

## Distinctions of Civil Disobedience

With further reference to Wolfe's editorial on civil disobedience (5 July, p. 9), and the response from readers (Letters, 13 Sept.), I would like to make the following points:

1) We need to make a clear distinction between acts that are misdemeanors, and which do not harm people or property, and more serious acts. To equate a demonstration with a political assassination is ridiculous.

2) One common form of civil disobedience with which we all have had experience is disobedience of traffic laws. Most of us break such laws once in a while, and we expect to pay the penalty if we get caught. But when our disobedience injures others or damages their property (say, driving away from the scene of an accident), then society is correct in taking a more serious view of our offense.

3) Some of those who scream loudest for law and order are not above fixing a traffic ticket, cheating on their income tax, or justifying the maiming of women and children in Vietnam. Perhaps it is this dual standard that stirs the younger members of our society to protest.

My own reaction to Wolfe's editorial was to obtain a copy of Justice Fortas' monograph and read it. I found it to be a remarkably well-reasoned, conservative statement. What's all the fuss? Could it be that Rhine, Bagnall, and Strickland haven't bothered to read Justice Fortas?

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## Black Power Trends

Hyman Rodman ("Family and social pathology in the ghetto," 23 Aug., p. 756) stresses that the increased participation of the ghetto poor in the civil rights movement has changed the character of the movement because the black poor have reacted to the meager results their efforts have achieved. He predicts that failures to meet expectations of the ghetto poor will lead to their employing further violence as a means of protest. This may be true. But the more fundamental changes in the nature of the civil rights movement are the trends toward separatism, insulated black communities, and similar variations of the black power theme.

These trends are more directly related to the increased participation by poor, ghetto blacks than is their move away from nonviolent protest. The decreased reliance on the nonviolent strategy is a result of a complex interaction of factors, such as its lack of effectiveness, changes in civil rights goals, and the makeup of participants in the movement. The black middle class, in contrast to the black poor, has already participated with some success in racially-integrated settings. But why should integration be a major goal of the black poor since they are easily able to assess their relative success in the larger community and in their black ghetto?

If the black poor are disproportionately entering the more violence-oriented civil rights movements, it is not primarily because the ghetto experience has made violence more acceptable as a means of solving problems (which Rodman does not claim). Rather, it is that these violence-oriented movements are also the movements which are likely to be exclusively black.

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## Formyl Methionine tRNA and Valine tRNA Available

As a result of a continuing program in biomacromolecular separations technology (Letters, 21 July 1967), 1 gram of approximately 100-percent pure formyl methionine transfer ribonucleic acid (tRNA<sup>f-met</sup>) and of 89-percent pure valine transfer ribonucleic acid (tRNA<sup>val</sup>) from *Escherichia coli* B are available for distribution free to qualified investigators. In binding studies with triplet codons the tRNA<sup>f-met</sup> preparation responds best to AUG, less well to GUG and UUG, and poorly to CUG. These materials, prepared at the biology and chemical technology divisions of the Oak Ridge National Laboratories, are a result of a collaborative program between the NIH and the AEC, supported by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, on the research and the development of methods and technology for the large-scale separation of biologically important macromolecules.

Requests, in letter form, for portions of this material should include the specific amounts needed, a technical exposition of the intended research use, and

sufficient material on the background and qualifications of the applicant to assess his capacity to carry out the proposed research. These requests should be sent to Associate Chief, Research Grants Branch, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland.

The requests will be considered by a consultant scientific review group, and awards of material will be made on the basis of the merit of the proposal.

Those to whom material is sent will be expected to make available the information obtained through its use, either by publication in the scientific literature or by communication to the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

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## Contradictions in LSD Research

It is important to record divergent points of view in an area as filled with controversy and dire social implications as the genetic hazards of LSD. The report by Skakkebaek, Philip, and Rafaelson (1) leaves the impression that it has been scientifically established that LSD causes chromosomal damage in man, damage conducive to neoplasia and teratogenesis. Yet, there have been a number of publications that report failure to reproduce the results cited by Skakkebaek and collaborators (2), or question the predicted consequences for LSD users and their progeny (3), or demonstrate the production of similar chromosome damage by commonly used agents such as caffeine, aspirin, and ergonovine maleate (4). With such contradictory results in regard to chromosomal damage, the problem remains one on which "a great deal more work must be done before any conclusions are warranted" (5).

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## References

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2. W. D. Loughman, T. W. Sargent, D. M. Israelstam, *ibid.* **158**, 508 (1967); J. Warkany and E. Takacs, *ibid.* **159**, 731 (1968); L. Bender and D. V. Siva Sankar, *ibid.*, p. 749.
3. W. M. Court Brown, *Lancet* **1967-II**, 1154 (1967).
4. W. Ostertag, *Mutat. Res.* **3**, 249 (1966); L. F. Jarvik and T. Kato, *Lancet* **1968-I**, 250 (1968).
5. W. A. Meyers, *Science* **160**, 1062 (1968).