern activists, who were just beginning to form the organization that soon was named the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to use their first organizing session to formulate three requests to the administration: that Eisenhower advocate peaceful compliance with *Brown*, that Vice President Richard M. Nixon come south to look into violence against blacks, and that Attorney General Herbert Brownell meet with black activists to discuss federal protection for civil rights activists. White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams brushed aside the first two requests, and Brownell declined the third. Those rebuffs led King and his colleagues to repeat the demands a month later, and to announce that they would lead "a pilgrimage of prayer to Washington" if the administration continued to refuse their requests.¹³

The Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom, as the demonstration came to be called, was scheduled for May 17, 1957, the third anniversary of *Brown I*. It drew the active support of Randolph, Wilkins, King's southern network, and a variety of black churchmen.

11. R. BURK, *supra* note 1, at 83, 238.

12. *Id.* at 170.

13. King to Eisenhower (Jan. 11, 1957), Sherman Adams to King (Jan. 18, 1957), and King et al. to Eisenhower (Feb. 14, 1957, GF-124-A-1, Box 912, DDEL).

The protest was the most significant political initiative undertaken by national black leaders since Randolph's 1941 threat of a march on Washington had led President Roosevelt to issue an Executive order banning racial discrimination by federal military contractors. The 1957 Pilgrimage was a direct outgrowth of the black leadership's dismay that the Eisenhower administration had little interest in either the growing turmoil in the South or the thoughts of black leaders.

The announcement of the Pilgrimage, and particularly the possibility that it would become an anti-Eisenhower demonstration, created considerable concern within the White House. Burk's relative inattention to the network of contacts that did exist between the Eisenhower White House and certain black leaders leads him to underplay the administration's sagacious and sophisticated response to the challenge that the Pilgrimage represented.

Burk does provide an excellent sketch of the valuable but often awkward role played by the Eisenhower White House's single black professional staff member, E. Frederic Morrow. Openly snubbed by some White House colleagues, Morrow had to cope with numerous black entreaties while often encountering substantial difficulties in getting his opinions taken seriously by higher-ranking staffers. Burk's sensitive portrait of Morrow is one of the strongest sections of his book.¹⁴ Disappointingly, he does not show similar interest in other important black figures such as Republican National Committee staffer Val Washington and Archibald J. Carey, an early appointee to the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy. More importantly, Burk also gives insufficient attention to the very important role played by Maxwell M. Rabb, the racially liberal White House aide who, rather than Morrow, had primary responsibility for administration liaison with black organizations.

II

Perhaps the major reason for Burk's inadequate treatment is his general overreliance on secondary sources and insufficient mining of the rich original sources available at the Eisenhower Library. While Burk at times has made adequate usage of those materials, in many instances he has not; his second chapter, for instance, on the desegregation of the armed services, contains not one citation to unpublished sources.

This deficient utilization of the available original sources results in some substantial holes, none larger than Burk's failure to

14. R. BURK, *supra* note 1, at 77-88.

explore the fascinating relationship between the Eisenhower White House, particularly Max Rabb, and New York Democratic Representative Adam Clayton Powell. Burk notes almost casually, in his sole paragraph on the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom, that Powell had served as a White House "mole" within the black leadership during the time that the Pilgrimage was being organized.¹⁵ Rather amazingly, Burk cites no original sources for this point; his only reference is an excellent book by Herbert Parmet which turns out to contain a considerably more extensive account of the Powell-Eisenhower White House relationship.¹⁶ Surprisingly, Burk did not pursue this lead to see whether there were more revealing original sources unavailable to Parmet. If he had, Burk would have discovered that there are such items, and that the further leads they provide are most intriguing indeed.

Early in the Eisenhower administration, Powell had been a vocal public critic of the executive branch's lackluster efforts to eliminate racial discrimination in the armed services and in public schools housed on military bases. Rabb had taken the lead in assuaging Powell's anger and, thanks to his adept handling of the Congressman, Powell soon was publicly praising the administration's swift response to his complaints.¹⁷

Building on that success, Rabb proceeded to ingratiate himself with Powell in a fashion that repeatedly proved invaluable to the Eisenhower White House. Rabb, whom Morrow later characterized as "a very suave, smooth, able man" who "can really butter people up,"¹⁸ skillfully commended Powell's various recommendations and suggestions in a warm series of personal letters that featured "Dear Adam" and "My dear Max" salutations.¹⁹ Rabb proudly sent news clippings reporting Powell's public pro-Eisenhower comments to White House chief of staff Sherman Adams, noting how "a little friendly treatment" had paid off.²⁰ By the fall of 1956, with Eisenhower's reelection prospects looking quite rosy, the Harlem Democrat publicly endorsed the Republican President's

15. *Id.* at 220.

16. H. PARMET, *EISENHOWER AND THE AMERICAN CRUSADES* 505-08 (1972).

17. Powell to Eisenhower (June 3, 1953), Eisenhower to Powell (June 6, 1953), and Powell to Eisenhower (June 10, 1953, OF 142-A-4, Box 731, DDEL); R. BURK, *supra* note 1, at 29-31, 35-37, 39-40; M. Mayer, *supra* note 8, at 42, 47-49.

18. E. Frederic Morrow Interview with Thomas Soapes (Feb. 23, 1977, transcript p. 8, DDEL).

19. See Rabb to Powell (Sept. 18, 1953; Oct. 19, 1953; Sept. 2, 1954; and Dec. 9, 1954), Powell to Rabb (Dec. 10, 1954), Rabb to Powell (Feb. 3, 1955), Powell to Rabb (Feb. 4, 1955; Feb. 15, 1955; and Mar. 3, 1955), and Rabb to Powell (Mar. 17, 1955; June 2, 1955; June 21, 1955; and Oct. 17, 1955) (Powell Alpha File, Box 2485, DDEL).

20. Rabb to Adams (no date, attached to New York Herald Tribune clip, Oct. 12, 1953, Powell Alpha File, Box 2485, DDEL).

candidacy after a personal meeting at the White House.²¹

The Republican courtship of Powell left him vulnerable to sharp criticism from civil rights proponents troubled by his enthusiasm for a President who was unwilling even to endorse the correctness of *Brown*. But Powell was at least as much a self-promoter as a committed advocate for black freedom. Morrow accurately termed Powell "a flamboyant opportunist" in a confidential memo to Sherman Adams;²² other staffers, particularly Rabb, appreciated how friendly relations with Powell could be used to the administration's advantage when prominent black assistance was needed to deflect civil rights criticism. The Prayer Pilgrimage represented just such a situation where that carefully cultivated relationship could be usefully employed.

Newly released documents also reveal some sub rosa financial relationships between Powell and the administration, stemming from the 1956 election campaign. In September 1957, more than ten months after the election, Powell asked Eisenhower's top White House staffers to provide at least several thousand dollars worth of funds to a number of Powell's political associates, funds that Powell asserted were needed to reimburse election expenses incurred on his behalf. "The leadership of the Republican party," Powell told White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams in a September 27 letter, previously had promised to make good these sums, and Powell was now demanding immediate payment. When Powell's letter was forwarded to high-ranking presidential aides Bryce Harlow and Gerald Morgan, Harlow in puzzlement returned it to Adams. "Since, obviously, this letter concerns clandestine arrangements with which Mr. Morgan and I are unfamiliar," Harlow told Adams, "we are [at] a loss as to (1) what reply to make and (2) who should pay up."²³

Powell's particular demands ranged from the mundane to the most intriguing. He wanted \$900 for two of his secretaries to whom he owed overtime, \$200 for a researcher he had retained, and \$600 in personal reimbursement for funds he had advanced to another political aide. One other loose end concerned contacts Powell had made with black reporters. "Each one of the Negro newsmen in New York was promised one hundred dollars (\$100)," Powell told Adams. "Each one received the money with the exception of James Booker of the New York Amsterdam News. In order to keep from

21. R. BURK, *supra* note 1, at 168-69.

22. Morrow to Adams (Feb. 27, 1956, OF 142-A, Box 731, DDEL).

23. Powell to Adams (Sept. 27, 1957), and Harlow & Morgan to Adams (Oct. 1, 1957) (Powell Alpha File, Box 2486, DDEL).

losing his friendship . . . I paid that money to him by check. This money should immediately be paid to me."²⁴

Impatient to obtain the funds, Powell wrote Adams a second letter, adding a more specific request that \$495 immediately be sent to one particular individual whom Powell had discussed in a more general way in his first letter. Within a week's time, White House and Republican National Committee staffers arranged to satisfy Powell's demands. Adams's secretary informed him that "checks to all the people involved with Adam Clayton Powell will go forward on November 15—these include those named in the second letter as well."²⁵ Apparently that resolved the matter to the full satisfaction of everyone concerned.

Given the existence of such intimate ties, it should come as no surprise that Powell worked closely with the Eisenhower White House, and Rabb in particular, when the threat of the Prayer Pilgrimage first loomed in the early spring of 1957. Powell informed his friend Rabb in advance about a major planning meeting that would take place on April 5, and volunteered to try and torpedo the entire Pilgrimage. "Powell is very much opposed to such a march and will do what he can to stop it," Rabb informed Chief of Staff Adams.²⁶ Powell recommended that Rabb also consult with NAACP Washington representative Clarence Mitchell. The next day, forty-eight hours in advance of the session, Rabb gave Adams an update on the situation.

Congressman Powell will attend the meeting and will report to me what takes place. He is still a little fearful that, despite Clarence Mitchell's representations, Martin Luther King may still try to make a march on Washington. Powell and Mitchell will do their best to try to keep the meeting under control.²⁷

In the wake of the meeting, Powell informed Rabb, who apparently took Powell's remarks at face value, that he, Mitchell and a third like-minded attendee at the April 5 planning session had been able to transform the Pilgrimage from an anti-Eisenhower demonstration into a purely celebratory event. Powell and his allies, Rabb told Adams, "successfully changed the entire character of this meeting into an occasion where there will be an observance of the anniversary of the school decision through prayer," and no criticisms of the administration. The fact that neither King nor any other major proponent of the Prayer Pilgrimage had pushed for any

24. Powell to Adams (Sept. 27, 1957); "Memorandum" (Oct. 16, 1957) (Powell Alpha File, Box 2486, DDEL).

25. Powell to Adams (Oct. 16, 1957), "Mary" [Burns] to "Governor" [Adams] (Oct. 24, 1957) (Powell Alpha File, Box 2486, DDEL).

26. Rabb to Adams (Apr. 2, 1957) (GF 124-A-1, Box 912, DDEL).

27. Rabb to Adams (Apr. 3, 1957) (OF 142-A, Box 731, DDEL).

anti-Eisenhower themes was unknown to Rabb, who instead accepted Powell's exaggerated claim. Rabb assured Adams that, thanks to Powell, "this matter is well in hand," but promised to keep a close eye on matters up through the May 17 event. "[W]e must keep constant vigil," Rabb said. "There is always the possibility that a prayer pilgrimage cannot be kept under control, and I am in constant communication with the leaders to ensure keeping it in hand."²⁸

Two days before the Pilgrimage, NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins phoned Rabb "to assure [him] that there would be no demonstration against the Administration."²⁹ On May 17, Pilgrimage organizers were disappointed when the crowd that gathered amounted to only a third of the 50,000 to 75,000 turnout they optimistically had predicted. Speaking from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the march leaders focused their remarks on the need for further federal action to advance black civil rights, rather than on merely celebrating the third anniversary of *Brown*. In the first truly national speech of his young career, Martin Luther King, Jr., emphasized the importance of voting rights in the South, and called for federal government action to "[g]ive us the ballot." King's oration notwithstanding, press coverage of the Pilgrimage turned out to be disappointingly modest.³⁰

Although the Eisenhower White House was pleased with the Pilgrimage's moderate tone and modest public visibility, the black leadership remained angry at the President's refusal to meet with them. Vice President Nixon, after a personal conversation with King during the early March independence ceremonies for the new nation of Ghana, had promised to receive King in Washington. In a letter to Eisenhower's appointments secretary at the time of the Pilgrimage, King emphasized that that commitment "can in no way substitute for the necessity of my talking directly with the head of our great government." A meeting with the President, King stressed, "would at least give persons of good will in general and Negro Americans in particular a feeling that the White House is listening to the problems which we confront."³¹

Eisenhower aides were willing only to inform King that the

28. Rabb to Adams (Apr. 17, 1957) (GF 124-A-1, Box 912, DDEL).

29. Rabb to Mr. [Jack] Toner (May 16, 1957) (GF 124-A-1, Box 912, DDEL).

30. *Negroes Hold Rally on Rights in Capital*, New York Times, May 18, 1957, at 1, col. 8; *Prayer Pilgrimage to Washington*, 12 EBONY, Aug. 1957, at 16-22; H. PARMET, *supra* note 16, at 508.

31. L. REDDICK, *CRUSADER WITHOUT VIOLENCE 180-84* (1959); *CHRISTIAN CENTURY*, Apr. 10, 1957, at 446-48; letter from King to Bernard Shanley (May 16, 1957) (King Papers, Special Collections Dept., Mugar Library, Boston Univ., Boston, MA, Drawer IX) [hereinafter MLK].

President would at some future time see him and other black leaders. Despite repeated urgings from Max Rabb and especially Fred Morrow that such an audience not be greatly delayed, other White House staffers postponed any firm decision. A concerned Morrow bravely voiced a frank description of the situation to White House Chief of Staff Adams. "I can state categorically that the rank and file of Negroes in the country feel that the President has deserted them."³² King and A. Philip Randolph each informed the White House of their willingness to be patient in waiting for a firm date to be chosen. The question dragged on through both the summer and fall without any resolution, despite a message from Vice President Nixon, following his own meeting with King, that the Montgomery minister was a most impressive man whom he believed the President would enjoy meeting.³³

In late January of 1958, more than a year after King had first requested that the President signal his support for civil rights, King turned to Adam Clayton Powell for help. In a telegram to Eisenhower, Powell indicated that the President's evasiveness over meeting with the black leadership was beginning to make even him critical about the administration's indifferent attitude toward civil rights.³⁴ Even that was insufficient to generate any immediate progress, and not until May, when King publicly released a telegram to the President expressing "shock and dismay" over a recent Eisenhower comment that the enforcement of the law should not be allowed to create hardship, did the White House staff move into action. Presidential aide Rocco Siciliano, who had taken over the now-departed Max Rabb's minority liaison responsibilities, phoned King to promise that a meeting with Eisenhower would be speedily arranged. Following a preparatory conference on June 9 with Siciliano, Morrow, and Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Walsh, where King insisted that a broader black group than simply himself and Randolph would have to be invited, a June 23 presidential audience was scheduled for those two men plus Wilkins and National Urban League chief Lester B. Granger. Finally, after more than five years in the White House, Dwight D. Eisenhower personally met with a representative group of black American leaders.³⁵

32. Rabb to Files (May 23, 1957) and Rabb to Shanley (May 23, 1957) (GF 124-A-1, Box 912); Morrow to Adams (June 4, 1957) (OF 142-A, Box 731, DDEL).

33. Rabb to Adams (June 5, 1957) (OF 142-A, Box 731), Rabb "Memorandum" (June 20, 1957) (GF 124-A-1, Box 912), Rabb to Adams (June 24, 1957) (OF 142-A, Box 731), "Memorandum" (June 25, 1957) (GF 124-A-1, Box 912, DDEL); Rabb to Morrow (July 13, 1957) (E. Frederic Morrow Papers, Box 10, DDEL); Morrow to Adams (Sept. 12, 1957) and Rabb to Adams (Sept. 27, 1957) (OF 142-A, Box 731, DDEL).

34. Powell to Eisenhower (Jan. 28, 1958) (Powell Alpha File, Box 2486, DDEL).

35. King to Eisenhower and "Statement" (May 29, 1958) (MLK Drawer VI); Siciliano,

Professor Burk is badly remiss in not giving far more extensive attention to both Representative Powell's relationship with the Eisenhower White House and the administration's indecisive dealings with the national black leadership. Even that presidential meeting itself did little to improve those badly frayed relations. When the four black leaders forthrightly voiced both black Americans' unhappiness at the administration's racial record plus specific calls for further action, including a White House conference on southern desegregation, Eisenhower brushed them off. "I don't propose to comment on these recommendations. I know you do not expect me to. But I will be glad to consider them. There may be some value to your idea of a conference. But I don't think anything much would really come of one."³⁶ Given that sort of presidential response, King and his colleagues were unsurprised when the White House staff over the ensuing several months turned a deaf ear toward Randolph's repeated requests for administration sponsorship of such a conference.³⁷

Here again Burk errs badly in not giving greater attention to that presidential audience and its aftermath. He also all but ignores the double-barrelled response King and Randolph organized, namely the two Youth Marches for Integrated Schools, which took place in Washington on October 25, 1958 and April 18, 1959. More emphasis on these significant events, which drew crowds of 10,000 and 26,000, would again have drawn attention to the continuing unhappiness of black America towards the Eisenhower administration.³⁸ It also would have provided at least some indication of the ongoing mixture of disinterest and disdain with which the White House greeted these initiatives. When delegates from the first

"Memorandum for the Files" (June 9, 1958), Blanche Lavery, "Memorandum for the Files" (June 13, 1958), and Siciliano to James Hagerty (June 16, 1958) (Papers of the Office of the Special Assistant for Personnel Management [hereinafter OSAPM], Box 42, DDEL).

36. E. MORROW, *BLACK MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE* 226-27 (1963); R. WILKINS, *STANDING FAST* 256 (1982); Lester Granger to National Urban League Board, "June 23rd Conference . . ."; King et al., "A Statement to President Eisenhower" (June 23, 1958), and Siciliano to Files, "Meeting of Negro Leaders with President . . ." (June 24, 1958) (OSAPM, Box 42, DDEL).

37. Lester Granger to Randolph (July 7, 1958) (Roy Wilkins Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 4); Randolph to King (July 9, 1958) (MLK Drawer IV); King to Randolph (July 18, 1958) (A. Philip Randolph Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) [hereinafter APR]; Randolph to Eisenhower (Aug. 1, 1958) (OSAPM, Box 42, DDEL); Randolph to King (Aug. 19, 1958) (APR); Siciliano to Randolph (Sept. 4, 1958) (OSAPM, Box 42, DDEL).

38. Pittsburgh Courier, Apr. 25, 1959, at 3; *Integration Rally Here Assured Ike Seeks End of Racial Bias*, Washington Post, Apr. 19, 1959, at B3, col. 3; Pittsburgh Courier, Nov. 1, 1958, at 2-3 and Nov. 8, 1958, at 3; *Harry Belafonte, Jack Robinson Lead Integrated Schools March*, Washington Post, Oct. 26, 1958, at A17, col. 1; Pittsburgh Courier, Sept. 13, 1958, at 2, and Sept. 27, 1958, at 4.

Youth March arrived at the White House gate to present copies of petitions calling for greater administration support for southern school desegregation, no official appeared to receive them. When, well in advance of the second march, A. Philip Randolph repeatedly requested that several students from it be allowed to call on the President, the White House responded by eventually providing only an audience with presidential counsel Gerald D. Morgan.³⁹

All in all, Burk's inadequate attention to these important events and the larger story of the political interactions between America's principal black leaders and the Eisenhower White House underlines once again the narrowness of his book and the incompleteness of his research. Although his volume will be a useful resource for anyone seeking an adequate narrative account of federal civil rights policy initiatives during the 1950's, it reflects insufficient interest in black America's political climate during those years and incomplete study of the original source materials. A fully researched, politically informative, and analytically insightful study of the interactions between black America and the Eisenhower administration remains to be written.

39. J. Edgar Hoover to Gordon Gray (Oct. 27, 1958) (Papers of the Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, FBI Series, Box 2), Siciliano to Randolph (Oct. 29, 1958), Randolph to Siciliano (Nov. 19, 1958) (OSAPM, Box 42), Randolph to Eisenhower (Feb. 17, 1959), and Morrow to James Hagerty (Apr. 10, 1959) (OF 142-A-5, Box 732, DDEL).