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"WHERE DOES THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT GO NOW?"

A debate

with

Mr. James A. Farmer, former executive director of CORE

and

Mr. William F. Buckley, Jr., Editor, National Review

on

FIRING LINE WITH WILLIAM BUCKLEY

WOR-TV

Channel 9

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(MUSIC UP, UNDER)

ANNOUNCER: "Firing Line, with William F. Buckley Junior. Tonight's guest, James Farmer. Our subject, 'Where does the Civil Rights Movement Go Now?'"

(MUSIC OUT)

BUCKLEY: "Mr. James Farmer is probably the second-best known Negro leader in the United States, after Martin Luther King. Mr. Farmer, for all intents and purposes, founded CORE, the Congress for Racial Equality, which he left a few weeks ago to head a community action project sponsored by private and public agencies, designed to harmonize with the poverty program. Mr. Farmer is generally classified as a militant whose public utterances and injunctions fall somewhere between those of the leaders of the relatively conservative National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, and the self-consciously radical Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee.

"Mr. Farmer is a man of extraordinary and varied talent, for instance, he has in his hand a degree in chemistry, which I hope will not enable him to reduce me at the end of the evening to a cloud of dust. Later on, he earned a Doctorate of Divinity from Howard University, but refused to be ordained on the grounds that the Methodist Church in those days practiced racial segregation. He chose the active life and pioneered the sin-in, years before that form of protest was institutionalized. Mr. Farmer believes in protesting at all seasons. He flatly refused President Kennedy's request in the summer of 1963, for instance, to call off the civil rights demonstrations, pending debate on the civil rights law, which was passed in the Spring of 1964.

"There are those -- myself for instance -- who think of Mr. Farmer as a man dissatisfied with American society beyond the dissatisfaction of the Negro who has suffered the material and psychological trials of segregation. He has seemed to me to want America to move in a direction inconsistent with American traditions. I've had the feeling -- and I want Mr. Farmer to talk on the subject tonight -- that if he weren't himself Negro, that if there weren't a Negro in all of America, or if you like, I have the feeling that if I were a Negro and all other Americans were also Negroes, that still he would want America to move in a new direction, that he aligns himself with certain Negro leaders whose dissatisfaction isn't exclusively with the plight of the American Negro, but with the plight of Americans in general. Mr. Farmer, you're most welcome; and I would appreciate your comments on this or any other subject you want to bring up."

FARMER: "Thank you very much, Mr. Buckley. First of all, President Kennedy did not ask us to call off demonstrations in the Summer of 1963. We had many demonstrations then, and probably the last, the largest demonstration of all, the mass march on Washington, occurred in that summer. Now I'm not a traditionalist. You speak of some of my positions flying in the face of American tradition. I'm not a traditionalist nor am I an iconoclast. I do not believe in traditions for traditions' sake. But if traditions are no longer useful in providing a better life for all the people, then I think those traditions should give way to new traditions."

"For example, slavery at one point was a tradition in the United States. Segregation has been a tradition for a long period of time. For many, many years lynching was a tradition. There were an average of two lynchings a week for a long period of time, up to the reconstruction period. I'm opposed to that kind of tradion. Now it is a tradition for Negroes to be hemmed, largely, into ghettos in the North, and increasingly, in the South. I'm opposed to that kind of a tradition.

"But when I oppose traditions, I try to create newtraditions. The new tradition is a tradition of brotherhood, a tradition of equity and equality. And as long as that tradition does its purpose, as long as it's useful, then that tradition should prevail. If the time should come when any of the new traditions that we create in the civil rights movement no longer are useful, then the next generations or subsequent generations will have to change those traditions and create new ones. I don't want America to move in any direction which will be damaging to all the citizens of the country.

"You ask what I would do if I were not a Negro or if there were no Negroes here, or if all of us were Negroes. The fact of the matter is, no Negro in the country can forget the fact that he is a Negro. Because it is pounded into his head. It's pounded into his consciousness, from the earliest moment of consciousness. I'm trying to help create a society in our land where that will not be the case."

ANNOUNCER: "We have some of the positions outlined. I think

we have an idea of what tonight's program will be like. We'll be back with Firing Line in just a moment."

* * *

BUCKLEY: "Mr. Farmer, when I said that President Kennedy called for a surcease in demonstrations, I didn't mean that he succeeded in effecting a surcease. So it is irrelevant to point out that the largest demonstration actually took place in the Summer of 1963. The New York Times quoted the President on June 30th, 1963 as saying these demonstrations have increasingly endangered lives and property and flamed notions and unnecessarily divided communities. This problem is now before the Congress -- unruly tactics or pressures will not help, and may hinder the effective consideration of these measures. So I think that President Kennedy was very clearly on the record as suggesting that under certain circumstances demonstrations generate not an enthusiastic desire for righteousness, but a kind of blind militancy in the context of which deliberation is difficult.

"But please let me agree with you that I also am in favor of outgrowing noxious traditions. But I'm talking about other traditions, the kind of traditions that are so frequently attacked, for instance, by James Baldwin, the traditions of free association, the traditions of the free enterprise system, a number of those traditions that, for instance, Bayard Rustin believes that the United States ought to outgrow, his belief being, as you know, that we need a completely radical departure from, quote, the traditional

way of life. Now he wasn't talking about lynching, he was talking about the free society, as some people understand. And I'd like you to answer that in your position, for instance, on the traditional right of individuals to send people to their local schools, irrespective of whether or not those schools in fact have a preponderance of white or a preponderance of colored people in them?"

FARMER: "Well, I think that integration of schools is in itself a very vital educational quality. I think that when we allow our children, white and black, to attend schools that are segregated, we are teaching them to study with, work with and play with kids that are pretty much like themselves. So I think, for the sake of the nation and the nation's future, it's important for us to have a reasonable mixture in as many of the schools as is humanly possible."

BUCKLEY: "I tend to agree with you. But what about people who disagree? What are we going to do about them? This is to say, if there were two adjacent schools, one of which had colored students, one of which didn't, and assuming that the academic standards of the two were equal, I would want my own son to go to the integrated school. My son does go to an integrated school."

FARMER: "Fine."

BUCKLEY: "But what about people who disagree, you see? As I understand it, here is an important distinction. You don't want to permit them to disagree. You are highly dissatisfied with Earl Warren's 1954 decision, and you have been quoted as saying, you hope, in the days to come, that the internal logic of that distin-

ction will be extended, in effect, to require integrated schools. Now I find this a very radical departure from American tradition, which I myself highly disapprove of."

FARMER: "Well you ask, Mr. Buckley, what would I do with those people who disagree. What would you do with those who wouldn't like to go to school with blondes or brunettes or redheads, or people with grey eyes or black eyes or tall people or short people?"

BUCKLEY: "I would, to the extent it's feasible, permit them to make decisions, even if I found them eccentric. I think that freedom, precisely, consists in my allowing you to do things which I can't rationally motivate. But I would also like the same respect from you."

FARMER: "I would grant the same respect."

BUCKLEY: "I don't think you would, at least, unless you renounce some of your previous positions."

FARMER: "No, on the contrary, I would grant the same rights that I'm asking for myself to even a segregationist in Alabama or Mississippi, if he feels strongly that he does not want his child to go to a school with Negroes, and it's a matter of conscience to him, then I would grant him the right which I have claimed, in the face of much criticism, of disobeying that law by pulling his children out of school and sending them to some private school, if he is willing to accept the consequences of his action."

BUCKLEY: "Ah now I see. I would be very much impressed by that statement if you would go so far as to say that you would also

permit him a rebate so that he would be permitted to send his child to a private school and have back the tax money which otherwise would go to the public school."

FARMER: "Oh, that would not be part of the bargain at all."

BUCKLEY: "Ah-ha, precisely."

FARMER: "It wouldn't be part of the bargain."

BUCKLEY: "In other words, you are saying that he's perfectly free to go to a private school, because the happy assumption is that he can't afford it."

FARMER: "He has a duty, He has a duty to pay taxes. I pay my taxes. Many of the things that are produced by the taxes that I pay I personally cannot enjoy. But I am not of a society. I am a part of a body politic. I am, in a sense, responsible for what happens to the lowliest Negro or white person in the rural area of Alabama. And I believe that I should be required to pay something for his well-being."

BUCKLEY: "Well Mr. Farmer, please don't suppose that this is so radical a suggestion. The contract is that everyone shall have an opportunity to go to school. It happens to be an American tradition that that school will be public. But, for instance, in Canada -- and I don't suppose that Canada is necessarily uncivilized -- they do allow these rebates."

FARMER: "Well now, Mr. Buckley..."

BUCKLEY: "My guess is that your aversion to it springs rather from your desire to punish people who disagree with you."

FARMER: "Quite to the contrary. You see, now, I will make a confession. My two little girls go to a private school."

BUCKLEY: "Why make a confession?"

FARMER: "It's a confession..."

BUCKLEY: "You're not going to get fired because of that, are you?"

FARMER: "Get fired? I'm not hired. We're waiting for funding. We owe."

BUCKLEY: "You're not going to get non-hired."

FARMER: "Mr. Buckley, let me finish my point."

BUCKLEY: "Sure."

FARMER: "I pay taxes."

BUCKLEY: "Uh-hum."

FARMER: "To support public schools. I don't object to paying those taxes. I would think of asking for a rebate. Because I believe that I should pay taxes to educate the underprivileged child in Harlem, or the Lower East Side."

BUCKLEY: "You apparently have a little economic surplus, and I'm glad you do. But let's talk about people who don't have economic surpluses, who can't afford to send their children to private schools, but who, all of a sudden, find that they must send their children to whatever school is certified by a bunch of politicians who are highly sensitive to civil rights pressures. I maintain that they aren't being given an exercise of their natural freedom. I believe, frankly, that you have no business deciding where Mrs. Jones should send her child to school, that if Mrs. Jones wants to send her child to the local school that is the natural thing for her to do, but I don't think that she should have to submit to a litmus test over which you preside."

FARMER: "I see. We were indicted previously on the test tube."

BUCKLEY (LAUGHING): "Yes, I had to get out of that field, indeed."

FARMER: (LAUGHS)

BUCKLEY: "I do, if I may say so, believe that it is a non-freedom for you to suggest that, after all, people can go to private schools; because the economic facts of life are that they can't."

FARMER: "Let me state my very strong feeling that freedom is not an absolute. There is a freedom to do things, and there is a freedom not to have things done to you. Now I think that when you insist upon the freedom of people to be treated as human beings...."

BUCKLEY: "Now wait a minute. Who got into that?"

FARMER: "May I finish my sentence? May I finish that?"

BUCKLEY: "Sure."

FARMER: "Then you are also restricting the person's freedom not to treat those people as human beings."

BUCKLEY: "Don't you think that's a truism? I don't mind your saying a truism."

FARMER: "I'm glad it's true."

BUCKLEY (LAUGHING): "I just mind your suggesting that this relevant to what I've been talking about."

FARMER: "Well, I certainly think it is relevant."

BUCKLEY: "I'm not suggesting that anybody has the right to keep a Negro child from getting an education or whatever, but I'm

suggesting that a person has a right to patronize his local school, and his patronage of that local school ought to proceed irrespective of grand sociological designs, dictated by yourself."

FARMER: "He does not have a right to keep my child from going to that school. If he objects to his child being in association with mine, then he has the right to withdraw his child from the school."

BUCKLEY: "No, I..."

FARMER: "You see, he's denying my right if he says I want my child to go to this school, but I don't want him to associate with your child, So I insist upon the greater right."

BUCKLEY: "Now wait a minute, Mr. Farmer. The neighborhood principle grows out of certain organic arrangements. Now suppose I decide that the best school in New York City is the Bronx High School of Sciences."

FARMER: "Fine."

BUCKLEY: "And I simply demand that my child be admitted into the Bronx High School of Sciences, without reference to any other standards of geography or attainment or whatever. I insist that this is an inordinant demand on society."

FARMER: "Many children do go to the Bronx High School of Science, who don't live in that vicinity whatever."

BUCKLEY: "Yes, on the basis of certain..."

FARMER: "That's not a neighborhood school."

BUCKLEY: "No, it is not a neighborhood school."

FARMER: "It's like the School of Music and Art."

BUCKLEY: "But it is a school to which people don't have automatic access. But those schools that are neighborhood schools are not conducted for the convenience of anybody who wants to send his child there."

FARMER: "I'm glad you mentioned the neighborhood schools. I consider this to be one of the traditions which has to be tested against its usefulness. Now in the rural areas of our country we've gotten rid of the neighborhood school concept. We've substituted for the one room country school house, the central school; and kids are then brought in, transported, to the central school, for the sake of shared services, shared resources, shared facilities, and higher quality education. Now I for one look toward the day when our cities will be inclined to do the same thing. At least two cities now are considering educational parks or plazas, which will be the urban counterpart of the central school. I do not believe that the neighborhood school concept is sacrosanct."

ANNOUNCER: "Our discussion tonight: Where does the Civil Rights Movement go now? Our guest, James Farmer, our host, William F. Buckley, Junior, We'll continue in just a moment."

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BUCKLEY: "Let's get off the subject, Mr. Farmer, but let me just finally say that I agree that neighborhood schools aren't necessarily sacrosanct. My only point is that the constituencies of that school ought to decide the moment when they cease to be

sacrosanct, and that the constituencies doesn't necessarily mean the last Plenary convention of CORE. It ought to be something for, I think, the neighborhood itself to decide, the moment at which it becomes appropriate to consolidate schools. But let me ask you, in that connection, since you have recently made, I think, an extremely interesting point, and not one incidentally to which I have any instant antagonism: you have taken the civil rights moment and said that it has to go a step further, that Negroes must receive preferential treatment. Now by preferential treatment, I understand you to mean that, as a result of the considerable privations of the Negroes during the past years, the society owes the Negro certain debts, and that, under the circumstances, those debts have got to be redeemed by very very special efforts, even if costly efforts, to give them these special rights. Tell me the kind of thing that you have in mind other than, of course, poverty programs and so on. Is it possible to prefer a Negro without dispreferring a white?"

FARMER: "That's a good question. I would like to take exception to one point that you made in your opening statement here on this point, and that is that I think society owes the Negro a debt. I do not ask for preferential treatment because of the debt that has to be paid for past abuses. All that I say is that the back wheels of a car can never catch the front wheels of a car while they are travelling at the same rate of speed. So we have to give the back wheels an additional push in order to help them to catch up. This is not for a past debt. This is to get us even,

so we'll start off from the same line. This is precisely the tradition -- speaking of tradition -- that America accepts in dealing with GI's or veterans. We say that the veterans have been outside of the mainstream of American economic life for one year, two years, three years, or however many, and therefore it's necessary to give them a little push back into that main stream."

BUCKLEY: "In return for services rendered."

FARMER: "Of course. Services rendered -- we've rendered services too -- we've picked cotton, we've helped build buildings."

BUCKLEY: "You know, that's not my favorite argument."

FARMER:: "May I continue my point though?"

BUCKLEY: "Yes, go ahead."

FARMER: "Let me continue my point. Now we have to give them an additional push. Civil Service even gives a veteran a five point advantage. We don't ask for a five point advantage. Nor do we ask that any unqualified Negroes be hired for jobs. Nor do we seek that any white person who has a job should be fired from his job so that a Negro may have the job. I would fight against that as vigorously as I fought for equal rights. But what we do say is that if a company has discriminated for the hundred years of its existence, has hired no Negroes except janitors, and now it has an opening in a decent category, two persons apply, one black and one white, similarly qualified -- since there's no such thing as equal qualification -- now I say that the fact that the company has not hired any Negroes in the past and has no Negroes in its work force beyond the lowest category, should be a factor weighing

in favor of the Negro applicant. Maybe the other factors will say that he doesn't get it. But this is what I say. President Kennedy, incidentally, adopted the same idea. It's said that he stepped off a plane in Washington. There was an honor guard there to meet him. He saw no Negroes. He called an officer, said, I see no Negroes here. The officer said, Mr. President, no Negroes have apppied. He said, go out and find some."

BUCKLEY (LAUGHING): "I suppose he thought that it was an honor to be a part of the honor guard for the president."

FARMER: "I think it's an honor for a Negro to have a job."

BUCKLEY (LAUGHS)

FARMER: "In an honor guard or elsewhere."

BUCKLEY: "Well, one hopes he will find more productive jobs than simply to be part of standing parade for visiting dignitaries."

FARMER: "Well, we want all kinds of jobs, even standing parades."

BUCKLEY: "Well, first of all, let me agree with you at least insofar as you suggest that it is a heavy moral obligation on white employers to make special -- to give opportunities and go out of their way to make opportunities -- to Negroes. I happen to agree a hundred per cent. But here, unfortunately, Mr. Farmer, is the kind of situation we get into. I believe that that obligation is moral in nature, voluntary in nature. But as you know, there an awful lot of people tooling around, some of them in your own organizations, who are arguing in effect for a situation in which you go and get the personnel roster of a business and say,

well now, let me see, there are 10 per cent Negroes in this community. There are not 10 per cent negroes in this particular firm; under the circumstances we find you are, ipso, guilty of segregation. And the interference of the entire government mechanism here is something that means a great deal to me. I think it means a great deal to a lot of conservatives. I hope it means something to you."

FARMER: "Well, whether it means ipso, or ipso-facto, CORE does not ask for a quota system. We do not ask that 17 per cent of the employees in any company in New York City should be Negroes, if Negroes are 17 per cent of the population."

BUCKLEY: "And you, therefore, disavow those Negro leaders who do insist on this?"

FARMER: "I'm not aware of any substantial Negro leaders who do. We have been charged in the press with doing so, but what we do say, we say to an employer, we see no Negroes working there; you obviously have practiced some discrimination."

BUCKLEY: "I don't deny that they do."

FARMER: "Now wait. Let me finish."

BUCKLEY: "I'm asking what should be the recourse."

FARMER: "All right we say that he must take affirmative action to integrate work force; and there must, therefore, be meaningful representation of the discriminated-against minorities in his work force."

BUCKLEY: "So you do want to use the mechanism of the state to enforce? You want to use the mechanism of the state to enforce integration."

FARMER: "I'm not an anarchist. I believe it is the duty of the state to guarantee the rights of its citizens."

BUCKLEY: "Now, you're trying to steal a base, because this has nothing to do with anarchy, because there wasn't any anarchy in this country during the preceding 180 years, but these are, after all, revolutionary proposals, according to some people's rights, that you have a right to step in and inform a business of how many Negroes and how many whites it has to hire. So don't pretend that the opposite of this is anarchy."

FARMER: "No.? Well, there are many anarchists, of course, who are opposed to the federal government, the state government, or the city government. But this is my point..."

BUCKLEY: "Well not many. Can you count three?"

FARMER: "I can count many more than three."

BUCKLEY (LAUGHING): "Well I can't. There's a school out in Colorado somewhere that has 16 people..."

FARMER: "Well, suppose we get back to the point of preferential treatment."

BUCKLEY: "Ah, ha. Yes, yes. Let's agree that I'm not an anarchist or that, conceivably you don't know what an anarchist is."

FARMER: "I don't label you, and I do know what an anarchist is."

BUCKLEY: "Yes. Now the argument that the government ought, increasingly, to take over the responsibility of seeing to it that integration take place is one which I tend to resist. And the

reason I tend to resist it is because I believe that there is a presumptive argument against government undertaking certain functions which are best left to individuals, responding to such moral injunctions as you yourself very eloquently make. But everywhere you go, it seems to me, whether it's on the integrated schools, or the abolition of the neighborhood school, all of a sudden you see that there is a new law there, that seems to be commandeering the movements of the citizens."

FARMER: "Mr. Buckley."

BUCKLEY: "And surely, we want to solve this problem. We want to solve this problem without creating a kind of state which has so much power that it totalitarianizes the social function."

FARMER: "Well you see, Mr. Buckley, the law may not make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me. And that's an important service to me. And I'm not willing to wait until the next generation to have that done. Because I might not live that long."

BUCKLEY: "Yes, I'm not in favor of lynching."

FARMER: "Yes, obviously, but I think we ought to make it clear that the federal government, the state government, and the local government does have the responsibility for the welfare of its citizens."

BUCKLEY: "But how do you describe welfare? How do you describe it? The sun doesn't set, save on a day, that somebody doesn't discover a new welfare right."

FARMER: "Well, let me describe it without defining it."

BUCKLEY: "All right."

FARMER: "If I walk into company seeking a job and I am qualified for that job and have training for it, and he turns me down and says the job has just been taken, My white friend goes in with less qualifications or similar qualifications and is given the job, then I think that my welfare has been stepped upon. And I think then, if the man will not voluntarily change his policies or his practices, I have a right to call upon my duly elected representatives, in the government, to protect my interests and my welfare. That's all we say."

BUCKLEY: "Yes, I agree. Your welfare is certainly at the disposal of anyone who has more power than you, any time, in any free society. The editor, for instance, who refuses, let's say, to purchase my column, because -- or to publish my book -- because I'm a conservative, is certainly not increasing my own welfare. As a matter of fact, I think he's not increasing his own welfare."

FARMER: "I think he ought to -- use your column."

BUCKLEY: "Well, that's very kind of you. But are we going to go to Congress and ask for a law that requires all newspapers to use my column. As a matter of fact, you're tempting me."

(LAUGHTER)

FARMER: "Mr. Buckley, I'm surprised at the logic. Because I ask for laws in one aspect of social life, then am I asking for laws in all aspects?"

BUCKLEY: "No. But my trouble is that you have an infinitely adaptable definition of welfare."

FARMER: "I think that there are laws which protect you."

ANNOUNCER: "I'm sorry to interrupt, gentlemen, We have to at this time. You are watching Fire Line with William F. Buckley Junior. Tonight's guest, James Farmer. We'll continue in just a moment."

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BUCKLEY: "An example of what I think is an overly flexible definition of the word welfare is this very generous and spontaneous impulse of yours to protect me against the editor who doesn't want to use my stuff."

FARMER: "It was your suggestion."

BUCKLEY (LAUGHING): "No, it was my suggestion that the existing arrangements are that the editor has the right to make his own decision. And I'm afraid that I must defend the editor's right. You were about to suggest, were you, some law by which someone asserting his transcendent right to secure his own welfare, could force such an arrangement on an editor."

FARMER: "No, but I'm saying that, if anybody prevents you from exercising your first amendment rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press."

BUCKLEY: "It's different."

FARMER: "No. Wait a minute. No, writing an article is freedom of the press and freedom of speech."

BUCKLEY: "But I can write an article, and you don't have to publish it. There's a difference, isn't there?"

FARMER: "If there is a systematic effort to reject you and refuse you having an audience in the nation's life..."

BUCKLEY: "If there is a conspiracy."

FARMER: "...then I think some action ought to be taken. And I would be glad to present your case to the American Civil Liberties Union. And I would sit on their board, and I would urge them to take it."

BUCKLEY: "Well, I certainly appreciate it, and I'll make a note of that. If there is a conspiracy?"

FARMER: "Yes, if there is a conspiracy."

BUCKLEY: "To deprive you of certain rights. It has been on the books for years..."

FARMER: "But you see, we have been facing a conspiracy. Negroes have been facing a conspiracy to deny us certain rights for a long period of time."

BUCKLEY: "You've been facing prejudice, Mr. Farmer."

FARMER: "You don't think it's a conspiracy?"

BUCKLEY: "No, it's prejudice. Prejudice."

FARMER: "But prejudiced persons have conspired."

BUCKLEY: "Which is worse."

FARMER: "They have conspired. How about those 21 persons who were accused of murdering Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney?"

BUCKLEY: "Mr. Farmer."

FARMER: "Wasn't this a conspiracy?"

BUCKLEY: "Mr. Farmer."

FARMER: "I'm sure it was."

BUCKLEY: "Mr. Farmer, please let's not get into the category of crime. There are lots of white people killed too."

FARMER: "Yes, and lots of Negroes are killed."

BUCKLEY: "Yes, that's right. Right, Correct."

FARMER: "Many Negroes conspire."

BUCKLEY: "So, therefore, I don't think that's really generically relevant to this argument. What is generically relevant to this argument is: what do you do to break down prejudice?" Now I happen to believe very strongly in the boycott. I supported Martin Luther King's boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. And I certainly supported boycotts -- and would support -- boycotts of any firm so governed by prejudice that they would refuse to give employment to people, simply on account of race or religion. But I wouldn't want to go further. The reason I wouldn't want to go further is, because I believe that freedom among other things is a freedom to act very obnoxiously. There is in my judgment any number of categories of people who exercise their freedom in ways that are malevolent. And the question is: what do you do about it?"

FARMER: "Freedom to act malevolently or obnoxiously, yes. But not freedom to deny another person his rights. Now I have a right to dislike a man. I have a right to hate him. I have a right, even, -- a legal right -- to wish him dead. But I don't have a right to kill him. Then it's the function of some power."

BUCKLEY: "Well, if you hate a man you're not going to hire him, are you?"

FARMER: "What?"

BUCKLEY: "If you hate a man you're not going to hire him, are you?"

FARMER: "Let me finish my point and you'll get your answer."

BUCKLEY: "Uh-hum."

FARMER: "I have a right to wish him dead: I don't have a right to kill him. But I do not have a right to deny a man's right to earn a living, because of the color of his skin or deny him from educating his children because of the color of his skin, or having a decent house in which to live because of the color of his skin. Then it is the function of the state to step in and say this you must not do because you are allowing whatever prejudice exists within you to damage other citizens and restrict their rights."

BUCKLEY: "Well, let's at least concede, Mr. Farmer, this is a very very recent construction of, quote, rights. It's something that wasn't on the statute books of a single state of the union 20 years ago."

FARMER: "You mean the FEPC laws?"

BUCKLEY: "Yes. The notion that an employer hasn't got the right to refuse to employ somebody for whatever reason is a recently discovered right. Now you may go down in history as having discovered an enormous right, but let me, please, just make this single point, that every time a new fresh right is discovered, there is a corresponding diminution, necessarily, in a right that was there to fore regarded as such. For instance, the United

Nations charter on Human Rights lists, what, 50 or 60 human rights, including the right to vacations with pay, the right to work of your own choosing, whatever that means. Suppose you want to make chemistry, but suppose nobody wants you -- to hire you to make chemistry, do you have a right to the job?"

FARMER: "You see, there was a point in the nation's history when it was conceived to be a man's right to hold another man as a slave. But the nation outgrew that. And the thing that enhances my faith in America is the fact that we have the capacity to grow, we have the capacity to refine rights."

BUCKLEY: "Yes."

FARMER: "And this is a refinement of rights. And I am all in favor of it."

BUCKLEY: "It's a question whether it's a refinement or not, isn't it? No doubt it was a refinement, obviously, it was a refinement of rights when the institution of slavery was belatedly overthrown. But the difficulty, of course, Mr. Farmer, is that there has never been any tyranny in the history of the world that didn't cloak itself in plangent moralism and insist that, in the name of newly-discovered rights, rights of Aryans in Germany, for instance."

ANNOUNCER: "May I interrupt, Mr. Buckley, I'd like to ask Mr. Farmer a question about the future objectives of the civil rights movement in the United States."

FARMER: "I'm very glad, sir, to have that question asked, because our subject is the future direction of the civil rights movement. And one thing that bothers me a great deal is that we

have won many victories, many little battles in the past three years. We got the Civil Rights Act of '64, the Voter Rights Act of '65. We've desegregated countless lunchcounters, restaurants, theaters, hotels, roller skating rinks, motels in the South. But the fact of the matter is that these victories have not yet translated themselves into a meaningful change in the life condition of many Negroes in our country. They've helped the middle class. I can now drive my automobile on the highway in Mississippi and stop overnight at a Motel. But what about the poor fellow who doesn't have an automobile and has little hope of getting one? He doesn't have that right, if I may use that term again Mr. Buckley. So we've got to translate these victories in terms that will meaningfully affect his life.

"What this means is a number of things. One, completely ending the discrimination in employment. Two, creating new jobs. And three, providing better education for all of our kids. And four, remedial education, to try to repair the damage that has been done. There are now about eleven and a half million people in our country who are functionally illiterate -- black, white, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, American Indians. We have to repair that, because these persons are increasingly unemployable. At a time when we are opening up doors, winning equality of opportunity, the percentage of Negroes in the unemployed lists is growing. And that is the paradox, and that is the tragedy. So it's my conviction that now we have to add to the battle for equal opportunity a new struggle for equal achievement. And that's where I'm devoting

my energies at the present time. I see the sum of those two, equal opportunity, equal achievement, as meaning vital equality."

BUCKLEY: "But do you recognize, Mr. Farmer, that during the past 150 or 175 years, the American people, Negro and white, have made a kind of material progress, which is the envy of most of the world, and that under the circumstances, it is relevant to look at those mechanisms that have reduced illiteracy to the extent it was reduced, and that gave employment to the extent that employment is given. And oughtn't you to pay some kind of respect to the free market system, precisely because it has gotten us where we are, precisely because it has given to the Negroes the highest standard of life -- a higher standard of life -- than 90 per cent of the white people throughout the world?"

"Now I grant that in the last analysis the Negro standard of life can only be judged as in comparison to the standard of life of his neighbors. And there I couldn't agree with you more."

FARMER: "Precisely."

BUCKLEY: "And there I couldn't agree with you more. But what is it that makes you believe that the society, the free society, is itself so flawed that it won't continue to effect that progress without massive interventions as a result of these newly discovered rights of yours?"

FARMER: "The fact of the matter, sir, is that absolute illiteracy and functional illiteracy is increasing in our country. And today seven and a half per cent of the Negroes in the country are functionally illiterate as opposed to one and a half per cent of

whites. The number, the absolute number, of illiterates increases each year in our country. And the fact of the matter is also that the gap between the average income for Negroes and the average income for whites is widening, not narrowing. That has been true since World War II. During the war there was a slight narrowing, but that was because of temporary jobs in wartime industries. In 1950 the average income of Negroes was 53 per cent of the average income of whites. In 1961 it was 52 per cent, in spite of the fact that 17 per cent of the Negroes in the country had become urban dwellers, and had moved to cities where one would expect a higher standard of living. So it's not solving itself, Mr. Buckley."

BUCKLEY: "Though on that account, or perhaps because of that -- because there are always dislocations when there are mass migrations -- as I think anybody would be able to confirm by citing for instance the lowest standard of life of Italians and Irishmen and Jews when they came to this country during the early period. But I think that you are begging a very important point for the reason that there is a very absolute rise in illiteracy has to do with problems that don't relate at all to what we're talking about. It has to do with things like television. It has to do with things like radio. There is a much higher illiteracy, are you aware for instance, in Yugoslavia than there was 20 years ago, even though it is a highly statused system."

FARMER: "Mr. Buckley I would accuse television -- I would charge television -- with many errors and many sins, but creating

illiteracy is not one of them, I'm sure. There are many things that create illiteracy."

BUCKLEY: "You say that very continently. Some people watch television who used to read."

FARMER (LAUGHING): "Well, sometimes they read captions in the commercials, I'm sure. But television does not create illiteracy."

BUCKLEY: "Well I really don't know what you're suggesting is the cause of illiteracy."

FARMER: "No expert would say that."

BUCKLEY: "Certainly what is not causing illiteracy is segregation, since there is manifestly less of that than there was 10 years ago. One of the reasons why there is a relative rise in Negro unemployment -- I will tell you and you won't like it -- is because of the rise in minimum wage. And economic technicians have absolutely established that every time the minimum wages goes up there is a relative rise in Negro unemployment."

ANNOUNCER: "Well certainly, watching this program does not cause illiteracy. (LAUGHTER) And we're going to have more of it, and questions from our television audience coming up in just a moment."

* * *

ANNOUNCER: "You are watching Firing Line with William F. Buckley Junior, and tonight's guest, James Farmer. It's time now for questions from our studio audience. As I call your name, will

you please rise, address your question either to Mr. Buckley or Mr. Farmer, First, Mark Sandman."

MAN: "Mr. Farmer, do you think the labor unions have improved as far as Negro employment is concerned?"

FARMER: "Well, some labor unions have and some have not."

MAN: "Which ones?"

FARMER: "Well, the industrial unions have done an increasingly good job. In the South, I regret that many of them still have segregated unions, white and black unions. But, generally speaking, the old craft unions have practiced a policy of discrimination. That is particularly true of many of the building trade unions. We have had a running battle for a number of years with the building trade unions. In some of the unions, you know, one has to be the son of a father who is a member to get in. And in others, he has to be sponsored by a present member. That battle goes on."

MAN: "Thank you."

ANNOUNCER: "And now, this question from Mrs. Evelyn Natov, a homemaker."

WOMAN: "Mr. Farmer, the oriental ghettos in the United States have given little support to both the goals of the civil rights movement or their anti-Vietnam position. Why has the oriental citizen, who is also segregated, not been sympathetic with the civil rights movement?"

FARMER: "Well, the fact is that many orientals have been sympathetic. There are some members in the various civil rights organizations that are orientals. There is a sprinkling of

oriental-Americans in the group of college students who have gone South in the past few summers. But generally speaking, you are right in your assumption that the masses of people of oriental ancestry have not been a part of the civil rights movement. You see, they have a tighter-knit social structure generally, than Negroes have in our country. There is much more mutual aid and self-help in their communities. It is something which I trust we'll be able to emulate. This is one direction we are moving now. We are seeking Operation Bootstrap in the Negro ghetto throughout the country."

ANNOUNCER: "Thank you Mrs. Natov. This next question is from a student of St. Francis College, Thomas Mills. He's like to ask a question of you, Mr. Farmer; and I'd like to have you Mr. Buckley comment on it if you will."

MAN: "Mr. Farmer, do you feel that the integration that the civil rights movement has brought about brings with it a forced acceptance of the Negro, and if so, does this satisfy you?"

FARMER: No, it does not bring about a forced acceptance of the Negro. You see, one has - to use the term right again -- one has a right to choose his friends, to choose whomever he would like to have in his home for dinner or for coffee or for tea. There are many Negroes I don't like and don't wish to associate with; and there's no law that can make me associate with them as friends. But all we are saying is the fact that I do not like another person does not give me the license to keep that other person from earning a living or from educating his children or

from having a decent home. So it is not forced acceptance of the Negro, but forced acceptance of an individual Negro's right as an individual citizen."

MAN: "Thank you."

BUCKLEY: "Well, Mr. Farmer, I think it is significant to note that those who look for these state integrationist measures to bring about the kind of society that is truly just are probably going to be disappointed -- I would say, surely disappointed -- as witness, for instance, New York State has had on its books the whole issue of legislation which has only been recently passed at a federal level.

"So it is correct that the kind of acceptance which true equality would suggest it is not likely to enure from such legislation. And I do think that it is important for more Negro leaders to stress that point, so that there won't be that collapse of expectations. The freedom-now rhetoric of Martin Luther King I find, for that reason, highly ominous. Nobody is going to be free now, in the highly idealized sense in which Doctor King has been talking about."

FARMER: "I think Doctor King realizes -- if I may comment on that, Mr. Moderator -- I think Doctor King realizes that freedom will not come now, and that it's going to be a long haul and a hard struggle. Now whether we'll be disappointed or not I don't know, but I do know that we waited 103 years since the Emancipation Proclamation for some semblance of equality without laws, that is, without specific laws, and that has been far too slow. So we would

like to speed it up. If the laws can shorten the next hundred years in half, then I think it'll be all to the good for America and for America's one tenth."

BUCKLEY: "Provided, of course, those laws don't make slaves of all of us."

FARMER: "Well I'm sure that's the case, it will make slaves of all of us. I am opposed to slavery in any color."

ANNOUNCER: "Our next question comes from Mr. Thomas Dayes."

MAN: "My question is directed to Mr. Farmer. Mr. Farmer, in your opinion, what part does the federal government -- how far do they have to go -- in legislation to guarantee the rights of the Negroes, that you think have been segregated against?"

FARMER: "You know, I certainly wish that it were possible for us to do all of this by a wave of the hand. If we could whisper through an occasional keyhole of each human heart and create good will and the kingdom of God on earth and do it reasonably quickly, I would be happy. But that has not happened. And I'm not prepared to leave the Negroes in Alabama to the tender mercies of Governor Wallace or his likely successor. I think that here, we've got to take action on another level. And that's the thing that I'm asking for now."

ANNOUNCER: "Mr. Buckley, would you like to comment on that?"

BUCKLEY: "Well, as you know, I don't have much use for Governor Wallace. On the other hand, I think anybody who reads the literature of protest -- who for instance, reads James Baldwin -- will find that the level at which the true struggle is being

made is one that doesn't distinguish between North and South. I grant that certain of the obvious liberties which are transgressed more frequently in the South than elsewhere need to be protected; but the kind of thing that causes James Baldwin to write, 'The Fire Next Time,' or that caused Louis Lomax to say that he had grown up in New York where the flames of the melting pot burned hotter, and yet still doesn't feel comfortable with two white people in the course of single day, that kind of tension, psychological tension, is something that is utterly irrelevant to Governor Wallace. And I think, therefore, he's going to be less and less useful as a hobgoblin."

FARMER: "Yes, but I think what Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Lomax are talking about as far as the Negro ghetto is concerned in the North is quite relevant. The fact of the matter is, most of our victories -- legislatively -- have spoken to the South, and not to the North. And the 17 year old drop-out youth in a Harlem street couldn't care less if his second cousin in Mississippi can buy a hotdog. He says, man, what about the rates that bite me? What about the cockroaches?"

BUCKLEY: "Why don't they kill those rats?" "Is there a law that says you can't kill the rats? I'm so tired of that argument. I've got rats, and I put traps all over the place. They're still there; I've never been able to get rid of them."

FARMER: "You know, in Harlem, if you kill one rat, two more come back to carry his carcass away."

BUCKLEY: "Well, why doesn't that happen in other cities?"

BUCKLEY: "Is there special refuse there? Why don't they do away with the refuse? It's a municipal function to get rid of the refuse, isn't it?"

FARMER: "When you have an entire family -- that's the state, isn't it?"

BUCKLEY: "Look, I'm not suggesting demunicipalizing the garbage collection."

FARMER: "Oh, you're in favor of garbage collection then?"

BUCKLEY: "I'm in favor of socialized garbage."

(LAUGHTER)

FARMER: (LAUGHS)

BUCKLEY: "Every time you mention rats it's as though I tippy-toed up there at midnight and plopped a rat in hobby, and it had become my special hobby."

FARMER: "Do you know that if the total population of the United States were as congested as Haarlem we could get the entire population of the United States into the five boroughs of New York City. When you crowd people together like that, living in much sub-standard housing, then you are bound to have refuse, and especially if the Sanitation Department doesn't do its job. And refuse attracts rats."

BUCKLEY: "Do you know that fifteen times the population of Haarlem could be put in Hong Kong in as small an area? This is a non-argument."

FARMER: "Does this justify anything?"

BUCKLEY: "No, But you people don't run around saying: let's

do something about the rats. Do something about the rats in Hong Kong. Have you launched a crusade about the rats in Hong Kong?"

FARMER: "I am favor of providing technical assistance, whether it's Hong Kong, or whatever."

BUCKLEY: "When you get to dropping Governor Wallace, you should also drop the rats, not because rats are pleasant, but because there is no Constitutional reason - methaphysical reason - why rats should be in Harlem."

FARMER: "Mr. Buckley, you don't have to live with rats."

BUCKLEY: "I do live with rats, in point of face. (LAUGHTER) I most certainly do."

FARMER: "Why don't you get rid of them?"

BUCKLEY: "And I spent a substantially part of my weekend from time to time, trying to bait the damned things."

FARMER: "Did you succeed?"

BUCKLEY: "No, I have not succeeded."

FARMER: "Ah, then why do you expect Harlem to succeed?"

BUCKLEY: "I don't go around on TV complaining about the rats in my house."

FARMER: "Have you had rats biting your children?"

BUCKLEY: "Well no, I haven't."

FARMER: "Have you had rats come up in a crib as the baby is sleeping and take a piece of his leg?"

BUCKLEY: "Now, don't melodramatize it."

FARMER: "All that we ask is for..."

BUCKLEY: "The point is, where the rat happens to travel at a given moment. And there's no reason at all why a rat should be more attracted to a Negro child than th a white child, you see."

FARMER: "No, if white people lived in Haarlem, the rats would bite them there."

BUCKLEY: "The point is to do something about the rats but don't try to suggest that this is the fault of George Wallace, that there are rats in Haarlem."

FARMER: "They bite on the lower East Side."

ANNOUNCER: "Gentlemen, if I suggest, the rat problem has been with us for a long time, and I'm afraid we won't settle it tonight. We'll be back with Firing Line in just a moment."

* * *

BUCKLEY: "Mr. Farmer, I'm extremely glad that you spent so much of the evening emphasizing the matter of rights; because I do think that that is the critical discussion. And I join you in hoping that people's rights -- provided there is a sound explanation of what they are -- will be guaranteed. I want to thank you so much for your courtesy and for coming on this program."

FARMER: "Thank you, Mr. Buckley."

(MUSIC UP, OUT)