

# Robert Kennedy Consults Negroes Here About North

*James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry and Lena Horne Are Among Those Who Warn Him of 'Explosive Situation'*

By LAYMOND ROBINSON

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy held a secret meeting here yesterday with a group of prominent Negroes to obtain their views on methods of combating segregation and discrimination in the North.

The meeting was held at an undisclosed location in Manhattan. The group reportedly told him that an "explosive situation" had developed in race relations in the North that, potentially, was at least equal to the growing racial strife in the South.

About a dozen Negroes participated in the talk with the President's brother. The group did not include any leaders of civil rights organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. However, it did include several well-known writers and other professional persons who have served as unofficial spokesmen for their race.

Among those attending were James Baldwin, the novelist and essayist; Lena Horne, the entertainer, and Lorraine Hansberry, the playwright.

## Administration Concerned

Several white people also attended the meeting. One of them was June Shagaloff, N.A.A.C.P. official on school integration matters. However, it was understood she attended in an unofficial capacity at Mr. Baldwin's invitation.

The meeting was said to have been initiated by Mr. Baldwin. Mr. Kennedy's attendance was seen as evidence of the Administration's growing concern over criticism voiced by Negroes across the country on its handling of the civil rights issue.

Mr. Baldwin has been sharply critical of President Kennedy for not moving more forcefully in civil rights crises in the South. He has charged that the President has "not used the great prestige of his office as the moral forum it can be."

## Fresh Ideas a Goal

Mr. Baldwin is reported to have pressed the Attorney General to use his influence to get the President to make a series of talks to the nation on the civil rights issue.

The novelist had discussed the necessity of such a meeting when he breakfasted Thursday morning with the Attorney General and Burke Marshall, chief of the civil rights division of the Justice Department, at Mr. Kennedy's home in McLean, Va.

Mr. Kennedy, it was said, attended yesterday's talks because he thought the group might present him with some fresh ideas on means of coping with civil rights problems, particularly in dealing with school segregation in the North.

Many observers of race relations in the North have said that the issue of de facto school segregation has reached a point of crisis. Negroes from New York to California have been

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# Robert Kennedy Sees Negroes About Racial Situation in North



Friedman-Abeles

Lena Horne



Friedman-Abeles

Lorraine Hansberry

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picketing and boycotting schools that they charge are in fact, although not by law, racially segregated.

The Administration is understood to be trying to work out a blueprint for dealing with these and other racial problems.

Mr. Baldwin, Miss Hansberry and several other participants in yesterday's discussion with Mr. Kennedy are sometimes referred to as "angry young Negroes."

They are generally of the view that the masses of Negroes and whites in this country are headed toward a serious, and probably violent, collision unless segregation and discrimination are quickly eliminated.

Mr. Baldwin is author of a best-selling book on this theme entitled "The Fire Next Time." Miss Hansberry is the author of the play "A Raisin in the Sun," which deals with the efforts of a Negro family to escape life in the slums.

Mr. Marshall was reported to have attended the meeting between Mr. Kennedy and the Negro group.

Earlier in the day the Attorney General met with several representatives of major hotel chains for lunch at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. It was reported that the question of integration with regard to employes and guests was discussed.

## Negro Voter Drive Set

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 24 — The Democratic National Committee is planning a nationwide drive to get Negro voters registered, particularly in the urban industrial centers.

The aim is to strengthen the party's chances in the 1964 elections by convincing Negroes that the use of the ballot is their most effective weapon in the civil rights struggle.

Officially, the planned registration drive is described as part of an intensive effort to get all eligible citizens, Negro and white, to register in time for the elections. However, the committee has been largely motivated by Negro critics of the Kennedy Administration who have charged it with moving too slowly and too cautiously on the desegregation issue.

The committee appears confident that a majority of the Negro voters will continue to follow the party at the polls, but what it desires is a maximum turnout of Negro voters.



Mottke Weissman

James Baldwin

Louis Martin, deputy chairman of the committee, who is a Negro, said today that a majority of Negro voters would remain faithful to the party because the Republicans have not offered forward-looking leadership on the racial question.

Mr. Martin, who is in charge of the committee's activities among Negro voters, said that he has already been in touch with many Negro leaders and clergymen to enlist their cooperation in the drive. The clergymen, he said, are expected to play an important role because of their influence among Negroes.

Mr. Martin estimated there were 10,000,000 Negroes of voting age in the United States. Only 3,500,000 of the 5,000,000 Negroes of voting age in the Northern states are registered, he said. Of the 5,000,000 adult Negroes in the South and Southwest, he said, only 1,500,000 are registered.

Mr. Martin said he would consider it an achievement if the number of registered Negro voters could be increased by 1,000,000 in the next 12 months. But the task, he continued, presents many difficulties because it involves a systematic door-to-door campaign to convince Negroes to enroll.

Mr. Martin said it was also the Administration's hopes to increase the number of Negro and white registrations for both parties because greater participation would contribute to the democratic process.