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the campus CORE-LATOR

"STARTED ON AVALON. COP STOPPED TO WRITE A
FELLOW A TICKET. COP JUMPED OUT OF THE CAR,
CALLED YOU A 'NIGGER,' PUSHING, NOT TALKING TO
YOU LIKE YOU ARE A MAN. THAT'S HOW IT STARTED.
THEY GOT THE MAN'S MOTHER. PEOPLE STANDING ON
THE STREET SAW IT AND THEY JUST DIDN'T LIKE IT.
THE TENSION JUST BUILD, MAN. PRETTY SOON THE
WORD GOT AROUND ALL OVER. 'CAUSE EVERYBODY
KNOWS. I'VE BEEN BUSTED MYSELF AND I KNOW HOW
THEY WANT TO GET YOU DOWNTOWN, FIVE OR SIX OF
THEM JUMPING ON YOU. I WISH IT WERE STARTING ALL
OVER AGAIN."

WATTS NEGRO

fall 1965

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Voices from Watts

During the Watts incident, KPFA reporters, Walter Thompson and Al Silbowitz, interviewed both participants in the looting and others in the area. Below and on the front cover are excerpts from these interviews.

NEGRO YOUTH

"I don't feel bad about it. I think what the people did by burning the business, I think that was good, because we don't own them, they overcharge us and everything. Actually, the people that was looting, taking stuff home with them, they could never afford it, they would never probably have got it anyway, so this was a chance to come down to get what you want and take it home. And the best thing they did while they were doing it, instead of leaving the business there where the white man could come back after this is all over with and start selling products and making money off you again was to burn it down, completely. And I think they should have done that. Going back when they started bombing churches in the south, there was one Christmas where the people said let's boycott and don't buy nothing from the white man. I don't think that was too wise, too much of a good idea. But the best thing they should have done was what we did in Los Angeles, burn their business. This way they couldn't get no business. If they keep on burning their businesses, this will make it kind of hard for them to make any money. I'm not going to go hungry for nobody."

"If we had never started this, we'd still be walking around here hungry and starving, half-clothed and things like that. Some of the people around here, they're not going to go for that. Lot of people out here want to look kind of decent on the streets and things and we kind of tear off anytime we get ready to. Cause they're not going to do nothing."

"I think there's another way although I've seen this coming on and everything. I think they got what they asked for. White merchants there in the town. They're the ones that hold the stores, and I think they got what they asked for for a long time, because most of these people around in this neighborhood are on the county. That check comes every month. Look at these projects, we have four projects down here in what they call

"Area Watts" and the project people have to pay rent. Okay. How do they live comfortable? They can't even get a decent piece of furniture in their homes. I mean that they have to pay light bills, gas bills, all of this. How do they expect them to live decently? And they're out paying on another bill trying to get the furniture. They get behind a couple of payments and the man wants to come and take it out of their house. I really think they got what they were asking for..."

"...I'm not going to fight for the United States. I'm not from the United States. I'm not an American. You get drafted today, go to Vietnam, get all shot up in the hip and the head, come back home and couldn't go buy a hamburger."

"They're not going to draft me, I got too many felonies. I mean, I'm not going anyway. I'm twenty-three and I'm not going in the service at all. ...I'm glad I got these felonies. I'm not going to fight for the United States of America. ...they're not going to take me and send me to Vietnam and let me fight against somebody and then over here in the United States they fighting us and trying to kill us off."

CLEVELAND WALLACE, Los Angeles CORE

"You'll find 30% of the people in Watts are unemployed, 60% receiving aid from the county, and the rest are working in menial jobs, just jobs that barely pay their existence. It's frustration out there. They feel that everything is being taken from them, the white merchants in the area are exploiting them and that they have no way out.

"Where the Negroes come from is very interesting, also. They come from the southwest part of the United States out this way to California and they go from what we call the "cottonbelt region", Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, north and middlewest. Sometimes they'll leave from there and come out this way. You will find that these people are very militant when they come out here and they even feel more strongly about this when they see what conditions they have to live under here, the disrespect that the police give to their women and children and themselves, and the inconvenience of being arrested and having an arrest on their record and not being able to get a job. Once you've been arrested here, whether you're convicted or not, the police keep a record of it and they will use it against you, especially if you are a Negro.

"And they felt that the chief is not very responsive to the Negro community. In fact, he is hostile toward the Negro community and he has let them know it. So they really feel that they have no other recourse but to riot. This is one of the

reasons that the riot is going on now, plus one other. You will find that, at this point, the Negro community is more unified than it has ever been before.

"You will find two words used very, very much out there, that is 'brother' and 'whitey', and any time they see a white person driving by, up until the troops came in, they would stone him and try to stop him and pull him out and beat him, and try to turn over his car and burn it. And they're not interested in talking to anyone because they feel that no one would listen to them anyway. They've been ignored so long until right now it's going and they don't want it to stop until they burn down everything they can possibly burn down."

JOHN SHABAZZ, minister of Black Muslim Mosque #27

"...It's not just police brutality, it's white brutality, it's white oppression, it's white man's four hundred years of slavery of the black man. This is what's culminating. It's the same thing that's happening all over the world. Everything that's happening in the world is race. Everything happening all over the world is black versus white. That's where it is today and it took the Negro in America longer than everybody else to catch on despite the fact that the Honorable Elijah Muhammed has been trying to tell them that for thirty-five years. And then it took the black man in Los Angeles longer than all the rest of the black people in America, longer to catch on. When he caught on, I think you have to admit that he seems to have caught on better than everybody else.

"...Mr. Muhammed was teaching us that the white man should listen to his solutions and he showed the solution to the problem. He said that if he doesn't that there would be a blood bath throughout America, that the black man and the white man were going to start clashing and this was back before any of the sit-ins or any of the bus rides, freedom rides and all that, that caused all this bloodshed. But he said that the closer that the black man continued to try to get to the white man and the more the white man listened to the people that the white man set up as Negro leaders, the closer we'd come to bloodshed in the streets and he said, and then they would clash.

"And he showed us in the Bible and he put it on the front page of Muhammed Speaks, the quotation from the Bible that, "Your agreement with hell shall not stand," and that there would be a breaking away of this agreement and then the judgement would sit. Well this is, as he pointed out, this is a means of showing that there would be this attempt by the black man and the white man to integrate and to get along together and to

be brothers and all this, but it couldn't stand. Every bill, every agreement they make, as the U. S. News and World Report pointed out this week, every civil rights bill that the Negro has ever asked for has now been signed into law and the problem is greater than it was before he got any bill signed into law. So therefore, the agreements are not standing, and still the black man is in trouble. Still the black man's in worse shape than he's ever been. So he's rioting. Yes, this is inevitable. Mr. Muhammed has been telling the white man that this would happen and he's telling him now that it's going to keep on happening. It's not going to stop."

BOB FREEMAN, Chairman, CORE Committee on Police Malpractice, Los Angeles CORE

"We're called sometimes when police are even there outside of people's houses threatening to break the door in because they want to come in and search without a warrant.

"One morning about three o'clock a lady called me from the Watts area and some policeman from West Covina had knocked on her door at three o'clock in the morning. When she went to the door she saw no one and she looked further and turned the light on and she saw a man in a plaid jacket hiding pressed against the wall. Naturally this frightened her because she had no husband there in the house. And she says, 'Who is it?' And they said nothing and the second time they jumped up with shotguns. They were all plainclothesmen and they told her they wanted to come in to search her house. And she asked them for what, and they said, 'We want to search. Open the door or we'll kick it down.' And she asked if they had a warrant. They said, 'No.' And she said she wasn't going to let them in. They kicked and kicked, but it was a pretty heavy door, and they couldn't kick it down. So she got me on the phone. We went out there. They didn't attempt to stop us from going into the house. In fact they made a lot of comments. There were about four of us. We entered the house to take a statement from the lady.

"I got on the phone immediately and called the Los Angeles Police Department to ask them about it because this lady was living in Los Angeles. They said they knew nothing about West Covina policeman being there, however, the lady should have let them in. I told them that these people didn't have a warrant. They said that she should let them in anyway. So she refused to do this. She had nothing to hide and she would let them in if they got a warrant. They came back telling her that they were going to get a 'telephonic' warrant. So we all wondered what a 'telephonic' warrant was and I called the LAPD again and asked them

about a 'telephonic' warrant and they never heard of one. However, the captain downtown did say that they should notify the LAPD.

"These policeman refused to give their badge numbers. I went around the back and one was hiding--he thought he was hiding behind a tree but everybody could see him--and I asked him for his badge number. Finally I told him it was a law, that I had already called the West Covina police and they said their policemen don't refuse to give their badge numbers. I told him that I called his office and talked to the watch commander, so he finally gave me his number.

"They waited there--this was three o'clock in the morning--they waited there until about eleven o'clock. They finally got a warrant. They made numerous threats to break down the door, even after we were there, but she wouldn't let them in. Soon as they got the warrant, she let them in. They came in and they were very nice because we were right there in the living room. They didn't tear open a thing, throw things over the house, scatter things around, but she had nothing to hide. They came in--they were looking for her son, incidentally, who is grown and doesn't live with her at all.

"However, we found the next day that while they were there four West Covina policemen were at her daughter's house and her niece's house and they just tore the house apart. They took records, they took all of her personal records, her checkbook, her receipts and everything, and \$45.00 in cash which she never got back.

"This is one of the incidents. This is not the Los Angeles Police Department, but we have numerous other incidents where people are beaten up. They are arrested for questioning on something and they are asked, 'Did you do this?' 'No, we didn't.' And they start beating on them and saying, 'Yes, you did do it.' This happens day in and day out in that community.

"Very little of this is carried in the newspapers. The general question about police brutality is carried in the newspapers because there are always charges of police brutality, but we always get the answer from City Hall that there is no police brutality. In January, a few members of my committee and I met with Mayor Yorty. We had attempted to get a meeting with Mayor Yorty way back in September, but he turned us down. We wrote numerous letters, but he did not want to meet with us. Our Los Angeles CORE Chapter decided to have an action against the Mayor's office. They got word of this somehow and sent us a letter stating that he would meet with us and would talk with us. However, when we walked in, he promptly informed us that he was there to listen and not to talk.

"However, we did discuss many things... The Mayor said that there was no need for any of this, that there was no police brutality. This was on Friday that we met with him. On Monday morning, the Mayor made a public statement on three of these things... He didn't mention that we had asked for them; we assume that it was because it was around election time that he did this...

"There is a section of the LAPD that handles complaints. Our criticism of that is that it should be some outside agency handling complaints, some type of police review board. My committee feels that we have in Los Angeles a unique thing, a civilian police commission that has the powers given by the City Charter to rule the Police Department. They're Chief Parker's boss--technically. In reality, they're not. They're ruled by Chief Parker. They admit that they do what he tells them to do because they don't know police work. They're not full time men; they don't have the money that they should have, they say... We feel that having an internal review department in the Police Department is just like having a man judge himself. The Police Department is judging itself. Naturally, if there exists bigotry in the police department, the adjudication of these complaints is going to be bigoted. Anyone who has really gone in to investigate the thing has come out with the conclusion that there was police malpractice. But nobody does anything about it...

"... When I talked to people in Watts, their response always was something like this, 'The police have been beating us all the time; we've been taking it all the time; tonight is our night.' That was the first night. However, there was a meeting on the second day, and everybody thought there would be some kind of negotiation between the Police Department and the police who were rioting--people from the community. However, Chief Parker came out with a statement that he didn't want to talk to anybody. The second night I went out and started talking to people. This is what they were angry about. Their statements were, 'If Parker doesn't want to talk to us, we'll burn the whole damn town down, and the next time we want to talk to him, we won't have to get on our knees to talk.'

"They were also angry about other statements that were made by various officials. County officials made some statement that they were going to withdraw all of the county checks unless they stopped rioting. And they said, 'We don't give a damn about the country; we don't have anything anyway, so we have nothing to lose.'...

"... There has been quite a bit of civil rights activity, which has been ignored by the power structure, which has been laughed at and derogated by Chief Parker. But the fact that these protests have been going, and have been in large part ig-

nored or played down by Chief Parker and Mayor Yorty, and therefore have really not made the gains that they should have made. You see, these people who are rioting are not members of CORE. When the bulk of the people look at these organizations... they don't feel like going out and letting somebody spit on them or kick them or call them names. However, they hold a certain hope that these organizations will do some good. If their efforts are futile because the powers that be play them down, laugh at them, derogate them, naturally these people give up hope altogether in these organizations, and will take it in their own hands. I had people tell me, after I told them that I was from CORE, 'We're for you and what you're trying to do, but we don't believe it that way man, and you couldn't do anything, so we're doing it now.' This is how the people feel."

MIKE HANNON, Los Angeles CORE, recently suspended from the Los Angeles Police Department

"I don't believe that the Los Angeles Police Department can pretend that they have not been adequately forewarned about impending violence in the Negro areas of this city. Civil rights leaders in Los Angeles for years have been trying to tell the police department that the attitudes and practices of the police officers in those areas were building up the kind of hostility and frustration that was going to lead to really major violence. The Police Department has continued to insist that their policies are above reproach and that their practices reflect these policies. Now, the department knows this isn't true, and I know from my own personal experience that this isn't true.

"Up until 1961, the Police Department in Los Angeles was rigidly segregated. Integration happened the first part of July in '61. Prior to that time there were only certain geographical areas Negroes could work in, the predominantly Negro areas. There were only certain jobs they could hold; there was never an integrated radio car team. If they had three Negroes on a watch where they were running two man cars, they would put one car out with two Negroes in it and keep the other man in the station filing papers or something rather than put him out in the car with a white officer. Since the integration, Negro officers have been working all over the city and so they are much more thinly spread in the Negro areas than they were. However, the department certainly isn't making any special effort to utilize Negro officers in this situation, except in such public positions as the public information division

"During the trial of my case, one of the issues involved an article I wrote for the Los Angeles

CORE-lator in which I referred to bigotry on the Police Department and the use of police facilities to promote right-wing political causes. The defense came into the trial well prepared to prove that everything I said in that article was true. We were not allowed, however, to put this evidence on. For two days we tried to present witnesses to show what the actual practices of the Los Angeles Police Department were in Negro neighborhoods--not only civilian witnesses, but police officers. We did put on the stand two Negro police officers who were willing to testify to the kind of things that go on in Los Angeles. While we weren't allowed to put this testimony directly before the police judges, we did make offers of proof of exactly what these men were willing to testify to, so the department was aware of what we were going to put on.

"I can cite a couple of examples. One Negro officer, Norman Eadlund, came in prepared to testify that while he worked at 77th Station--the station that controls the Watts area where the rioting started--a couple of years ago he saw a stone-cold sober Negro man come into the detective bureau on 77th Street to find out why his brother had been arrested. He insisted on knowing after they told him to get out; they booked him drunk. In the same week a Negro police officer tried to arrest a white bar owner who was a friend of the detectives and was unable to get him booked at 77th Street Station.

"We brought in other witnesses. Another retired police officer would have testified to the particular harassment of racially mixed couples in cars containing white and Negroes by officers in the minority communities. I've personally seen this, too. I'll be riding in a police car and my partner says, 'Look at that. Lets go shake that car.' 'Why?' 'Well look there's a 'nigger' in there with that white woman,' or vice versa.

"My own experience in five years in Newton Division was that, while there are a lot of fine men on the police department, the prevailing attitude on the part of white police officers is one of white supremacy, nicely structured by right-wing ideologists like William Buckley who make all this garbage sound almost respectable. But nevertheless, these feelings are there. They're very open.

"I've also worked as a patrol officer in white areas of this city, and it's like two different worlds the way the policeman react to their ordinary contacts with citizens. Simple things like how you act when you go in somebody's home. When I worked Highland Park Division, a white area, officers would take a seat if they were offered them or they would take their hat off; they were courteous in their language. More typical in Newton division, in the Negro area, officers, even if they were answering a

call to make a burglary report, would stomp around the victim's home like members of the Gestapo looking for Jews hiding in the ghetto. Rudeness, discourtesy, just a generally well displayed and open attitude of complete contempt for the people they were working for is so common and such a standard practice that the police department evidently thinks it's normal.

"I've seen the chief of police on television the last few days trying to blame the whole thing on agitators. Parker said, 'Agitators have been going into that neighborhood for two years and telling those people they're deprived, and so naturally they are beginning to believe them.' My God, does he really believe these people are so stupid that they don't know they're deprived until agitators tell them so? The whole trouble is that the Los Angeles Police Department is run by a blind man. He's blind and deaf and willfully so. William Parker is the same man that was telling the Civil Rights Commission a few years ago about how his officers had to deal with people not far removed from the wild tribes of the hills of Mexico. And he's no slouch at right-wing activities, either. As recently as May of this year, just before my trial, Parker transcribed a radio interview for the Manion Forum--Manion is on the National Council of the Birch Society and the editorial staff of their magazine, American Opinion--the same Chief Parker who insists over and over to the press that he doesn't know anything about Birch-ers on the Police Department. He says he doesn't consciously know a single member of the Birch Society. The man is just either a liar or willfully blind.

"John Rousselot claims 2,000 Birch Society members among peace officers in Los Angeles County and I wouldn't be surprised if this wasn't a very accurate figure. I know several men at Newton Station where I worked for quite a long time, that admitted membership in the Birch Society. I know that the Los Angeles Police Department does have a right-wing front group called FIFO, Fire and Police Research Association of Los Angeles, which is very active in promoting right-wing causes. They've got five registered lobbyists in Sacramento. They put out a monthly smear sheet that has attacked everything that even smells of liberalism in the entire state and nation. They've attacked Braden, the Board of Education Chairman; they've attacked the union movement; there was even an article entitled, 'Sex, Sukarno, and the State Department,' signed by a police officer where he accuses the American State Department of providing prostitutes for Sukarno.

"Chief Parker himself characterizes police officers as naturally conservative, ultra-conservative, or very right-wing. Now I don't believe

that this should be grounds for expelling anybody from the police department. I'm not in favor of political loyalty tests under any circumstances. There are police officers of quite liberal persuasion. There's one man who's high in CDC circles who's a police officer, but he's very quiet about his political affiliation. Other officers, even Negroes who are involved with the civil rights movement are very, very quiet about it on the police department. I object to the fact that they can talk and those of us who are left of center or even mildly liberal are just not allowed to speak. Anytime I get into a controversy with a right-winger they say that I'm causing morale problems and I'm a troublemaker.

"The whole line of these right-wing organizations that are appealing to lower middle class whites plays on their feelings of white supremacy, plays them up as the good, decent, hardworking people who are supporting all these lazy no-good loafers living off county aid, and, of course, completely ignores the factors which cause unemployment in this country and create the situation that make this aid necessary.

"The major problem, it seems to me, between the police department and the Negro community is a total lack of communication and a total lack of any attempt to comprehend or understand the whole life of the people that they're dealing with in this community. The police department in Los Angeles fits into the general pattern of California criminal law enforcement like a handful of nineteenth century gravel thrown into a twentieth century machine. The courts, the penology system, the probation and control departments, all operate in terms of rehabilitating a person who's committed anti-social acts so that his behavior patterns will be changed. The Police Department, on the contrary, works for a police chief who sets absolutely the line of the police department and Chief Parker's line is: 'I believe that man is inherently corrupt, that his criminal tendencies must be constantly repressed.'

"The Police Department has got to make a real effort to educate its officers about the Negro community that it works in so that they don't believe that the civil rights movement, for instance, is nothing but a great big Communist plot, so that they have some understanding of the problems and frustrations of the people they're dealing with, and they know what the social dynamics of this community are. Secondly, the Police Department is not under civilian control in this city. The police chief has civil service tenure on his job as police chief, which he shouldn't have. In many cities, a man has his civil service tenure at the highest rank he's made through the civil service process, usually deputy chief or captain or inspector. Let those people take

the exam for chief and have tenure in their permanent rank, but not an iron clad grip on their job at the top of the pyramid of authority like Chief Parker has. But I would go further, I think that policing is so important because it's the actual point of contact between the people and the machinery of the state that the ordinary citizens ought to have some direct control over this body of armed men with monopoly on the use of force. Therefore, what I personally advocate is the creation of a directly elected civilian police commission of full-time civilians who will supervise the operation of the department directly."

JERRY FARBER, English Department, California State College, and volunteer worker for Non-violent Action Committee (NVAC)

"The Los Angeles papers tend to over and over again use the adjectives, 'grim,' 'ominous,' 'jeering,' 'angry,' 'furious,' and so forth. There is certainly a lot of hostility in this, but there is one word they've left out, that's 'happy.' There's an enormous amount of joy in that community. I think back to Wednesday night after it really got going and the kids started throwing rocks at passing white cars. Then particularly Thursday night when I was down in the Watts area on Avalon. There was some heavy looting going on; people were happy. This is important; it may be hard for some persons to accept. I don't mean just the kids were happy or just the gangs were happy. I heard an older woman say that for the first time in her life she was proud to be black. Down on central near the NVAC office there are some people who have small businesses there, some Negroes, and they may not be participating, but they're looking and they're smiling, digging it.

"Just as I was leaving around three o'clock they were doing a lot of rock throwing and the police were coming in and making some arrests. Kids had kind of organized themselves--organized isn't the word--they disorganized themselves into small roving bands of bottle and rock throwers. With some other people I passed by one of these groups and the kids said, 'Man, you know we've been taking it for a long time, and now were giving it. I don't care what happens; I'm ready to die,' he said, 'but for once the tables are turned.' And I think this is an important part of it.

"Also, the people throughout the whole community are aware that they've been getting screwed all their lives. When they see these businesses being looted, they don't exactly feel sad or guilty about it because there's kind of a feeling that maybe they've got it coming. A lot of the people involved in this don't have the kind

of identification with this society that a white man has. It's not their society and so for once maybe they're getting their own back.

"And then there's perhaps something even deeper. A lot of the people are saying with all of the looting and the burning and the rock throwing, 'Dammit, I exist.' 'Here I am.' And that's something, because that whole ghetto has been invisible in the sense of Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. That is, most of the people in Los Angeles hardly know of its existence. There are people who have lived here all their lives and never been in the Negro community. But it's not even in that sense that they've been invisible. They've been invisible as part of the social structure, as part of the political structure. They've been cut out, and so here their presence is being felt. They're thrusting themselves in on the white society on their own terms and there's a certain amount of just simply pride in asserting identity. Yorty or Parker or someone said as recently as two weeks ago that we have the best race relations of any city in the United States. Well, we don't, dammit, we don't. We don't at all and people have to face up to this."

Editor's Note: If you wish to hear the tapes or play them for a group, contact Bryson Collins, 841-9899.

HARLEM

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes

Watts: Burning the American Dream

The views that I am about to express are my own since I do not feel that I can represent anyone but myself.

In the August 17th edition of the Los Angeles Times there appeared an editorial by Evans and Novack. This editorial's main theme was that there had been a waste of poverty money in Philadelphia, Penna. because the head of the poverty program (in Philadelphia) had gone to Harrisburg, the State Capitol, to lobby against the Governor's veto of a bill that would give extra money to welfare recipients. He had also carried local people with him.

In the above two paragraphs are embodied the causes and aspirations of the Civil Rights Movement, the Peace Movement, The Free Speech Movement, the Negro riots (if you wish to call them that), the white teenage riots (if you wish to call them that), the fast advancing global racial war which will be the end of the human race as we know it. A presumptuous conclusion, since we have God on our side.

Let me explain. There are two waves sweeping this globe and they are as related as the tidal-wave is to the earthquake. The first wave is the revolt of the have-nots (mainly non-Caucasian) against the haves (mainly whites). There is not a non-white people on this earth who have not suffered at the hands of whites. This is a fact that all our glorified history books cannot cover up.

The second wave is a desire of people to speak for themselves. This wave crosses all racial barriers.

The non-white wants a say in determining his own destiny and is willing to die for that right. The right to represent himself. The thinking Caucasian sees this and identifies with this aspiration, not only out of fear, not only out of guilt, but out of the same frustration. In spite of a material advantage (gained at the expense of the non-white) the white has started to realize that he has no say in his destiny either. You can tell when a white has "arrived" when he sheds his guilt and fear, (which knocks the props out of his paternalism) and realizes that the Civil Rights Movement is not a movement solely for black people but for all people.

The movement against the war in Vietnam has this same frustration at its base. People are becoming aware that their destinies are not in their own hands but rest in the hands of those who "represent" them. The Free Speech Movement was simply students asking for the right to think and explore instead of being fed into the automated machinery that has been set to turn them into non-thinking robots. Other students who have not figured out the reason for their frustrations, destroy resort towns.

This was clearly pointed out by the students who worked in Mississippi during the Summer of 1964. They went in idealistic, bent on lifting their little black brother to freedom. They came out hostile towards the system that was destroying them as individuals. What had really happened was that they discovered that they were in the same boat as the Mississippi blacks. In fact, they were worse off because the blacks were at least aware of their predicament. (Who lifted who up?)

In short, they had discovered that people, given the opportunity, are the best masters of their fates and captains of their souls. The American people have been so robotized, (and consequently so removed from the above thought) that if you were to move the subway entrances in New York just fifty feet, you could tie up the island of Manhattan.

I mentioned the editorial by Evans and Novack for two reasons. First, because I want to point out that they are as wrong as you can get. Anyone who cannot see the relationship between the poverty program and welfare is blind. That is if you assume that the poverty program was designed to aid poor people, (which incidentally, it wasn't). I have to go on the assumption that Evans and Novack feel it was, since they didn't state otherwise. Even then, I could find, in this age of automation and cybernation with the accompanying lack of jobs, few better ways of spending poverty funds.

Secondly, people like Evans and Novack, who "represent" those few people who want to do all the thinking for the many, have a monopoly of the means of mass propaganda. That may well be our salvation. (If we are to be saved, and I don't believe it). To get our message over, we have to rely on personal contact with people. This is our ace in the hole, but it is also our dilemma. An ace in the hole is usually of little value without one up and showing. Are we really willing to give up the concept of "established and

responsible leadership"; willing, if necessary, to shed ourselves of wordly possessions and positions; willing to let people decide for themselves what is best for them and work with them towards their goals; willing to believe that they have this ability, (Fannie Lou Hamer is more representative than an exception); willing to explore the possibilities of independent political action instead of being wedded to one party; and finally, which may well be the joker in the deck, willing to create moral instead of physical confrontations?

I feel that these things had to be pointed out before we can start to talk about the revolt that occurred in Los Angeles. Just try to imagine the frustration that takes place in a ghetto such as Watts. Constant bombardment by all the media of propaganda, talking about Negro gains. The Civil Rights Bill, the voting rights bill, the "defeat" of Goldwater, token black representation in higher positions, as just a few examples.

None of the above have or will mean one damn thing to the Negro buried in Watts. (Add to this the passage of Proposition 13 which told him that he couldn't even physically relocate). He is caught between the illusion of great strides being made by black people and the reality of his own worsening conditions. Throw into this the gestapo role of the police, (I call them gestapo because they serve the power structure and not the people) and you have your revolt.

I find it amusing that those who are quickest to condemn the revolt of the people in Watts, who were only asking to share in the American dream, are the people who worship our revolt against mother England. The ridiculousness of the mental state of white America can be clearly seen in the cry of many whites that the people who revolted should be sent to Vietnam.

The tragedy of Watts is that we are not profiting from the revolt, as

we have not profited from revolts in the past.

The people are asking for the removal of one symbol of oppression, Chief Parker. The inadequate Mayor, who makes decisions for the people of Los Angeles is defending his warden of Watts. The people are asking for jobs while we appoint washed up politicians and "Negro leaders" to poverty jobs which means that they can now get paid to sit among the unpaid and show them the proper way to eat at the table, (very important if you want to be "acceptable"), though the teacher at times has trouble identifying what is being eaten, if indeed eating is taking place at all.

The people want a civilian review board, but the reply from the decision-makers is that the police can best investigate the police. When the people retort: "then let us investigate our own revolt," the response is to appoint an ex-head of the CIA to do the job.

The tragedy of Watts is that we are seeking a structure for the solution of the problems facing us instead of freeing people and letting their aspirations determine the structure. This convinces me that we do not trust free people. (I'm positive that guilt plays a major role here).

"Still water runs deep and dirty at the bottom." The city of Los Angeles had become "still." The political machinery had ground to a halt. The "haves" had depended on Chief Parker to maintain the calm while they slumbered in a sterile world of material comforts. Their sediments had drifted to the bottom to such an extent that the people of Watts were being smothered. They coughed up the secretions and flung them back towards the surface whence they came.

Watts was saying to white America that the black man in this country will tolerate no slumber nor will he walk peacefully to the gas chambers.

Lou Smith

"...violence is the final support of power, and the final resort of those who would contest it."

C. Wright Mills

WATTS: AN ANALYSIS

"It couldn't happen out here on the West Coast" was the complacent tone as the wave of Negro rioting swept the slums of the large eastern cities in the summer of 1964. There were a few civil rights leaders and social scientists who predicted trouble, but trouble did not come that year. And after all, why should it? The Negro was getting a great break out on the West Coast. Los Angeles Police Chief Parker cited an Urban League report showing that Negroes were better off in Los Angeles than in the East. Negroes were not packed into tenement slums as in Harlem but lived in houses on streets lined with palm trees. There were of course some trouble spots. In 1963, the California Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported:

The committee concluded that the attitude and opinion of the great majority of Los Angeles Negroes was one of expectation of unequal law enforcement . . . whether justified or not.

The Commission was urged to investigate the charges that the Los Angeles police used excessive force. But that was three years ago and following the release of the Commission's report Chief Parker instituted a number of programs to improve the image of the police. He ran training sessions on minority groups and began a program to convince children that the policeman was "friendly Officer Bill."

In a very real sense the Negro ghettos on the West Coast were invisible. The deceptive exteriors of the houses, the lack of rats, and the palm trees do not fit into the traditional image of a slum community. The freeway network--so highly developed in Los Angeles--allows people to pass through a slum every day without knowing it. Watts was a prime example of the "invisibility" of the Negro slum. If a person had heard of Watts at all, it was usually because it was the location of the "Watts Towers," an interesting and beautiful construction of steel, mesh, concrete, broken bottles, tiles, and shells, built by an immigrant who worked alone for 33 years.

However, the most important reason for "invisibility" was that Negroes had not pushed themselves forward politically or any other way. There had been no race riots to remind the city that it had crammed some 10% of its population into 1.5% of its land area. Nor had the Negro community any political spokesman to present its case. The city councilman for Watts is a white who voted against a city Fair Employment Practices law and attributed the riots to a "group of people who are not law-abiding, and who were encouraged by the Chinese Communists in the community."

There are, of course, Negroes on the city council. (In fact, L.A. is the only major city in the country with a higher proportion of Negroes on the Council than in the population.) But these men are not responsible to the ghetto and are dismissed by most of the Negroes as "Uncle Toms." In their election, they had all received a mandate "to get rid of Parker," which is within the power of the city council. Yet, none had taken the initiative in this. There is almost no political organization in the Negro community to force politicians to even the demagogic militancy of Harlem's Adam Clayton Powell. The absence of a traditional political machine means that Negroes do not even get the slight representation and services provided by the machines of the Eastern cities.

Not until August 1965 did the Negro really intrude on white Los Angeles. Overnight the invisible became visible and every would-be liberal politician (and even a number of conservatives) was wringing his hands and making speeches about the conditions of poverty which lead "to senseless violence." Politicians made speeches about how 60% of the population was on welfare, 30% to 40% were unemployed, about how terrible it was that children in the ghetto were fed their meals on an average of 22 cents per day. We will say more about the responses to Watts later. Suffice it to say here that no matter how much "civic leaders" and "responsible Negroes" decried useless violence, the problems of Watts and Central Avenue were now visible to the entire nation.

The "Riot"

The traditional image of a riot is that of a completely aimless and senseless action in which the participants have lost control of themselves and are just striking out at whatever they contact. This image is a myth for at the base of most riots there are real social questions. Although played down by radio, TV and the press, there was a high degree of social consciousness in the Watts "riots"--probably more so than in the riots that took place in the East last year. By social consciousness I mean the extent to which actions were directed against specific social grievances and the extent to which the participants understood this.

In the Watts "riots," the actions were generally directed against the symbols and manifestations of their oppression--the white merchants and the Los Angeles police.

The grievances against the local stores were many. Stores in Negro ghettos are notorious for shoddy merchandise at high prices. These businesses can be maintained because the local community cannot afford to travel far away

to shop. But even more important is the credit system. Precisely because they live in poverty, many Negroes must get credit to buy both basic necessities and symbols of self-respect which include clothes, furniture, and automobiles. Credit is available to them only from the local merchant at outrageous credit charges. When a customer cannot meet his credit payments the merchandise is repossessed and often sold again as new. There is a story told about "the thousand-dollar lamp" so dubbed by salesmen in a furniture store because it had been sold, repossessed and sold again as new so many times. The lamp and the store were destroyed.

Intensifying these grievances is the fact that the stores are largely owned by whites who are seen as taking the Negroes' money back with them to the white areas at night in "Jew canoes" (Cadillacs). That Negroes are exploited by these stores has little to do with the color of the owners. The practices by Negro businessmen are often as bad. What is at fault is the economic system that places the impoverished at the mercy of store owners such as those described above. But the fact that most store owners are white provides an easy reason and understanding for oppression. It is much easier to strike out at a white store owner as the symbol of oppression than at an economic system.

This is further intensified by the overt and/or covert racist attitudes on the part of the white merchants. Take, for example, the following report in the Los Angeles Times:

B., a Caucasian who owns a clothing and yardage goods store in Watts said he, too, had always been fair and honest with his customers. But one of his stores was burned out and the other was looted. . . .

B. didn't blame his old customers for what had happened to his shops. "It's Negroes from the South," he said. "They never had anything and don't know how to act. Now they've torn down what we had."

B. doesn't blame all Negroes--he makes distinctions. It couldn't possibly have been his customers that harmed his store because he had always been fair and honest with them. No Negro who knew how fair and tolerant he was would have done this to him. But the facade slipped away; the Times article goes on:

While B. was talking with a reporter, a group of Negro men gathered round to listen and comment.

A police car with four white officers in it and four shotguns sticking out of the windows cruised slowly past the group.

"Hey! Why didn't you use that thing when you had a chance?" B. yelled to one of the white officers, pointing at his gun.

The policeman held up two fingers.

"You should have got five of them," B. replied to the sardonic gesture.

Thus, especially at the early stages of the riot, white-owned stores were burned and looted and Negro-owned stores were left untouched. There was some publicity given by the press to the signs that were painted on store windows, such as "blood brothers," "Negro," "Negro owned," "soul brother," etc. But at the early stages of the riots these signs were not widely used and were generally unnecessary--people knew what was what. While white stores were hit and Negro stores were untouched in general, there were a number of cases where stores whose white owners had good reputations were not looted and where stores owned by Negroes which had bad reputations were attacked. In some cases white merchants put up signs such as "soul brother" in the hope of coming through unscathed but usually this did not fool anyone. On the other hand, there were few signs put up on the 4200 block of Central Avenue--known among Negroes as "Swing Alley," yet most of the Negro-owned stores were not damaged.

Later in the riots, there was not so much discrimination, especially as people moved outside their own immediate communities to "where the action was" in the hope of taking part in the looting. But in general, stores which proudly displayed the Negritude of the owners were not severely damaged.

That the stores were the focus of much of the activity was made clear by the Los Angeles Fire Department's statistics on the damages during the riots. Of 209 structures that the Fire Department lists as destroyed or badly damaged by the riots, most are markets, liquor stores, furniture stores, clothing stores, etc. Only a few residences are listed and all but one of these is adjacent to or in the same building as a store. The one exception is listed by the Fire Department as vacant.

The second, and perhaps more important, symbol of oppression to many of the "rioters," was the Los Angeles police. What was involved here was the simple question of dignity. Resentment toward the police in the Negro community of L.A. has been noted for years, as it has in all the large American cities.

During interviews, rioters made complaint after complaint about the treatment they, or friends or relatives, had received from the police. It was not only a question of brutal treatment--this was, of course, important--but also simple indignities such as being called "boy" and "nigger." All through the riots the police denied mistreatment of Negroes and racism in the force. But the statements and the actions of the police during the riot told a different story. Police Chief Parker likened the rioters to "monkeys in a zoo" and refused to meet with Negro "leaders." Newspapers sent Negro reporters into the area to cover the story and most of them reported some indignity to themselves. "What do you want here, black boy?" a cop asked one reporter. A civil rights worker and friend of Negro State Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally related the following:

. . . we were there when policemen stuck a gun in the face of Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally and told him [after Dymally had identified himself] . . . that if he took a goddamned step, he'd blow his head off, he didn't give a damn who he was.

Apparently even being a "responsible Negro leader" doesn't protect one from indignities. Such incidents were so common that few news stories did not contain at least one of them. Newsweek, for example reported:

On Vernon Avenue a pedestrian who was halted by a cop protested loudly that he was only bound home from work. "Don't yell at me," said the cop, "you lost your rights a couple of days ago." "He thinks everyone black is wrong," said the pedestrian to the cop's two companions. "Well, you ain't the man no more. Who are you to judge any black man?"

These examples show a tone and an attitude which does not show up in the public relations releases of the police department about "friendly Officer Bill" or in attitude survey questionnaires. These were the indignities that were symbolized by the white policeman in Watts against whom the Negro community for one week overtly directed their fury.

A word should be said here about the question of violence on the part of the rioters. The rioters were anti-white but generally they did not direct themselves against individual whites who happened to be around. In this sense what took place in Los Angeles was not a race riot. Whites could and did come into the riot area to help

participate in the looting or just stand around and watch. White reporters and TV crews gave varied reports of their treatment by Negroes. Some were not bothered at all, others were attacked. While the situation was varied regarding the attitude of the rioters toward whites, one thing appeared to be crucial for a white to remain untouched--that he did not try to dissuade those who were looting stores.

There were rumored to be a number of gangs which did look for any white person to beat up, but for the most part it seems that most of the "rioters" were interested in looting the stores and stoning and avoiding the cops.

There was even a difference between the Negro attitude toward the cops and his attitude toward the National Guardsmen. The Guardsmen were not regarded as the bitter enemies as were the cops. Days after the riots were officially over one could still see very plainly this difference in attitude. Guardsmen who were stationed on the streets might be seen playing ball with some kids or talking to some Negroes. There was undoubtedly an air of tension but not the bitter hostility that could be seen when a police car would roll by knots of people gathered on the street. Numbers of Negroes would turn and raise their fists and/or fingers toward the cops in defiance.

The press, especially the TV, played up the violence of the rioters despite the Negro who stepped in front of a camera and pleaded, "Tell it like it is!" But the statistics tell a somewhat different story. Of the 36 reported dead as the results of the rioting, only three were whites. One was a fireman who died when a wall collapsed on him. The other two were police officers. At first the press claimed that they had been killed by snipers. It only later came out that one had died when a policeman had tripped and his shotgun fired wildly. The events of the second death were not clarified until three men were indicted for the murder of Deputy Sheriff Ludlow. Until September 1st, the press referred to the "cold-blooded killing by hoodlums." Then the Los Angeles Times stated that Ludlow's partner

. . . reportedly told the grand jury he approached the car carrying a shotgun and one of the occupants grabbed it. Ludlow rushed up and was shot in the stomach when the shotgun discharged during a struggle for the weapon.

The rioters tended to avoid the police. When they did come in contact with the police, their fighting usually took the form of hurling rocks, bottles and other objects. But, generally speaking, it was the police that sought out the rioters and not the rioters the police. There were undoubtedly some snipers, but these were greatly exaggerated by the police and press.

In fact, most of the brutality and violence toward individuals was inflicted by the police upon Negroes they caught looting or just standing around. The police were tired and on edge and they were even less likely to take that spirit of defiance and self-respect which had developed in the Negro community. Every new act of police brutality or indignity against a Negro further increased the defiance of the Negroes, which in turn increased the brutality of the police.

Revolution?

What was extremely important about the "Watts riots" was the extent and way in which the Negro participants articulated their grievances and their actions. In Harlem there were left-wing political groups which made a conscious effort to try to articulate demands for the Negro community and mobilize Negroes for specific actions. Although they were not of great influence, they at least existed and could be pointed to by the liberals and reactionaries as the "cause" of the riots. In Los Angeles these groups were extremely small, unorganized, and generally caught unprepared for the riots. They played no discernible role. The Black Muslims (although they command a great deal of sympathy and respect in the Negro community, largely because they are constantly attacked and harassed by the police) also appeared to play little role in the rioting.

The rioters themselves saw their actions as a revolt against "whitey" or "The Man." Newspaper interviews and radio call-in shows

would commonly have such statements as "Man, this ain't no riot, it's a revolution." A number of times the struggle with the police was compared to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

A Negro psychiatrist who stayed in the Watts area during the rioting put it this way:

They feel morally right about what they have done. They look upon it as a revolt rather than a riot and therefore subject to a different value system. They see their insurrection as an opportunity to achieve dignity and self respect. It is as if they were saying, "It's better to be feared than to be held in contempt."

The pride that Negroes felt for their actions of a few days before was evident. They may have been defeated in some military sense, but what was important was that the cops could not do it. The cops were defeated and had to call in thousands of national guardsmen. Even Police Chief Parker's statement (which once again illustrated his mentality), "Now we are on top and they [Negroes] are on the bottom," was greeted with mixed feelings in the Negro community. The statement could be interpreted to mean that at least for a while Negroes were on top.

The sense of dignity and pride that the Negro community felt is perhaps best illustrated by a story from Life Magazine (August 27, 1965). Shane Alexander relates the story of a Negro friend of hers from Watts, Stan Sanders. Sanders is a Negro who has made it. He had been student-body president of Whittier College. He had been a football star and after college had turned down a \$13,000 offer from the Chicago Bears in order to become one of America's first Negro Rhodes scholars. He had studied at Oxford and had traveled around Europe. And he had led a parade down the main streets of Watts as part of Stan Sanders Day. Here was a Negro success story. Two years ago he said:

There are degrees of being a Negro. I don't think like a Negro but like a human being. If somebody wants to reject me on the basis of color that's his problem, not mine.

But the "riots" gave Stan Sanders a new pride in being a Negro. Alexander quotes him as follows:

"I find the Day [Stan Sanders Day] and the riots absolutely compatible," he said. "A community takes pride in things it has achieved. Then it vents its hatred against things it despises." At the height of the violence, he went on, he found himself joyously speaking the nitty-gritty Negro jargon he hadn't used since junior high, and despite the horrors of the night, this morning he felt a strange pride in Watts. "As a riot," he told me, "it was a masterful performance. I sense a change there now, a buzz, and it tickles. For the first time people in Watts feel a real pride in

being black. I remember, when I first went to Whittier, I worried that if I didn't make it there, if I was rejected, I wouldn't have a place to go back to. Now I can say: 'I'm from Watts.'"

What is of overriding significance in the "Watts riot" is the high degree of social consciousness that pervaded the actions. In many ways the riots resembled nineteenth-century peasant jacqueries with all the problems of those actions.

There was no leadership and immediate direction. What happened in what place was largely the result of accident. Much was dependent on radio and TV reports of "where the action is" to bring people from surrounding areas onto the scene. Nowhere was action sustained for any long period of time. The length of the "rioting" was largely due to its spreading from one area to the next. Where it would spring up each time depended greatly on chance groupings of people, and triggering incidents.

People were striking out at the visible symbols of their oppressive conditions. But in the absence of a leadership and a program to identify what was responsible for those conditions and to provide alternatives to them, huge amounts of energy were fruitlessly dissipated. The burning and looting of white-owned stores gave the Negroes involved some feeling of dignity long denied them. But there was little dent on the economic system which spawned those stores, and which will now rebuild them so that they can return to the same practices (perhaps more subtly) which made them a symbol of oppression.

The Liberal Response

One of the most important aspects of what took place in Los Angeles was the response to it on the part of liberals and the civil rights movement. The similarity of the responses from a wide range of leaders was remarkable. There were generally two parts to the response. First, the breakdown of law and order was attacked and Negroes were criticized for resorting to "senseless violence." Secondly, there was some statement about how bad social conditions had produced the riot. The two leading liberal cartoonists in the nation portrayed this theme. The Mauldin cartoon showed a Negro banging his head against a wall (with the impact labeled "riots") while a door right next to him marked "civil rights" was partly open. This was over the caption "The Hard Way." Similarly, Herblock showed an ugly man marked "stupid injustice" looking at his water reflection labeled "stupid violence." The caption was "You ugly devil."

In the same vein California's Governor Brown declared that while poverty is no excuse for violence, neither is violence an excuse for forgetting about poverty. LBJ was also careful to balance his remarks. In one speech he likened the rioters of Los Angeles to the KKK

and insisted that "Neither old wrongs nor new fears can ever justify arson or murder." He then followed this with the promise to continue fighting poverty: "And we shall overcome, and I am enlisted for the duration."

And let it not be thought that this was the response of only a narrow section of Democratic party liberals. The same response emanated from most of the "respectable" civil rights leadership. To some extent the message of Watts reached even Barry Goldwater who had much the same response as Johnson and Company: "The thing that happened in Los Angeles--and I think it will happen again in this country--was caused by people . . . just being fed up with not being able to get jobs, with not being able to live as well as other people live. . . . I don't discount the agitation that took place, but I think we better get on the job with providing training, providing incentive, and providing integration wherever it doesn't exist for all people whether they be Negro or white, whose education and economic backgrounds have not been as fortunate as some of the others."

This element in the initial liberal response to "Watts"--the extensive softening of criticism by reference to the social problems involved--is extremely important. Suddenly it became not only fashionable, but imperative, for politicians to quote extensively from social scientists about the grinding conditions of poverty. The Labor Department study which stressed the breakdown of the Negro family was often cited. Newspaper editorials are titled "Jobs Are Key in Negro Crisis." Overnight, the question of how to get jobs, better housing, and improved conditions for Negroes was in the forefront of the news.

And this led to some action. Leroy Collins was sent in to resolve the political disputes that held up the War on Poverty money for Los Angeles. Large numbers of businessmen--especially those with businesses in the ghetto, such as chain stores--were offering to hire Negroes. In part, this was the mood of the time immediately following Watts; but even more important, if your business was in the ghetto, it suddenly became good business to hire Negroes for all jobs, including and especially managerial jobs. "A kind of insurance," one businessman admitted in a more candid moment.

In the labor movement the "riots" caused considerable stirrings. A number of conferences were held to discuss a program to get jobs for Negroes. A number of proposals were made by union leaders to deal with what everyone recognizes is the crucial problem in the ghetto--jobs. Most important was the proposal of the L.A. County Federation of Labor executive board that hiring policies in the construction crafts be "relaxed," in order that Watts residents be given priority in the rebuilding in that area. In effect, the proposal was for "preferential treatment" for Negroes and was rejected by the conservative craft unions.

(Numbers of others have also broached the extremely delicate subject of "preferential treatment." Vice-President Humphrey said that new jobs and educational opportunities must be "deliberately opened" for Negroes.)

"Preferential treatment" has long been recognized by some radicals, civil rights leaders, and social scientists as absolutely necessary for the Negro to achieve real economic gains. Employment, education, housing, family structure, and morals are all closely interrelated. Without a decent income, an open occupancy housing law is next to meaningless for most Negroes. Because of the large unemployment and underemployment in the United States, even if there were no discrimination on the basis of color, the Negro would still bear the brunt of unemployment. The discrimination of the past would still be at work so that in competing with whites for the scarce jobs, the Negro would have less seniority, a poorer education, less job experience, less contacts for jobs in crafts which are presently all white, etc. Some civil rights leaders argue that the problem cannot be solved until there is full employment and that therefore the demand for preferential treatment only detracts from the main goal of employment for all.

But precisely because full employment is necessary, "preferential treatment" as a demand takes on additional importance. In order to overcome the tremendous political obstacles against getting a program of full employment, the civil rights movement needs allies. The likeliest of these allies is the labor movement. In the context of the cold war, large unemployment, and rapid technological change, the labor movement has had to choose between two political strategies. The first strategy involves fighting for the unemployed and those most vulnerable to displacement as a result of technological change, as well as fighting for those union members who are at present secure in their jobs. Such a program would involve fighting for greater control over technological change, extensive public works, extensive retraining programs, "30 for 40" (thirty hours' work for forty hours' pay), price control, etc. A real struggle for such demands would make the trade union movement truly the ally of the Negro struggle. The second strategy is largely limited to attempting to maintain the security and increase the benefits for those union members whose jobs are not threatened by technological change.

Unfortunately, to one degree or another, practically the entire labor movement has by default concentrated its efforts on the second strategy at the expense of the first. There are many reasons for this. The second strategy can be pursued largely at the bargaining table with individual industries and companies. The first strategy means that the unions must focus their energies politically. While many of the elements of the first strategy have been raised by the labor movement, the Johnsons and Kennedys, the businessmen, Dixiecrats, and city machines with which the labor movement is "allied" within the Democratic party oppose such measures. The

labor movement, rather than fighting this alliance, has acceded to it as the lesser evil and has taken the path of least resistance--taken what concessions it can get from the Democratic party and focused its efforts on protecting the jobs and increasing the benefits for those presently enrolled in unions.

"Preferential treatment," however, threatens this path of least resistance for it refuses to allow unions to provide security and benefits (such as passing on jobs from father to son as in the construction trades) at the expense of the Negro. In effect, by challenging the labor movement's ability to protect its present members at the expense of the Negro, the Negro demand for "preferential treatment" is a pressure on labor to make the political fight that will benefit not only its present members but also the unorganized and unemployed.

Thus, it is extremely significant that the question of "preferential treatment" was raised as a result of the "riots," and that it was supported by significant sections of the labor movement in Los Angeles.

Action, promises, and rhetoric were only one theme in the general response. A second theme which in many ways ran counter to the first was also clearly present. This was in one form or another an attempt to deny that there was anything so basically wrong with the conditions of the Northern ghetto that could produce a "revolt" against law and order, and private property. The variations on this theme included: (1) If Negroes had real leadership, the leadership could have prevented the riot. (2) Only a small number of Negroes were involved--"We abhor the violence to which the city has been subjected by a small number of lawless individuals," was the statement issued by a middle class Negro service sorority. (3) The problem is not really in the North where Negroes are treated well. The problem is that the North is having to pay for the disrespect for law and order which was taught to Negroes by whites in the South. (4) The problem was in immediate or contributing factors such as the arrest which triggered the "riot," the hot weather, etc.

As time passes this theme is becoming more and more predominant in official liberal circles. It completely misses the lessons of "Watts" for in fact what took place was the product of the failure of liberalism to deal with the problems and conditions of life in the ghetto. The "riots" were not the work of a small number; on the contrary, the overwhelming majority of ghetto Negroes participated in or identified with what happened.

One reason that the liberals have increasingly emphasized this theme is that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to solve the problems of jobs, and the social conditions of the ghetto within the framework of liberalism. The task is just too awesome. It is much easier to concern oneself with better public relations for the police and other "solutions" that, it is hoped, will eliminate the triggering incidents

that sparked the "riots," than with providing full employment.

And, as time passes, many of the insights that white liberals had for a short while, gradually fade and we are once again treated to speeches about how there is progress being made (Civil Rights Act, War on Poverty, etc.) and that Negroes cannot expect to have things changed overnight. Even if real progress were being made, how long Negroes must wait is open to debate. But no matter how well meaning are those who ask for patience, their words are empty for, in fact, over the last few years the Negro-white gap is increasing, not decreasing. Between 1960 and 1963, according to a Department of Labor study, the ratio of Negro family income to white family income not only did not rise, but fell from 55% to 53%.

Thus many of the promises for immediate action to meet the problems of jobs, housing, education, etc. are being forgotten as they meet institutional resistance. Other programs which have actually begun are gradually following the course of most such "poverty" programs--those sections of society with political power (which of course does not include the ghetto Negro) are twisting the programs to meet their own needs so that very little assistance, if any, filters down to the poor themselves. The reason the lessons of "Watts" are so easily "forgotten" is because there was and is no leadership or on-going organization in the Negro community which commands the respect of the ghetto. As a result there is no leadership which can "watchdog" the programs and politicians and mobilize (or threaten to mobilize) massive portions of the ghetto to increase pressure at critical points, to prevent politicians, trade union leaders and others from following the usual "path of least resistance" at the expense of the Negro. This is the real tragedy of "Watts."

The Role of the Civil Rights Movement

The relationship of the civil rights movement to what took place in Los Angeles, last August, must be understood from both a long and short range point of view. Over a period of time, the civil rights movement made two important contributions to the "riots."

First, although they rarely ever directly affected the ghetto Negro, the civil rights activities of the past two years did make an impact on the ghetto. It must be understood what poverty and the conditions of ghetto life do to people. So enervating are these problems that the Negro (or anyone else) who must live with them day to day cannot continually cope with them. To consciously recognize these problems and to be able to do nothing about them--i.e., to continually have immediate goals which are always beyond reach--is an intolerable situation. The problems are internalized as personal failure, personal weakness. This was especially true in the United States before the advent of civil rights movements. Before the "discovery" of poverty, the tone was that if you didn't make it, it was because you were not

trying or you had no talent. Under these circumstances it is far easier and "natural" to lower your sights and your goals to those things which there seems to be some chance of obtaining--to deal almost exclusively with problems of how you are going to live for the rest of the day or week.

Overcoming this sense of futility is a very long and difficult process. Years and generations of ghetto life develop barriers against having hopes raised, for to raise one's hopes also means to take a chance that the hopes will not be realized. It is far safer not to raise one's hopes and expectations.

This has been by no means overcome by the civil rights movement, but the situation has been changed somewhat. In the first place, the civil rights movement, even though largely middle class in nature has helped provide a new-found sense of dignity in being Negro. The ghetto Negro cannot, in general, identify with the "non-violence" aspect of the civil rights movement because in the violent world in which he lives "non-violence" is a symbol of their weakness and their practically "begging" position vis-a-vis whites. But, nonetheless, there was still much that the ghetto Negro could identify with in the civil rights movement. Every demonstration, sit-in or appointment of a Negro to high public office is, in one sense, felt ever so slightly as a victory for all Negroes. This increase in a sense of dignity and self-respect is very important for people to act.

In the second place, to some degree, the civil rights movement, both directly and indirectly through its influence on liberals, has changed the context of poverty. The message is presented again and again in a thousand different ways: Poverty is not because you have failed, but because you are oppressed; it is not your inadequacy as a man that is responsible but that you have been denied your rights and your opportunity; it is not your fault but the white man's fault. And when civil rights agitation and increasing unrest force LBJ to spread his consensus wings a bit further to try to hold his coalition together with "We shall overcome," the message that it is not your fault comes through just a little bit more. All of this ever so slightly raises the veil of futility that hangs over the lives of ghetto Negroes and allows that much more hope, that much greater expectation of what is due them and what is possible, and, consequently, that much greater possibility of them acting to change their lives.

The second aspect of the relationship of the civil rights movement to the "riots" was the contribution years of civil rights activity made toward the liberal responses. In many ways, the civil rights movement was responsible for creating the political atmosphere so that it was necessary for liberals (and even conservatives) to at least for a moment raise the social questions that were involved and to make promises for changing the social conditions which were at the base of the "riots." The nature of the response of liberals has been already discussed.

Suffice it here to note the role of the civil rights movement in making this the politically necessary response.

As important as these contributions of the civil rights movement are to what happened in Watts--and they must not be forgotten--the riots also clearly demonstrated the limitations and the failings of the civil rights movement. It was clear for all to see that the civil rights movement was an essentially middle class movement in constituency which had developed no roots in the ghetto. Recognized civil rights leaders were not able to provide any of the leadership so desperately needed by the Negroes in Los Angeles. Instead, they told people, many of whom for the first time were fighting to change their lives and perhaps for the first time felt a real sense of dignity, to go home--that is, return to their normal situation. And, as was to be expected, little attention was paid to them except to boo them down. Martin Luther King, after meeting with the white public officials, tried to hold a series of meetings in the ghetto. His reception was so poor at the first one that order could be obtained only by ejecting hecklers calling out the slogan of the "riots," "Burn, baby, burn!" King canceled the remainder of his tour. It was rumored that the reason given for cancellation was "security."

The failings of the civil rights leadership was no better indicated by the fact that their statements were no different from those of the liberal politicians. There were the same two parts, although sometimes in reverse order. There was the condemnation of "senseless violence" and a statement about the social causes which produced the "riots."

From Puerto Rico, Martin Luther King announced that he backed the "use of the full force of the police power to quell the situation in Los Angeles," but that what was needed in the long run was a massive program to relieve joblessness and poor housing conditions. James Farmer of CORE stated: "I unqualifiedly condemn the suicidal path of rioting. This is not the bridge to freedom . . . but we must remember that the outrage of unemployment and hopelessness that pervades the ghetto remains a prelude to the outrage of the rifle and the gasoline bomb. . . ." The Los Angeles Urban League "deplored the wanton destruction of life and property." The L.A. NAACP urged that the California National Guard be kept in the riot area for a longer time.

The established civil rights leadership began to issue soul-searching statements. The civil rights movement was middle class. The things on which it had focused (legal barriers, public accommodations, bank jobs, etc.) had been of little relevance to the ghetto Negro. They had failed to develop roots in the community, they said. "We as Negro leaders--and I include myself--have failed to take the civil rights movement to the masses of the people. We've got to take this movement to the people who are forgotten and neglected," said King.

"Community organization" was the answer. Every civil rights leader talked of new programs to develop roots in the ghetto. But this was only part of the problem. The civil rights movement had been talking of "community organization" for years. Bayard Rustin, the leading political strategist of the established civil rights leadership, and an assistant to Martin Luther King, is one of the many who has long called for working in the community: "We must bring to the movement a totally new type of worker who is prepared to stay in the community day after day doing tedious nondramatic work in addition to demonstrations." CORE has established "Freedom Houses" in a number of areas.

The problem is not just "going to the people" but "what you bring to them." One of the main reasons that the established civil rights organizations had failed to develop roots in the ghetto is that they have little or nothing to offer the ghetto Negro. They have tried to organize in the ghetto with a political program oriented not to building an independent Negro movement but toward building a base of support among white liberals. This is the politics of accommodation or as it is called by its proponents "coalition politics." Its leading theoretician is Bayard Rustin.

On paper, the first part of the theory is fine. The real problems facing the Negro are economic--Negroes need decent jobs, and therefore the economy must be boosted to full employment. Massive public works and retraining programs are necessary. These are federal programs and to get them a powerful political movement must develop. Negroes alone cannot do it--they need allies among whites. There must be alliances and coalitions.

In and of themselves, these political judgments are accurate. However, what they mean in practice depends on the answers to a number of questions. Who are the allies of the Negroes? How are these allies moved to take action? On what basis or on whose terms are coalitions built?

For Rustin, and for most of the established civil rights leadership (with the exception of SNCC) the coalition has already been established. Rustin talks of "the coalition which staged the March on Washington, passed the Civil Rights Act, and laid the basis for the Johnson landslide--Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups." (One might also ask whether this coalition as described doesn't also include Lyndon Johnson, Bobby Kennedy, and the northern city machines.) In answer to our first question, then, the coalition is already partly formed and it includes the trade union movement, liberals, etc., as they are now. The answer to the other questions flow from this. To hold the coalition together one must be careful not to alienate one's allies. Finding themselves unable to build a base in the Negro ghetto, the established middle class Negro leadership has attempted to substitute a base in the liberal (non-Dixiecrat?) wing of the Democratic party. To the extent that they try to mobilize masses

of Negroes it is not for building an independent Negro movement but to help them develop their base among the white liberals. Where mobilizing masses of Negroes may alienate their new-found white allies, the civil rights leadership chooses not to mobilize. A number of examples make this clear.

1) The politics of accommodation were evident before the 1964 Presidential elections when the civil rights leadership called for a moratorium on demonstrations. Instead, they urged the civil rights movement to use its energies in defeating Goldwater (i.e., in supporting Johnson). In effect, they asked the civil rights movement to lay down the one weapon it had at that time--direct action--out of fear of the "white backlash." This meant that the liberal "allies" of the Negro feared that if the Negro were to press for his demands, some whites would be alienated. LBJ's margin of victory would not be so great. Thus the civil rights movement was expected to subordinate its needs and demands to the needs of its "allies."

2) The role of the established civil rights leadership in the "Atlantic City Compromise" of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, needs no further discussion here. In the debate that ensued, the defenders of Rustin made a number of arguments which deserve attention for they illustrate the orientation of their politics. They argue that Rustin, and the civil rights and liberal leadership, did not "sell out" the MFDP by urging acceptance of the compromise. Rather, they say, Rustin carried the MFDP's own strategy to its logical extent. The MFDP had chosen as its strategy to seek official recognition of the Democratic party. In urging acceptance of the compromise, Rustin et al. were only trying to see that the MFDP achieved this recognition. What Rustin's defenders do not see from their political vantage point is that the basic aim of the MFDP was to build an independent political movement in Mississippi. The attempt to seek recognition, whether right or wrong, was a tactic subordinate to this basic aim. Rustin and his associates made this tactic into a basic aim, and hence flows their logic. The distinction is crucial. On the one hand were the MFDP leadership whose first concern was the effect of the compromise on the movement back home. On the other hand were those whose concern was the impact of the compromise on the Democratic party.

3) Those civil rights leaders like Rustin who act consistently on the basis of "coalition politics," have undermined those weapons which the Negro can utilize by himself. Hence, they have discouraged direct action, saying that "politics" (i.e., their version of "coalition politics") is more important. They have opposed demands such as school bussing and preferential treatment because (in the words of Rustin's associate, Tom Kahn), "it drives a wedge between Negroes and those whites who stand the most to gain from a political alliance for economic reform." I have argued earlier that the demand for preferential treatment may drive a wedge between Negroes and the labor movement as the labor movement is now. But the

demand may also serve as a spur to get the labor movement, once more, struggling for a political program which would be the basis for a real Negro-labor alliance.

Another "weapon" that Rustin has tried to undermine is race--the very fact of being Negro. It may sound more radical to say that the problem is not one of color but one of class. But for Rustin, pride in being Negro which manifests itself in forms of black nationalism and separatism is a barrier in creating his coalition. It alienates whites. But race consciousness is fostered by the very conditions in which Negroes live. It helps hold the movement together, and in the absence of a developed political program it makes it possible, to some degree, for those Negroes who have escaped the ghetto to continue to identify with it and provide leadership for it.

Not all of the established northern civil rights leadership follow completely the logic of the politics of accommodation. To the extent that they have their own organizational interests or have a base in the Negro middle class, some of these leaders will disagree over this or that point with Rustin who, responsible to no one, has fewer such "restraints." There are also hopeful signs of the beginnings of a break with these politics in the North. Farmer's speech at the recent CORE Convention calling for greater independence in political action is an encouraging development. But, by and large, the established civil rights leadership still works within the framework of the politics of accommodation. Within this framework the civil rights movement has been able to make itself felt, has won some real victories, and contributed to the Watts "uprising" as described earlier. However, in the last few years the politics of accommodation have become more and more of a brake on the Negro struggle.

Nowhere could this be better seen than in the response of civil rights leaders to the "riots." For example, King and other civil rights leaders denounced the "rioters" for using violence. Yet, their well known principled positions about "non-violence" did not prevent them from throwing their moral weight behind the police use of violence to (in King's words) "quell the situation." This is especially interesting when we recall that it was the police that were responsible for most of the violence toward people. (If King's main concern was, instead, violence against property it might be another question.) Why didn't King call for the police to stop using

violence--for them to withdraw from the "riot" area, and to protect whites by preventing them from going into the ghetto.

Violence, clearly, was not the real question. A violent struggle was going on. King and other civil rights leaders felt compelled to take sides.

Even though they knew full well of the conditions that led the Negroes of Los Angeles to do what they did and what their action meant to them, these civil rights leaders took the side of the police. They had to do so to keep from alienating and losing their base among white liberals and sections of the Negro middle class. The "rioters" had gone too far--well beyond the framework of the politics of accommodation. They had attacked private property, and defied the police, and they felt a new sense of dignity.

As a result, there were no known and respected civil rights leaders who could be accepted as leadership for the Negroes of Los Angeles. There was no one to channel the tremendous energies which were, in large part, fruitlessly dissipated.

The political lessons of Watts must not be lost. The Negro civil rights movement must turn its back on the "social brokers" and direct itself toward building a real movement in the ghetto. This means a program not subordinated to the needs of the liberal wing of the Democratic party, but a program around dignity and self-respect, jobs and housing, and independent political power. This means utilizing every weapon available to the Negro: from demands for preferential treatment to demands for more control over decisions affecting the community; from direct action to independent political action. Only once such a movement has been built can a real "coalition" be forged which will not sacrifice the needs of the Negro in the process.

Such a movement and necessary leadership do not develop overnight. It takes years of steady and patient work to develop a program and a leadership that can command the recognition, respect, and confidence of the ghetto Negro. This means organizing in the ghetto. It is not an easy process to organize the ghetto, and overcome the sense of futility that the Negro feels and there are other enormous problems as well. But it is impossible so long as the program one has to offer is the politics of accommodation.

Mike Parker

Are Civilian Review Boards the Answer?

Sympathy for the helpless victims of police "brutality" in the South as well as public indignation at the harshly oppressive and discriminatory treatment received by American citizens at the hands of some law-enforcement officials throughout the nation have created strong interest in eliminating the conditions fostering such abuses. This popular unrest calls attention to a long-neglected issue. Stated most generally, it is: What is the proper way for society to govern the activities of its public law-enforcement officials? To the individual this means: What is the nature and extent of police invasion of personal privacy that can be justified by the necessity of containing crime?

Police activities influence the day-to-day living conditions of a large number of people. Until recently few individuals or groups questioned the significance of unrestrained police discretion. Today, however, scholars and legal authorities are increasingly devoting efforts to illuminate the intricacies of this complex issue. The establishment of an independent civilian review board has frequently been proposed as one means of providing the members of society with power to control the actions of police. This article examines the current controversy over the idea of civilian review, briefly reviews how other communities have attempted to meet the problem and sets forth a number of key issues raised by the proposal of civilian review of police conduct.

Arguments Against Civilian Review.

Most policemen and law-enforcement spokesmen accept the general principle of review of police conduct. It is the manner in which the principle is to be implemented which currently rests at the heart of the debate. The chief argument of law-enforcement officials against the establishment of civilian review boards has been that existing remedies for dealing with complaints of police misconduct are adequate. Direct compensation for damages resulting from asserted police violations of civil rights, police spokesmen maintain, is available through civil court actions against specific officers. In most jurisdictions there exist criminal sanctions for potential application to policemen found by a court to have violated any law governing police conduct. Police officials opposed to the idea of civilian review also point to the fact that intra-departmental review procedures have been established in all major police forces to guarantee that citizen complaints of police misconduct will be evaluated responsibly and professionally by police executives

anxious to insure a high quality of law enforcement. Thus, it is clear that police do not reject the principle of review, but rather the ad hoc creation of a formal agency staffed by citizens to carry out the process of reviewing and passing judgment upon allegations of police misconduct.

Police opposition to the establishment of civilian review boards, of course, goes farther than merely asserting the adequacy of existing judicial and administrative procedures. Law-enforcement spokesmen have long maintained that the creation of civilian review boards would undermine police morale by questioning the integrity of the behavior of all police, from the cop on the beat to the chief department executive. A primary requisite of efficient crime control, they maintain, is that police receive trust and cooperation from the civic community and an autonomous sphere of operations. In the review of Michael J. Murphy, former Police Commissioner for the City of New York, the establishment of a citizens' board to review police actions

...would dilute the responsibility of the Police Commissioner to maintain discipline of his department and result in a breakdown of morale among our policemen who have been doing their best in a dangerous and thankless job. It is even possible that the police attitude may become "the only way to keep out of trouble is to do nothing."¹

Almost exactly one year before the Watts uprising, Los Angeles Police Chief William H. Parker announced his intention to "walk out" if an independent civilian review board were formed there. His reasons for threatening to do so included the morale-destruction argument as well as a somewhat less often stated proposition about the incapacity of civilians properly to evaluate police practices. Chief Parker claimed to be unwilling to "share ... responsibility or authority for police administration with any group of citizens who lack the expert training to know what they're doing."² Whether he would extend his charge to civic ignorance to every sector of society -- including the oft-labeled "responsible middle class" community -- or confine it, in his words, to "... persons ... from minority elements -- many of them demagogues with axes to grind ..." ³ is unclear, but the general import of his remarks needs no clarification.

The argument which appears to at-

tract the greatest attention of the lay public and the mass media is that the operations of civilian review boards would handicap police efforts to cope with an apparently increasing crime rate and a growing tide of disrespect for the law and law-enforcement officials. Ex-Commissioner Murphy has stated emphatically that "any board of [the independent civilian review] type would ... destroy the efficiency and effectiveness of the Police Department."⁴ Chief Parker has claimed that "the pressures being put upon the police throughout the nation by such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union -- in relation to these so-called citizens' boards to review police actions -- have encouraged a flouting of police authority."⁵ Critics of the police, most of whom tend to be proponents of the civilian review concept, are, according to the Los Angeles Police Chief, contributing to the eruption of sporadic anarchy and an ultimate destruction of the nation.⁶ Ironically, while this argument seems to draw the heaviest popular support for police opposition to civilian review, it appears at present to have more limited currency among policemen and law-enforcement spokesmen than either the adequate-remedies argument or the moral-disintegration argument.

Arguments for Civilian Review.

Proponents of civilian review state that boards located within the existing structure of the police department do not provide adequate protection of the aggrieved parties. They state that many people will not take their complaints directly to the police. This attitude reflects the widespread belief that police cannot be trusted regardless of the safeguards that are built into an internal review system.

With an internally operated system, the police department is always open to the hard-to-defend charge of whitewashing misconduct complaints. Police review board hearings are often closed to the public, complainants do not have adequate legal representation, and the composition of the board, usually staffed by former police officials or FBI men, is such that the appearance of a fair and just hearing is difficult to maintain.

Advocates of civilian review claim that it is even more difficult for complainants to obtain satisfactory redress through the courts. The filing of a criminal charge against a policeman depends upon whether the District Attorney feels that prosecution is feasible. Since the District Attorney normally works closely with the police, he is placed in the uncomfortable position of having to prosecute the policemen who usually supply him with valuable information and is therefore often reluctant

to do so. Very few cases are handled in this manner, and in those cases where the District Attorney does prosecute, few convictions are obtained. Frequently the only witnesses to the alleged misconduct are the police officer and the complainant. If the complainant has a past criminal record which may place his integrity in question, it becomes increasingly difficult to establish the officer's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition to these problems, many kinds of alleged police misconduct (for example, discourtesy or psychological harassment) are not criminal offenses. Redress through civil action, civilian review advocates argue, can be even more difficult to obtain. For those citizens most likely to allege violation of their civil rights, lawyers' fees and the prospect of protracted litigation are formidable barriers to initiating civil suits. Court action, therefore, rarely provides complainants with a satisfactory method of handling grievances.

Advocates of civilian review argue that an independent board would improve police-community relations. Rather than impairing police morale, they argue, the operation of an impartial board would keep the public informed of the disposition of misconduct cases, bring the facts into the open and prevent charges of concealment or whitewash by police. In those cases where the charges were found to be groundless, policemen would be publicly exonerated and their reputations protected. In this sense police morale as well as community respect for the law officer would be strengthened.

From the citizen's perspective, civilian review advocates claim, the operation of an independent board can act as a safety valve for the community. With an impartial board available to hear the pent-up grievances of citizens, the community is in a better position to identify potential danger spots or to have appropriate public agencies take corrective action to eliminate the causes of such grievances. Often complaints result from misunderstanding of police actions. Thus a civilian review board could seek to correct misunderstandings whenever they occur and raise the general level of respect for law enforcement.

It is often said that crime rates are rising drastically, that the police must centralize their resources and increase their efficiency in order to combat this crime rise, and that civilian review would serve only to fragment an already splintered law-enforcement process. Some law-enforcement experts call for a closer scrutiny of the basic assumption that crime rates are drastically rising. Although one can today pick up a recent copy of the FBI Uniform Crime Reports and find statistics showing

tremendous increases in rates of selected crimes, the basic question here is how are these figures computed? Since World War II, law-enforcement agencies have expanded their operations and surveillance techniques as well as increased the efficiency of their activities. Police departments are therefore better able to detect crimes, collect information and tabulate accurate statistics on all forms of criminal activity which had not been reported earlier (including some newly-defined categories of criminal conduct). A significant part of the increase in crime rates, these same experts claim, reflects the improvement in statistical collection of cases plus the expanding scope of police surveillance. Therefore, appeals for increased police efficiency based upon crime statistics should be carefully examined, especially when coupled with arguments opposing civilian review.

Civilian review advocates will admit that the operations of citizens' boards would increase costs and duplicate efforts already expended in internal disciplinary processes of police departments. The efficiency or cost criterion, however, is a false one for measuring cases involving alleged police misconduct. The important issue here is whether the complainant can obtain a fair and just resolution of his grievance; the economic issue should be of secondary importance. The courts have long recognized that there is a delicate balance to be achieved between developing more effective ways of maintaining social order and protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals. Democratic notions of justice demand assiduous effort to uphold individual rights when threatened by increasingly efficient police techniques. Proponents of civilian review feel that it is in the long-run interest of individual liberty to provide the conditions for a just hearing, regardless of cost considerations, in order to avoid violating individual freedoms and prevent the growth of a totalitarian police system.

Opponents of civilian review argue that only police officers themselves have responsibility for and competence to evaluate problems of police discipline. Advocates of civilian review reply that the internal complaint system lacks necessary safeguards against dishonesty or unjust exoneration of accused officers, and that, furthermore, it is incapable of sustaining the public confidence necessary to the satisfactory handling of citizen complaints. Here the civilian review advocates claim an institutional advantage. By establishing an independent and impartial agency which can hear all sides to a complaint, the public's control over police policies and activities would be maintained

through a representative board in the democratic tradition. One suggested way to increase the expertise of the board as well as to reduce the grounds for misunderstanding of police actions is to have the police represented on the board itself so that the police viewpoint will be expressed and their experience called upon.

Civilian Review in Action. Only two cities (Philadelphia in 1958 and Rochester, N.Y. in 1963) have established civilian review boards.⁷ Since the Philadelphia board has been operating for some seven years now, it will serve as the model for discussion and evaluation.⁸

Any interested citizen or organization can bring a complaint to the board's attention where it is officially written up and signed by the complaining party. During the period from 1958 to 1964, the Philadelphia board received 510 complaints. Fifty-one per cent of these cases were voluntarily withdrawn by the complainants after a preliminary discussion of the case, while another thirty per cent were cleared when the police action was found to be proper and no discipline was recommended. Thus, only 59 cases, roughly ten per cent, were of such a serious nature as to warrant recommendations by the board to the mayor for reprimands, suspensions or clearing the arrest records of the complainants. (The remaining ten per cent of the cases refer to those still pending investigation or in process.)⁹

However successful the results of the Philadelphia board may appear to certain public officials,¹⁰ several features appear to limit the effectiveness of the board's operations. The board does not have subpoena power to call witnesses so each complainant must bring his own witnesses to the hearing. A more serious defect is the fact that the board does not have its own investigators but must rely upon the police department to investigate complaints. The usual limitations of an inadequate budget, staff, and time prevent the foundation of a more comprehensive service and keep the existing staff preoccupied with the day-to-day case load. A procedural weakness is the failure of the board to prepare written opinions explaining its decisions. A full explanation of each decision is a necessary safeguard against arbitrary judgment as well as a way to set guidelines for future police conduct and board decisions. The board can only recommend to the police commissioner and mayor what action needs to be taken. In those cases where the board's recommendation is contested by the police commissioner, the mayor is called upon to arbitrate. The experience of the

Philadelphia civilian review board should suggest some of the factors to be taken into account by communities considering the establishment of similar procedures.

Some Key Problems. The problems of civilian review may be broken down into three general categories dealing with the who, what, and how of civilian review: Who is to sit on civilian review boards? What aspects of police conduct are civilian boards to review? And how are civilian review boards to deal with cases of alleged police misconduct? The first set of problems speaks to the composition of civilian review boards, the second to the content of civilian review proceedings, and the last to the distribution of authority between citizens' review boards and other existing regulatory bodies.

Many civilian review advocates and opponents view the matter of the membership of civilian review boards with great concern. Obviously, any civilian review board which failed to provide representation for those segments of the community which most often charge police violations of civil rights could hardly be expected to obtain widespread confidence. Civil rights organizations, familiar with the difficulties inherent in gaining meaningful representation for minority interests in newly-created community political organizations often set up in response to the pressure of racial tensions (human rights commissions, community relations boards, etc.), correctly sense the importance of obtaining influence in the selection of members. At the same time, civil rights groups interested in civilian review of police conduct are aware of the problem of representation. One aspect of the problem involves exercising influence in the selection process; the other has to do with ensuring that those board members chosen to represent the interests of civil rights groups and the minority community remain accountable to and controllable by their constituency. In an agency like a civilian review board, as in other political organizations, there exists a potentiality for cooptation, whereby interest-group factions are absorbed into the larger organization, their energies turned to satisfying the demands of the larger organization, and their capacity to serve the needs of their constituencies eroded.

Police, on the other hand, are anxious to insure that the law-enforcement perspective be represented on citizens' review boards and seem equally anxious to bar from membership "... persons from minority elements -- many of them demagogues with axes to grind ...," to repeat the phrasing of Los Angeles Police Chief Parker. Recogniz-

ing civilian review as a potential means of draining off some popular discontent with police operations, of course, some far-sighted law-enforcement spokesmen may see strategic value in providing formal representation for the minority community on civilian review boards. If the pressure for civilian review becomes sufficiently great, it may be anticipated that some law-enforcement officials will voluntarily seek "responsible middle-class" Negro citizens for civilian review board membership, in order to avoid being forced to deal with potentially more militant members of the Negro community who may obtain membership.

Since civilian review boards would necessarily enjoy a certain public importance and formal political status, determination of membership would undoubtedly come to rest upon some established mode of selection -- election, mayoral or city council appointment, human relations commission delegation, etc. Each of these would have certain advantages and disadvantages, depending in good part upon the political disposition and organization of particular communities. For a number of reasons, it seems likely that some kind of appointment method would be chosen in most communities. With the result that strong pressures would probably be activated to seat "civic leaders" (predominantly from the business community and the clergy) on civilian review boards. Unfortunately, only unusual configurations of political conditions would enable members of progressive civil rights organizations and civil libertarian segments of the legal profession to gain significant voice on citizens' review boards.

The content of civilian review proceedings, that is, the concrete aspects of police action with which civilian review boards may properly concern themselves, is of no less importance than the composition of the boards. Currently, most proponents of civilian review seem to concentrate upon the arrest and post-arrest stages of the criminal process as providing the greatest potential for police misconduct, citing arrest practices and interrogation techniques as the most common cause of complaints of police misbehavior. These are important areas, where some of the most glaring cases of police lawlessness allegedly occur, but equally important are those phases of law enforcement prior to the time of arrest, when police behavior possesses a very low level of visibility. Thus, for example, at the pre-arrest stage, detectives may be found to conduct investigations in ways which violate legally-protected rights of personal and domestic privacy, patrolmen may be

found to enforce certain laws regulating the flow of people and goods in discriminatory or ineffective ways, and investigating officers may be found to provide unfair or inadequate treatment of criminal complaints in ghetto areas.

To multiply the instances in which potential police misconduct may occur, however, is not to state that all aspects of police behavior could reasonably be brought under the scrutiny of a citizens' review board. The nature and extent of reviewable police actions would both strongly influence the capacity of civilian review boards to serve fairly and effectively the interests of citizens and also heavily condition the relationship of these boards to law-enforcement agencies, the courts, legislature and electorate. Perhaps the most important implication of this statement is that the success of civilian review, once established, could not be measured realistically in terms of any kind of overall impact on the character of police administration. Civilian review critics and advocates alike are sometimes inclined to envision the establishment of civilian review boards as a dramatic, comprehensive means of revolutionizing law-enforcement operations -- as a step which would precipitate civic disaster or utopia, depending upon whether the viewpoint is that of an opponent or an advocate of civilian review. A more sensible view would seem to include an awareness that the basic quality of police administration is a matter properly left to legislative and judicial processes designed to govern the general relationship of the state and its institutions to society and its members. If civilian review is to perform a meaningful role in the community, it must be explicitly confined to a limited realm of police-citizen interactions. Civilian review, in short, cannot be looked upon as a panacea. Instead, it should be evaluated in terms of its objective potential as a mode of communicating citizen dissatisfaction to police administrators and public officials and, at best, a way of providing redress for certain determinate categories of legitimate grievances of the legally dispossessed.

To resolve the problem of the content of civilian review proceedings requires careful attention to these and other issues. Some civilian review advocates may feel that no area of police behavior -- on duty or off, public or private -- should be excluded from the jurisdiction of civilian review boards. Other proponents recognize a need to confine civilian review hearings to those aspects of law-enforcement operations bearing some demonstrable relevance to individual freedoms and civil rights. It may be that some lead

can be taken from the formula used for assessing alleged misconduct in the legal profession, where canons of legal ethics provide criteria by which the behavior of lawyers may be judged. Some of these canons operate as regulatory standards in areas not governed by criminal or administrative law, while others overlap with State codes. By no means do these remarks suggest that civilian review may appropriately concern itself exclusively with asserted violations of police ethics, which in specific application (proscribing, in some instances, drunkenness in public and certain sexual activities) vary in terms of relevance to legitimate citizen grievances. Nor, for that matter, is it necessarily intended that other elements of the model used for disciplinary proceedings in the legal profession be adopted wholesale, for one of the major features of this model is its provision of trial by fellow professionals. Rather, these comments underscore the crucial importance of articulating the grounds upon which civilian review proceedings are to be initiated and the standards by which their decisions are to be governed.

Perhaps most demanding of thoughtful consideration is the problem of the balance of power between citizens' review boards and the police, the courts, and other governmental bodies. The problem consists in determining what general powers and limitations ought to fall upon civilian review boards and how the derivation and distribution of these rights and restraints will influence the boards' effectiveness and integrity. At least three questions present themselves: (1) How and what kind of legal powers are to be delegated to civilian review boards? (2) How are the results of citizens' review proceedings to be fitted into extant police discipline systems? and (3) What judicial response is to be accorded these findings and decisions?

Clearly, it is easier to deal with the last of these questions, since the resolution of the first two would in good part determine the answer to the third. In general, where civilian review boards would operate outside of formal police discipline systems and be authorized to impose only advisory judgments, civilian review proceedings would probably not come under the jurisdiction of the courts, for it is unlikely that police administrators would automatically accept civilian review board recommendations. Instead, upon receiving civilian board advisory opinions, police departments would probably conduct independent inquiries and reach independent conclusions, thereby taking on legal responsibility for any consequent disciplinary actions.

If, however, civilian review proceedings were to be adopted as full-fledged supplements to existing police control mechanisms, then certain cases treated in the civilian review process could be expected to result directly in fines, demotions, suspensions, and dismissals. Because police-defendants in some of these cases would be certain to appeal, as they are generally entitled to do in routine intra-departmental discipline cases, the courts would be called upon to review the proceedings of the citizens' boards (contrary to the disingenuous suggestion that "the next thing you know, these citizens' review boards would be firing guys left and right, and you'd have to set up review boards to review the civilian review boards"). In this event, an established body of substantive and procedural law would be brought into formal application and, theoretically, the cases accorded strict due-process treatment.

In general, if civilian review boards were to be authorized to judge and sentence accused police officers, they would necessarily require the power to conduct full and independent investigations, subpoena witnesses, and impose disciplinary sanctions. At the same time, of course, they would be bound by certain restrictions, including the most obvious obligation of granting the parties to each case of alleged police misconduct the right to legal counsel, cross-examination, presentation of witnesses, and appeal. This type of constitution would be likely to lead to the growth of highly adversarial hearings, a development capable of facilitating a particular kind of "truth-seeking" but also conducive to time-consuming and occasionally hyper-formalized proceedings. It also would fail to resolve at least two problems: (1) Should standing to bring charges be limited to individual citizens claiming personal wrongs resulting from police behavior, or should interested organizations and citizens' groups be granted standing to initiate civilian review proceedings? and (2) Should civilian review boards operate on a case-by-case basis, or should they be empowered to issue general decisions aimed at eliminating patterns of misbehavior? Critical of the framework in which FEPC's and other anti-discrimination agencies typically operate, most civil rights organizations would prefer that a broad construction be placed upon standing to bring complaints and that review boards be authorized to provide comprehensive remedies.

Other combinations of legal characteristics would be possible and, in the nature of the situation, likely. This conclusion draws strength as much

from a recognition of the potentially serious and difficult problems involved in delegating legal powers to supra-governmental bodies, as from an awareness of the hard realities of political life -- although this alone may be of sufficient force to convince many. The matter of vesting sanctioning authority in such bodies, in particular, would appear to raise some highly complex problems in jurisprudential and political theory. To resolve them would seem to require, at a minimum, two accomplishments: (1) the articulation of some rationale to justify the creation of new processes whereby punishments of state officials may be decreed and executed in addition to established constitutional and statutorily-designed processes for this purpose (and this, it should be emphasized, is not to bring the "adequate-remedies" argument of civilian review opponents in through the back door); and (2) the elucidation of some principle(s) to warrant establishing these new processes in certain spheres of governmental relations but not in others (i.e., a citizens' board to review alleged misconduct on the part of NASA personnel?). The resolutions of these problems would no doubt be interrelated, with an answer to the second question more readily forthcoming than one to the first, and more fundamental, question.

Most of the militant civil rights organizations tend to define the matter of controlling police lawlessness in largely political terms, viewing power to impose sanctions as the central component of any system designed to govern police conduct. Sensitive to the recourse to "tokenism" frequently taken by public agencies and private associations, most civil rights groups would regard as meaningless any system of civilian review which failed to include access to formal disciplinary powers. Many law-enforcement spokesmen, of course, are generally no less sophisticated in political calculus, and seem to share with civil rights groups an understanding of the potential significance of civilian exercise of disciplinary measures, dreading the possibility of such a development with the same intensity of emotion that some of their critics relish it.

To re-state a point made at the beginning of this section, police do not reject the principle of review. This is not to say that they do so other than reluctantly; rather, it is to call attention to the fact that review of police conduct is built into the legal and organizational framework of the law-enforcement system. The problem confronting the police, therefore, is not whether to be under the governance

of some external authority, but what kind of governance is likely to be most consistent with their interests? Due substantially to inaction on the part of Federal, state and local law-making bodies, the task of "policing the police" has fallen to the Supreme Court of the United States.

It is by now common knowledge that the police are less than pleased with this resolution of the problem and their outrage at recent Supreme Court decisions which have the effect of "coddling criminals" and "handcuffing law enforcement" is shared by certain segments of the public and frequently echoed in the press. In a recent article, Law Professor Herbert Packer has cut to the heart of the problem. Speaking of the Supreme Court's discomfort with "the business of running police departments" he explains:

The court deals with the unique facts of a case at hand. It has no fact-finding facilities, except for its members' uncertain reliance on "what everybody knows." It cannot independently inform itself about the dimensions of the general law enforcement problem, or identify and choose among the range of particularized solutions that may be available. It cannot frame a program, much less carry one out. The Court moves with greatest assurance when it looks at a particular case and concludes that there has been a particular injustice which it should right. It moves with unease when it tries to frame a general standard for police conduct. It is one thing to say: This defendant's confession was illegally coerced because he was illiterate, unadvised of his rights, held incommunicado, subject to threats, beaten, or whatever. It is quite another to say: No person who is arrested may be questioned by the police until he has been advised of his right to remain silent and to have the assistance of a lawyer and until he has had the chance to see a lawyer if he wants to.

"And yet," his comments continue, "it is this second kind of statement ... to which the Court has been resorting with increasing frequency in the last few years."¹¹

Continued racial unrest and the escalation of "creative tension" may result in stronger political pressures upon law-enforcement officials to maintain "law and order," but the aftermath of future Selmas may also bring increasingly severe responses from the Supreme Court. The conclusion therefore emerges that, short of a

nationwide legislative awakening to the urgency of regulating police conduct, the police may soon find themselves placed upon the horns of a dilemma: whether to submit to continuing rule by the Supreme Court or to yield some ground to the movement for civilian review. The first choice involves governance by the blunt instrument of sweeping, "constitutionalized" decisions (to borrow Professor Packer's term). The second involves an alternative form of governance offering a potentially greater sensitivity to the problems of day-to-day police work. With future Watts-type outbreaks not an entirely unrealistic prospect for American society, it is urgently necessary that citizens and civic officials everywhere undertake efforts to meet the crisis in advance. Some program of civilian review of police conduct is one step in the right direction.

Notes

1. Michael J. Murphy, "Civil Rights and the Police," New York City Police Department, no date, p. 19.
2. U.S. News and World Report, August 10, 1964, p. 34.
3. Ibid.
4. Murphy, op. cit., p. 31.
5. U.S. News and World Report, August 10, 1964, p. 34.
6. Ibid.
7. Harold Beral and Marcus Sisk, "The Administration of Complaints by Civilians Against the Police," Harvard Law Review, v. 77, No. 3, January, 1964, pp. 499-519.
8. Annual Report, Police Advisory Board, City of Philadelphia, December 31, 1963.
9. The figures cited for the disposition of complaints by the Philadelphia board are taken from correspondence to T. Lehmann from the board. A summary table of similar figures on the Philadelphia board is contained in Gertrude Samuels, "Who Shall Judge a Policeman?" New York Times Magazine, August 2, 1964, pp. 8, 34, and 46.
10. Samuels, ibid. p. 46.
11. Herbert L. Packer, "Policing the Police: Nine Men Are Not Enough," The New Republic, v. 153, September 4, 1965, p. 18.

In addition to the above references, the following sources are recommended:

Joseph Goldstein, "Police Discretion Not to Invoke the Criminal Process: Low-Visibility Decisions in the Administration of Justice," Yale Law Journal, v. 69, 1960, pp. 543-94.

Wayne La Fave, "The Police and Non-enforcement of the Law," Wisconsin Law Review, January-March, 1962, pp. 104-137, 179-239.

Herbert L. Packer, "Two Models of the Criminal Process," University of Pennsylvania Law Review, v. 113, November, 1964, pp. 1-68.

Jerome H. Skolnick, Justice Without Trial: A Sociological Study of Law Enforcement, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1966 (in press).

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Who's Decadent?

Michael Harrington, The Accidental Century. Macmillan: 1965. \$5.95

The West is in the midst of a technological and bureaucratic revolution. Capitalism as expounded and extolled by the classical economists and the National Association of Manufacturers is dead. The working class has not fulfilled Marx's predictions. Orwell's 1984 might come true.

Heard it all before? Michael Harrington in his latest book, The Accidental Century, examines these very familiar notions and attempts to unify them under the concept of decadence. The technological revolution is being made by grey-minded bureaucrats, totally lacking in ideological zeal and ardor as they parrot the old clichés of *laissez faire* (hence the 'accidental' quality). Trade unions have dropped references to the class struggle from their constitutions. Some unions, like the Mine Workers and the ILWU have made their peace with automation at the expense of their own membership. Others, like the UAW have tried and failed to democratize the technological revolution. The Harlem riots of 1964 were an "urban *jacquerie*," (p. 136) and Harrington implies that this mode of protest closely resembles the behavior of Orwell's "proles." De-

cadence is also to be found in the literary and philosophical worlds. Both faith and reason are bankrupt. His chapter on Thomas Mann, the best part of the book in the opinion of this reviewer, traces Mann's obsession with decadence and his failure to find 20th century values to replace those of the paternalistic, solid North German burgher.

This is a grim picture. But Harrington professes to be a socialist, and socialists are nothing if not optimistic. Since the technological revolution holds out the promise of superabundance without toil, we need only to find means of democratic controls. The old metaphor of seizing power is no longer appropriate, "for that metaphor implies that the existing power is suitable to the new purpose if only the proper hands are laid upon it. It is rather a problem of transforming power, of changing it, of making new institutions." (p. 296) Moreover, possible elements of change exist: "the racial minorities and the poor generally; the labor movement revived; the middle class; both secular and religious humanism. Thus, in looking not to the far distance but the immediate American future, the struggle of the liberal wing of the Democratic party seems to be the point of departure for any serious hope." (p. 302)

It is easy for the civil rights activist to test Harrington's thesis. Granted that barricades are *passé* and that power must be transformed, one may observe that bureaucratic power must be first resisted on the level at which one meets it. When the Berkeley administration attempts to smash the student civil rights movement, the remedy is not to join your local CDC club, but rather to organize and fight back. In Harrington's perspective for "transformation" there is apparently no room for the FSM. Again, how does one analyze Watts in terms of Harrington's argument? If it was, as The Accidental Century implies, an urban *jacquerie*, (although to be fair I do not know what, if anything, Harrington has said specifically about Watts), how does one account for the organization and selection of targets, which, incidentally, included selective service offices?

In sum, recent events have played a very mean trick on the decadence-conscious Mr. Harrington. They reveal that, in addition to the things he lists, what are also decadent are his reformist, Fabian politics. The Accidental Century stands as a cogent statement of neo-Fabian thought with which civil rights activists should be familiar if for no other reason than to combat it in theory and action.

Joe White