

Eulogy By Martin Popper

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The Meeting House of The Society For Ethical Culture

For those of us whose involvement in Andy's martyrdom is deeply personal, the pain has been all but overwhelming. But Bobby and Carolyn and Jonny and David have given us so much of their love and strength that we have been helped to escape the futility of despair.

Through this period of unalleviated strain, and despite the growing shadows of hopelessness, they have retained a perspective and dignity which has sustained us all.

In subordinating personal anguish to the compelling urgency of arousing the nation's conscience, Bobby and Carolyn have made a lasting impression upon the millions who have seen and heard them and upon the leaders of our government.

By their example, we who are their friends are able now, AS WE MUST, to transmute our private grief into some larger focus more worthy of Andy's legacy to America.

It seems like an eternity since Andy disappeared. In truth it is an eternity. For if time is measured by change, we have witnessed in these few weeks one of those rare and searing events in history which so affects the relations among men that succeeding generations will honor it as a milestone in the tortuous, yet wonderful and never-ending quest for human brotherhood.

The reverence in which Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner are held will never cease to grow. Their deeds and their sacrifice will become an integral part of the culture of our nation: its literature, its songs, its monuments -- and even part of its legend.

People who do not yet know their names call them "the civil rights workers". The phrase is already part of the American language, like "abolitionist" and "underground railroad".

Our children's children's children will identify with Andy and will hold up his life as proof to the world that "even in days gone by" we Americans were a people who believed in equality. Whether that assertion will be legend or fact depends upon whether we dedicate ourselves to Andy's cause.

What moved Andy to such greatness? Perhaps it was the knowledge that a hundred years after the Emancipation, ~~White~~ America is still living a terrible lie; that the injustice, deprivation and degradation it continues to impose upon Negro citizens is unforgivable, and that unless we hold out our hands and offer our hearts and minds NOW, our Negro fellow Americans will so lose faith in us that ~~we~~, Negro and white, will find ourselves living too long in a divided and mutilated country, despising each other and ourselves, and being despised by the rest of the world.

But, these truths which so disturbed Andy ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> also evident to many others. Therefore, it had to be more than just his knowledge.

~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> It must have come from a deeper source: an instinct ~~of~~ justice beyond that of most men; a greater sensitivity for the hurts of others; a stronger passion to set things right -- or a blending of all these and other qualities which,



when they were combined with a lively curiosity and a knowledge of the world he lived in, added up to the making of a hero -- the kind of hero who because he responded to the call of the most oppressed of his fellows, gathered strength from them, and in so doing, moved the world.

Because of Andy, there are the beginnings of hope among the Negro people that we may yet fulfill our moral, economic and social obligations to them.

Because of Andy's commitment, thousands of white Americans are searching themselves at long last and many have even begun the process which, when it is repeated and repeated again by many more, will finally make us a better and wiser country.

I know of nothing that has happened in our country for over a century that has the quality, and therefore the particular significance, of the deaths we mourn here and the men we honor here. Not since the Abolitionists cried out against slavery have Negro and white Americans been so bound together in life and death as Andy and his two companions. Because of <sup>them</sup> ~~it~~, Mississippi will never be the same again, and therefore America will never be the same again.

From all over this country the flower of Andy's generation is following in his path - in Mississippi, in New York, everywhere - the light is beginning to shine again in this blessed land.

It is sad that a cause needs dying for to make people understand its worth. But it is so. And if there were no one like Andy, life <sup>would</sup> ~~might~~ not be worth living.

Andy has given us all a chance we did not have before - to build the kind of world he saw in the stars.

Nothing we do or fail to do can change his immortality. Now we have only ourselves to count upon to justify his faith in us.

Dear Bobby and Carolyn,

In all the world, there is no greater love of friend than mine for you.

Marty

August 12, 1964