THE MOST EXPLOSIVE RACE PROBLEM
IS IN THE NORTH
"Tyrannosaurus" Stalks in the City of Brotherly Love

By Morley Cassidy

IN THE STARTLED tones of a man who has just discovered a Tyrannosaurus on his doorstep, several national magazines have been crying out recently that "the race problem is moving to the North!"

They are a little late. Most of their Northern readers have been watching the ugly creature prowl their streets for the last 25 years, noting its growth with mounting apprehension. The potential menace has been visible in crime statistics, in mounting welfare budgets, in spreading areas of slums and "blight," in the number of quiet streets where it is no longer safe to walk after dark and in the shocking changes that have come over schools and playgrounds.

The alarm of ordinary citizens has found but little echo in timid newspapers. The subject is too delicate, and no one likes to ruffle sensitive Negro feelings. The press, for the most part, has whispered that the only way to deal with a Tyrannosaurus is to feed it abundantly, pet it, and hope that it will just go away.

But the problem hasn't gone away, and in recent months a whole series of racial quarrels and "incidents" — in Levittown, Pa., in Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland and New York City — has compelled even the blindest to see that Tyrannosaurus is now full-grown and vicious. It is a problem that must be faced and dealt with, and the sudden reappraisals are revealing that it is even bigger than was thought.

The white Northerners' love of Negroes — almost limitless when they are considered abstractly, as a race — is proving to be not much greater than that of Southern white supremacists when the colored folk move in next door, three families to a house, and begin throwing rent parties. There is a saturation point, in other words, at which Northern feelings grow explosive. In many Northern cities, it seems to have been reached.

With much less public comment than would have been given to a similar migration by white Okies or Crackers, four million Negroes have left the Old South since 1940 to find new homes in the North or Far West.

Forty per cent of the Nation's 18 million Negroes now live in the North and the flood of their migration is growing. They are pouring into Los Angeles at the rate of 20,000 a year, into Chicago at the rate of 35,000 a year, into Philadelphia at the rate of 10,000 a year. Most of the newcomers are agricultural workers, but almost all are determined to make their homes in industrial cities where their lack of skills and ignorance of city ways make them uncomfortable guests. In nearly every Northern city, the Negroes' numbers are increasing at a rate five to 10 times greater than the rate of increase for whites.

This means that, for the future of this country, the dramatic events in Little Rock are of minor significance compared with the boiling-up of new feelings in the North. As a sample of the North's problem it is useful to take a look at Philadelphia. Little Rock's problems reflect the past. Philadelphia's foreshadow the future.

It is a grim picture, made grimmer by the flat refusal of such groups as the ADA and the NAACP to recognize dynamite when they see it. Senator Joseph S. Clark, a charter member of the ADA and a former Mayor of Philadelphia, recently upbraided a Southern Senator who had pointed to racial problems in the integrated schools of Philadelphia. Clark roundly declared that there had never been the slightest trouble.

His statement made Philadelphia eyes pop. Actually, the Philadelphia schools have been plagued for years by racial quarrels and fights in which knives, broken bottles and zip-guns have been used with deadly purpose, and teachers in some schools have abandoned, in fear for their own safety, all effort at maintaining discipline. Clark's bald denial almost coincided with a massive clash between white and Negro