

decision to have programmes broadcast for Asian immigrants early on Sunday mornings. Much more could be said, too, about the social life within Asian communities.

It is plain from this book that Mr Hill is that rather rare creature these days: a man with a deep concern for the problems of people in society but with no *political* sense. I do not mean a party political sense, but an awareness of the interaction between public events and private lives, and how to influence this interaction. There is virtually nothing in this book about the part played in forming or affecting prejudice by newspapers, television and members of Parliament. There is little reference to what work is being done to combat colour prejudice outside the work of Mr Hill and other London clergy. Local voluntary committees are given a paragraph of high praise, but are not honoured by much description. The Campaign Against Racial Discrimination rates one brief, mildly disapproving reference. The National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants is not mentioned. The political views, organisation and action of immigrants themselves are given not a word. The final chapter, on what can and should be done to improve the situation, is thus somewhat out of key with the rest of the book,

which has described racialism in Britain as an aggregate of individual cases and opinions. Mr Hill begins by denying various remedies, and ends by advocating a combination of the same remedies. He seems uneasy with a fundamental statement of the problem in general terms.

Yet, in spite of serious limitations, this is a book to be recommended widely, because it says very well so many things that are quite unfamiliar to most people in this country, and which *must* become generally known and discussed if we are to have any chance of breaking down the ramshackle, eccentric but solid structure of British racial prejudice. The high degree of discrimination against Commonwealth immigrants by employers and landlords, the almost universal objection to racially-mixed marriages, the petty, everyday unkindnesses, the ignorance and misunderstanding of a great number of the British people, are all vividly described and documented; these facts will come as a severe shock to many readers without direct experience and knowledge of the lives of immigrants here. Mr Hill is an honest and reasonable man: any Christian who has not yet given much thought to the problem created by colour prejudice should read him at once.

ANN DUMMETT

DARK GHETTO, by Kenneth B. Clark. *Victor Gollancz, Ltd.* 35s. pp. xxxii plus 251.

*Dark Ghetto* will be rather heavy going for most readers. The dust-cover quotes Robert Penn Warren as saying that it is well written. It is, indeed, very well organised, and the quality of the thought is high – producing some forceful turns of phrase: but in general, unfortunately, the prose is turgid. The language is that of American academics – grammatically careless, the verbs mainly structural ('relates to', etc.), the sentences crammed with abstract nouns and often requiring re-reading if one is to catch their drift.

This is much to be regretted: for the greatest good would be done if everyone in Britain learned what *Dark Ghetto* has to tell. It analyses the racial situation in the North of the U.S.A. – an affront to human dignity as vicious as that represented by the Deep South, but different in character. It comments on, but is not, like other books on the subject, concerned to describe, the activities of civil rights groups and the utterances of Negro spokesmen: it aims, rather, at an exact diagnosis of the disease; of which the primary symptom is that appalling

phenomenon, the Negro ghettos in the large cities of the North. Since Dr Clark worked on the first stage of the Haryou project (Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited), he concentrates, with no apology, on Harlem. Dr Clark is a sociologist, and writes with a sociologist's jargon and turn of thought: but his book must enhance our respect for that discipline, because he is so deeply and consciously resolved that his work shall serve the human beings who are the subject-matter of his study, instead of being a mere exercise in one of the 570 varieties of academic research. He takes us through the various aspects of the ghetto's deformation of the human personality: he depicts the despair engendered by squalid housing costing more than decent housing elsewhere, by relentless discrimination by employers and unions, by schools that have failed even to pretend to teach, by the cynical inoperativeness of the social services, and above all the feeling of being trapped on every side by the devices of oppression which have been set up by white men, who exploit while they despise and reject, or at best

do not care and will not understand. He also examines the Harlem Press, its churches and its politicians; discusses possible strategies for change, as pursued by various groups; and concludes with some deeply perceptive comments on psychological relations between white and Negro in racist America. Dr Clark's observations are almost always penetrating: his analyses are thorough and painstakingly well-balanced. He neither makes the error of identifying moderation with sanity, nor that of equating militancy with concern. He has written an exceedingly good book.

This book is relevant for English people for two reasons. First, as a warning. If racialism continues to spread and take hold in Britain with the same acceleration as over the past 15 years, within a generation we shall have a situation comparably cancerous. (Few people here realise how rapidly ghettos can develop: Harlem – where you can walk for hours without seeing a white face other than a cop's – has been a ghetto for only about 35 years.) Nothing could be more urgent than to get the danger across to people in this country; and simultaneously to convey to them how much *all* members of the community have at stake. The first paragraph of chapter 4 of *Dark Ghetto* expresses this with power: 'It is now generally understood that chronic and remediable social injustices corrode and damage the human personality, thereby robbing it of its effectiveness, of its creativity, if not its actual humanity. No matter how desperately one seeks to deny it, this simple fact persists and intrudes itself. It is the fuel of protests and revolts. Racial segregation, like all other forms of cruelty and tyranny, debases all human beings – those who are its victims, those who victimize, and in quite subtle ways those who are merely accessories'. Unhappily, what the last sentence quoted says is *not* yet understood in England by very many people: most people – whatever their stand on race prejudice – imagine that, if racial segregation were to triumph here, and non-Caucasians were relegated to certain jobs, and cordoned off into 'coloured areas' of the cities, then, however unjust or inhumane this might be to the victims, 'white society' would be able to carry on unaffected. This is a disastrous illusion: the guilt and fear provoked by the existence of massive social injustice infect and corrupt the whole society. One of Dr Clark's central theses is that, whatever means

may be adopted, the key to effecting change lies in convincing those sections of white American society in whose hands power lies that their own interests – economic and social – are served by integration: perhaps his book could help to bring this home to people here.

The other reason why Dr Clark's book is relevant to us is that it contains so many acute insights into the problems created by racialism, and the psychological reactions to its existence and effects. We must be chary of wholesale transference of American experience to our own strikingly different situation: nevertheless, all manifestations of white racialism have enough in common that much that is learned from the experience of one can be applied to that of another. Here in England, people have scarcely begun to grasp how much thought, understanding and imagination are necessary if the multiplicity of problems engendered by racial prejudice are to be overcome: in America, there are many – like Dr Clark – who have thought hard about these problems, and achieved a deep understanding of the manifold reactions of those on either side of the colour line; and we have much to learn from them – above all, what it is to give thought to a topic about which many English people are still content to say, 'Of course, I've no prejudice myself', and leave it at that.

Although it would do so much good if Dr Clark's book were widely read here, that is unlikely to happen: one reason is that it is written for reasonably well-informed American readers. Dr Clark expects his readers to be aware what the Urban League, the World's Fair stall-in, the Garvey movement, the Brown decision, etc., are or were: so only the tersest explanations, if any, are given when references to them are made. When Dr Clark's conclusions are based on facts not widely known, these facts are presented most carefully: but when they rest on what is common knowledge in the U.S.A., he simply advances them without first describing the situation he is assessing. No-one can blame Dr Clark for not explaining once more what has already been set out in a score of books: but if someone could quarry in *Dark Ghetto* to extract the nuggets of wisdom, and embed them in a more readable and more elementary text designed for the ordinary English reader, he would be doing this country – as well as Dr Clark – a service.

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