

RACE RIOTS, 1960s

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RUSTIN URGES WAGNER ACT TO AVOID LONG HOT SUMMER

In a telegram to Mayor Wagner on Wednesday Bayard Rustin, Director of the newly formed A. Philip Randolph Institute, urged Mayor Wagner to immediately set up a municipal job program for youth to avoid another long hot summer.

Rustin accused the Mayor of not having implemented the proposals drawn up by Negro and Puerto Rican leaders last summer and placed before the Mayor by Dr. Martin Luther King and himself in three days of discussion at Gracie Mansion during last summer's disorders.

Rustin said that in addition to the job program the Mayor must now take other steps, including the appointment of a Puerto Rican to the school board and the establishment of a genuine civilian Police Review Board independent of the city administration.

Rustin urged that the Mayor call Negro and Puerto Rican leaders together to report to them a concrete economic and social plan to deal with the ghetto frustration.

He told the Mayor that failure to do so would place the responsibility for future rioting squarely upon City Hall and not on the minority leaders who for months have urged him to act.

"Social peace cannot exist in a vacuum," Rustin stated, "it is a by-product of justice obtained."

Copy of Mr. Rustin's telegram to Mayor Wagner
sent 6:00 P.M., 19 May 1965. For release A.M. 21 May 1965

Hon. Robert F. Wagner
City Hall
New York, N. Y.

You will recall that almost a year ago Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and I placed before you the demands that had been drawn up by New York's Negro leaders, and outlined a specific program designed to deal with the fundamental problems underlying the violence then raging in the ghettos of New York.

Paramount among those problems we stated were police brutality and economic hardship, particularly as manifest in the unemployment of Negro and Puerto Rican youth.

The proposals we laid before you have not been implemented. Yet before us stretches a summer of even greater youth unemployment and simmering discontent provoked by continuing examples of reported police brutality and discrimination, as in the Whitmore and Sideratos cases.

Having failed to move to eliminate the causes of social discord, you and your administration cannot escape major responsibility should last summer's tragedy be repeated.

The choice before you is clear; either you creatively meet the causes of discontent in spring, or negatively face another long hot summer.

The prompt establishment of a genuine civilian Police Review Board independent of the city administration, the creation of a municipal job program for youth, and the appointment of a qualified Puerto Rican to the school board are three among many steps that must now be taken.

Many of us who went into the streets last summer to help establish peace know that nothing short of a bold social and economic program can counteract the frustration in the city's ghettos. For social peace cannot exist in a vacuum; it is a by-product of justice obtained.

I therefore call upon you to meet with the representatives of the Negro and Puerto Rican communities to present now your concrete proposals for implementing the programs that Negro and Puerto Rican leaders urged upon you since last summer --- the same proposals that Dr. King and I emphasized in three days of discussion with you and your aides.

I repeat: better to have a well planned spring than risk a long, hot summer once again.

Sincerely,

Bayard Rustin

January 10, 1966

Mr. Harvey Schapiro
New York Times Magazine
229 West 43rd Street
New York, N.Y. -- 10026

Dear Mr. Schapiro,

Enclosed is my article. I'm sure you understand that because of my political responsibilities, it is essential that I approve final page proofs, including captions and headlines.

It is difficult for me to get to the office during the strike and I have some out-of-town appointments; therefore, it would be best if you contacted Rachelle Horowitz, AM 4 4953, when the proofs are ready or if you want to discuss any part of the article. She will know where to contact me or has the authority to approve changes in my absence.

Sincerely,

Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

BR/rjp
enc.

INTRODUCTION

The fiery "Manifesto" of the Watts rioters was both a warning and an appeal to white America from the masses of Negroes confined in the ghettos across the land. The violent confrontation on the streets of Watts tells much about the state of race and class relationships in America today. Los Angeles Police Chief William Parker inadvertently "told it like it was" when he said, "we're on the top and they're on the bottom." The reply of Negroes on the streets was no longer "We shall overcome" but "burn, baby, burn".

At a street corner meeting in Watts an unemployed youth of about twenty said to me "we won." I asked him, "how could you have won? Homes have been destroyed, Negroes are lying dead in the streets, the stores from which you buy food and clothes are destroyed and people are bringing you relief."

"I want to be treated like a man," he replied, "and we won because we made the whole world pay attention to us. The Police Chief never came here before; the Mayor always stayed up town, we made them come."

The Los Angeles Riot I

The Los Angeles riots in August of 1965, took six days to run their course. After it was over, 34 persons were dead, the wounded and hurt numbered 1,032. More than 3,952 people had been arrested. On August 24, 1965, Governor Edward P. Brown, created a Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, chaired by former CIA chief John A. McCone. In December, the Commission issued its report entitled, Violence in the City -- An End or a Beginning?. The report called for the creation of 50,000 new jobs and tremendous expenditures to prevent more riots.

The McCone Report, (the Commission's study has been called), like the Moynihan report, is a bold, new departure in government documents. Going beyond mere statistics to discuss somewhat sympathetically the real the real problems confronting the Negro community (unemployment, inadequate schools, dilapidated housing), they seem at first glance to be leading toward constructive programs. Unfortunately, both reports are ambivalent and shi away from meaningful programatic suggestions. While calling for 50,000 new jobs, the McCone Report neglects to present a program for creating or obtaining the jobs and supports the existing but inadequate programs. (The Moynihan Report similarly detailed the relationship of unemployment to the breakdown of the Negro family, while giving greater weight to the socio-psychological results of slavery, thereby, creating the impression that family instability is now being passed through the genes.) Both reports manage to contain just the right amount of new departures, combined with somewhat sophisticated, nearly-racist, shiboleths, The results is that each report has become a weapon for opposing forces.

Civil rights leaders can agree on the need for jobs and the necessity for economically reconstructing the Negro family. While conservatives can point out the Negro penchant for lawlessness; the civil rights movement's distruction of law and order, and the high rates of crime and illegitimacy in the Negro community. The results of these counterposing ideas is, unfortunately, a debate about statistics and interpretations rather than program.

It is interesting to note that neither report is concerned about, nor mentions segregation. Both tacitly assume that the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 destroyed the last vestiges of that system. The

McCone Report goes into great detail on the question of adequate housing and unemployment, yet, the integration of a given institution is never once proposed.

I will concentrate on some of the errors and misconceptions of the McCone Report because, while the Moynihan Report has set the tone for abstract national debate, the McCone Report may very well concretely influence the Negro administrations and their behavior toward the Negro community. Moreover, the McCone report has been much less widely distributed and has been criticized by conservative and liberal alike, without a thorough analysis.

II

The report begins with a chapter called, "The Crisis -- An Overview," and it is in this chapter that the most glaring, false and erroneous conclusions are committed and reached. Later the report contradicts some of the early conclusions but never retracts them.

After a brief discussion of the looting and beatings that went on in Watts during the six days in August, the report says, "The rioters seem to have been caught up in an insensate rage of destruction." Insensate may have been an appropriate word to describe the youth of Harlem during the third day of the 1964 riots. But, really, had little to do with the Negroes of Watts.

For many years Negroes have turned the violence inflicted upon them by society inward. Watts really marked the first rebellion of Negroes against Negro masochism. The riots were a warning that Negroes would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life.

The rioters, with an uncanny subconscious logic, knew what they were doing and were in control of themselves. One Negro woman told me that the people of Watts "had been ignored, but now the white power structure was going to have to pay attention to them. They wanted more than anything to be recognized, to be heeded.

At a meeting that Dr. King and I attended a young man got up and said, "Dr. King, we're happy you've come, but your not what we really want to hear. You go tell ~~the Governor~~ and the Mayor to come down here and hear our grievences and tell the goddamned Chief of Police we want to talk to him and tell him what's been happening down here."

The riot itself proceeded an almost perfect path to City Hall. (The map, conveniently published by the McCone Report demonstrates this.)

Most of the people involved in stealing were taking things the economics of this society would normally prevent them from owning. And a great number of touching stories can be told about this. There was a husband and wife, both over sixty, who carried a sofa about 8 blocks to their home. They go so tired with carrying the enormous weight that they simply stopped in the middle of the street and sat down on the couch until they could carry it further.

Langston Hughes recorded the story of another woman dragging a sofa through the streets. She always stopped at the corner and waited until the light changed to green.

A large number of people were arrested trying to match up furniture. One of them was a woman who had gone out with her children to get a kitchen set. When she got home she added up and discovered that they needed another chair in order to feed the whole family around the table. They went back to get the additional

chair, all were arrested.

There was an amusing, tragically amusing, side to the manner in which people, who were not used to theft, nor conditioned to the strategy of it, got caught up in the mood of the riots. Finally, the greatest number of arrests were for looting -- not for arson or shooting.

A riot, in a certain sense doesn't have a head, but it does roll on with its own inexorable logic. Violence was not, however, indiscriminate in Watts. Where Negro store keepers put up signs saying "I am a poor working Negro trying to make a business" they were not touched. Where a sign said, "Blood Brother" the mob passed it by. It even spared a few white businesses that allowed credit, or time purchases. ~~and~~ ~~but~~ ~~where~~ ~~merchants~~ were known for high prices and hostility, their stores were looted and destroyed.

That the direction the rioters took was not completely anti-social is demonstrated by their treatment of the liquor stores. All liquor stores were broken into and burned, but I was told by a number of reliable sources that many more bottles of liquor were destroyed than were stolen to be drunk-

The McCone Report, although neglecting to follow the logic of its facts agrees: "The rioters concentrated on food markets, liquor stores, clothing stores, department stores and pawn shops." And continues, "We note with interest that no residences were deliberately burned, that damage to schools, libraries, public buildings were minimal and that certain types of business establishments, notably service stations and automobile showrooms were for the most part unharmed."

The report also notes, "there is no evidence that the rioters made any attempt to steal narcotics from pharmacies in the riot area even though some pharmacies were looted and burned." This is hardly the behavior of an "insensate" mob bent with rage, but is the action of an oppressed and deprived people shut off from the economic benefits of this society! Incidentally, National Guardsmen were not assaulted or jeered at as were the white policemen (but more of that later).

III

The McCone Report further distorts the causes of riots generally. In reviewing the history of rioting beginning 19 1964, it indicates a lack of understanding of the complexities and problems facing the Negro Community. Here are fundamental causes of riots in 1964 as seen by the committee. "Not enough jobs to go around, and within this scarcity not enough by a wide margin of a character which the untrained Negro could fill." "Not enough schooling to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged Negro child whose environment from infancy onward places him under a serious handicap." The last is telling: "a resentment, even hatred of the police as a symbol of authority." The trend of the report is to place the burden on the Negro.

We are told in the next paragraph that, "Many [Negroes] moved to the city in the last generation and are totally unprepared to meet the conditions of city life." There is not one word about the city's ability to provide jobs or homes for these immigrants.. In fact, there is not a word about the situation that caused Negroes to migrate to the cities from rural areas.

After briefly and describing the plight of Negroes in other cities the report gets down to Los Angeles and reiterates the same mistakes. L. A. Negro areas, "are not ghettos, neither are they slums

slums," the Negro population has exploded, etc. The committee does concede that the transportation system is the least adequate of any major city.

The L. A. slums may be beautiful compared to the New York slums (and indeed, Harlem would be an improvement for most of India's masses) but they are slums. The houses are delapidated and owned by absentee landlords. The rest of the city is growing, ~~whikénghés~~ beautiful, while the disadvantaged areas are deteriorating.

The committee doesn't fully explain the meaning of an inadequate transportation system to an isolated Negro population. It is inconvenient, or even, in fact, more expensive. But, that the transportation system hems people in the ghetto. It means that a domestic who must spend \$1.50 and take 1 1/2 to 2 hours to get to a job that pays six or seven dollars a day. It cuts down the possibility of job hunting.

The report, most importantly, ignores the political atmosphere of Los Angeles. On the passage of Proposition 14, for example, the report says, "In addition, many Negroes here felt and were encouraged to feel that they had been affronted by the passage of Proposition 14" [emphasis mine, BR]. Affronted indeed! A major city in the United States repeals a no discrimination housing order and Negroes are to regard this in the same way they might regard the failure of a friend to say "pardon me." To many Negroes in Los Angeles it seemed that the rest of the country was moving forward, passing civil rights laws, improving conditions for Negroes, while Los Angeles was moving backward.

Along with the transportation system and Proposition 14, the report lists two other "aggravating events in the twelve months prior

to the riot." And I quote them so that the ~~one~~ grasp the insidious type of wording used once again. Note particularly, number 2.

(1) "Publicity given to the glowing promise of the Federal poverty program was paralleled by reports of controversy and bickering over the mechanism to handle the program here in Los Angeles and when the projects did arrive, they did not live up to their press notices."

(2) "Throughout the nation unpunished violence and disobedience to law were widely reported and almost daily there were exhortations here and elsewhere to take the most extreme and illegal remedies to right a wide variety of wrongs real and supposed."

It seems to me that it would be more correct to point out that throughout the nation, Negroes have been exhorted to demonstrate non violently with dignity, and to assure their constitutional rights. And, in fact, very few other groups in our society have seen as many people to jail and have been so thoroughly punished for trying to uphold the law of the land.

There is a deeper importance however, in Negroes viewing what was happening throughout the rest of the nation.

In 1948, Negro and white unemployment were roughly equal. In the 50s and early 60s Negro unemployment was consistently double that of white, and Negro teenage unemployment has often been at rates as disastrous as those which prevailed for the entire depression of the late 1930s. It is happily true that Negro unemployment has, as a result of the nations improved economic performance in the 1960s declined from the level of 12.6% which it reached in 1958 (and 12.5% in 1961). Today nonwhite joblessness in the United States at roughly 8.3% but, and this is of great significance, the proportion of Negro unemployment compared

to white has remained constant despite the progress it is twice as serious. So, if in 1958, 12.6% of Negroes were unemployed and 6.1% of the whites, in 1965 the corresponding figures are 8.1% and 4.2%. Or, still a ratio of 2 to 1 against the Negro. In other words there is continuing discrimination even when gains are made. But these statistics conceal an even more dangerous trend. The persistence of Negro youth unemployment. In 1961, 24.7% of those Negroes between 14 and 19 years of age were out of work and it is estimated that in 1965 this incredible rate will only decline to 23.2%. This is an expression of the fact that Negro job progress has been largely a result of calling men with previous experience back to work. What official figures give us no reason to be optimistic about the huge number of young and often unskilled, uneducated Negroes who will be entering the labor market in the next period. For, in the next year Negroes, who are 11% of the population will be 20% of the new entrants into the labor force. Approximately half of the proportionate number of young Negroes will be without the equivalent of a high school education. And they will be competing in an economy in which the demand for skill and training is increasing dramatically.

It is, thus, possible that there will be a deterioration of the Negro's social and economic position at the very moment when the civil rights movement is achieving great political victories. As a result, the new "freedom" becomes a bitter thing indeed, and economic servitude would become as effective an instrument of discrimination as any racist law. I would suggest, therefore, that it was declining job opportunities and growing teenage unemployment that make make Negroes restive, and not civil rights demonstrations or exhortation to lawlessness.

IV

In yet another section of the report entitled, "Dull, Devastating Spiral of Failure" the burden is once again placed on the Negro: his homelife destroys incentive, he doesn't have experience with words and ideas, and is unready and unprepared in school. Consequently, even the most dedicated teachers can't teach him in overcrowded class rooms.

"Unprepared and unready", the report goes on, "he slipped into the ranks of the unemployed." [emphasis mine, BR]. (

I think it is important to really understand the, "Dull, Devastating Spiral of Failure." In 1940, Edward Wight Bakke described the effects of unemployment on family structure. Bakke demonstrated a model tragedy: The jobless father is no longer a provider, credit runs out, the women is forced into the labor force. Then, if relief becomes a necessity the women is even more the focal point. The father is dependent, the children bewildered, the stability of the family is threatened and often shattered. Bakke's research was a description of the plight of white unemployed. Thus, the fact that Negro scholars like the late Franklin Frazier and Dr. Kenneth Clark and other investigators have described this pattern as a typical one among Negroes poor does not mean it has anything to do with some "Inherent" Negro trait. It is a relationship between family life and joblessness which holds and has held for both black and white. If Negroes suffer more from the problems today it is not because they are Negro but because they are so disproportionately part of the unemployed, the underemployed and the ill-paid.

What has happened in America is that the post-Emancipation labor

market denied many Negroes the opportunity to become economic fathers -- just as the laws of slavery had denied the Negro the juridical right to marriage and children, and the possession of property. (Under slavery a Negro could not even own a dog.)

The answer to this problem is not to give the impoverished masses of the black ghettos sermons about middle class virtues it is to jobs and decent integrated housing and schools.

V

I shall turn to the report's view of the Los Angeles Police. Many pages are devoted to the functioning of the police, and the authors are rightfully concerned with what really sparked the incident, the enforcement procedures used and the attitudes of the police. I do not want to discuss or argue about the details here. My dispute is with the conclusions of the report.

First there isn't even the slightest admission that the police might have used excess force. Invariably during a riot police bring in too much power to contain the outburst; the attitude of the rioters is hardened; the ~~thetase~~ then come out, followed by the people who want to politically manipulate the riot. And Los Angeles was no different.

34 persons were killed during the riots. (3 of them were working for city and state government.) At the hearings held on 32 deaths, 26 were ruled justifiable homicide, 3 ruled homicide and one accidental. Yet, a commission ~~whpakt~~ which has been given hundreds of thousands of dollars and can document the time Mayor Yorty called Chief Parker and at what time the National Guard was summoned and various other statistics does not give definitions of what was considered justifiab~~e~~

homicide. How many policemen and how many Negroes were involved.

A more interesting statistic is that out of 1,032 reported injuries, 90 were police officers, 36 firemen, ten National Guardsmen, 23 from government agencies. The overwhelming majority, therefore, were the Negroes themselves. And one would have hoped that the McCone Report would have broken down those statistics so that we know how many police were seriously injured and how many incurred minor injuries.

We heard from Chief Parker for many days during the Los Angeles riots that the rioters were the "criminal element." But, let me cite these statistics from the report: There were 3,438 adults arrested. Of those adults, 1,232 had never been arrested before and 1,164 had a minor criminal record (convicted with a sentence of 90 days or less).

In the Negro community this is an absolutely phenomenal record. Most Negroes at one time or another have been picked up and been placed in jail either on a disorderly conduct charge or some charge that for the most part was unfounded.

I have been arrested several times in Harlem on charges that had no basis in fact: Once for trying to stop a police officer from arresting the wrong man; the second time for asking an officer who was throwing several young men into a paddy wagon, what they had done. Both times I was charged with interfering with an arrest and spent the night in jail. By the time I reached the courtroom the judge recognized me and dismissed the charges. Most Negroes are not fortunate enough to be recognized by judges.

There were 514 juveniles arrested. 257 had never been arrested before. The report never acknowledges that this was a riot not of

thiefs and looters but of consumers. Most seriously, Chief Parker is absolved from the charge of discrimination. Let me quote once again from the report.

"Chief Parker's statements to us and to collateral evidence, such as his fairness to Negro officers, are inconsistent with his having such an attitude [deep hatred of Negroes]. Despite the depth of feeling against Chief Parker expressed to us by so many witnesses, he is recognized even by many of his vocal critics as a capable Chief who directs an efficient police force and serves well this entire community."

In fact the police are consistently applauded for their handling of the incident before and after the riot and their general functioning in Los Angeles.

I am not going to raise the usual arguments that police are brutal and that police mistreat Negroes. Every Negro knows this. There is scarcely any black man, woman or child in the land that at some point or other has been anything but mistreated by a policeman. A young man in Watts said, "the riots will continue because I, as a Negro am immediately considered a criminal by the police and, if I have pretty woman with me she is a tramp even if she is my wife or mother." But what really is important to understand is this: Even if every policeman in every Ghetto behaved like an angel and was trained in the most modern and progressive police academies, (very few of which can be found,) the problem would still exist. First of all, because the ghetto is a place where Negroes do not want to be. They are fighting to get out and when someone tells you in those terrible circumstances, particularly someone who carries a gun and billy club, to ha

to behave yourself, he becomes a zoo keeper. It is not an accident that Parker called the rioters, "these monkeys". In the ghetto the policeman is demanding essentially that you accept and tolerate conditions that are abhorrent to you. He is brutalizing you by asking you to accept what you cannot, and ought not to accept.

But let me turn to Chief Parker and the Los Angeles Police Department. Dr. Martin Luther King, after a 2 3/4 hour meeting, in responding to the naivete of Chief Parker and others, said, "what we find is a blind and intransigent ignorance of the social forces which are at work here. To treat the situation as though it were the result of a criminal element is to lead the community into potential holocaust." It was Chief Parker who behaved, "insensate" when his department used excessive force and violence in the situation. And his description of the Negro rioters as "monkeys" could only heighten disregard for law and order.

There was much less resistance as to the National Guard, that that included many Negro troops than to the Los Angeles Police who are made up mainly of white Southerners.

Although Dr. King and I have talked with many public officials who lack understanding of the problems of the Negro community, we were nonplussed during our discussions with Mayor Yorty and Chief Parker. They both denied any prejudice existed in Los Angeles and when I asked them why did citizens vote 3 to 1 for Proposition 13 which repealed the states Fair Housing Act they said, "That's no indication of prejudice. That's personal choice."

When I asked Chief Parker why he used the kind of language he did when referring to the Negroes during the riot he implied that this was the only language Negroes understood.

While Mayor Yorty was insensitive to the problems in the Negro community, Chief Parker is a greater menace. He doesn't recognize that he has prejudice, and he is both naive and a zealot about law and order. These are two qualities which together produce a kind of fanaticism that is dangerous.

Parker appeared last May 30th on the Manion Forum conducted by Clarence Manion, a Birch Society council member, according to a Group Research Report, and spoke on the need for supporting the police.

Drew Pearson quotes him at a meeting as having said, "it is my considered opinion that America today is in reality more than half pagan." Parker went on to say, "we have moved our form of government to a socialist form of government." This attitude was compounded by the amount of right wing Birch influence in and on the Los Angeles police department. I can't determine the exact influence and numbers but the following incident is an example which may give some idea. About a month before the riots a most scurrilous leaflet describing Dr. King as a liar and a Communist was put up on the Los Angeles police station bulletin board. There it remained until the concerted efforts of the combined Negro organizations had it removed.

It is strange that that is not listed as one of the "aggravating factors" by the McCone Report. The Mayor and Chief of Police by their statements, particularly their denunciation of the Negro leaders, and their refusal to meet with them early enough, put Negro leaders in an untenable position. One of the most revealing aspects is that the rioters felt that the only way they could effect the Mayor and the Police Chief was through violence.

The commission rejects also the concept of an independent police review board and instead suggests that the post of Inspector General

be established under the authority of the Chief of Police. It also suggests that speakers be sent to various Negro schools to inform Negro youth that the police are their friends. This is another indication of the public relations approach of the report.

The problems between Negroes and the police cannot ever be counted as public relations problems. It is not a lack of contact or understanding but, in fact, too much of the wrong kind of contact that creates the problem. It also should be recognized that when Negroes were deprived of work and must therefore sell numbers, women, or dope to earn a living, must gamble and work in the pool rooms, and when the policeman upholds law by arresting them, he is, in fact, cutting off the Negroes livelihood.

A clever criminal in the Negro ghetto might have been a clever businessman had he been born with a different skin color. But, so long as the problems of unemployment, bad housing, and inadequate schooling remain, and as long as Negroes are treated unjustly, no exhortation for law and order can be a solution.

In my opinion, the presence of an independent police review board would strengthen respect for the police. For if Negroes knew that their grievances could be handled through independently established channels there would be less frustration and less feelings of futility which result in violence. The report basis its opposition to an Independent Police Review Board on the fact that the '64 riots took place in some cities with already established review boards. The riots in those cities (Rochester and Philadelphia) never reached the intensity of the Harlem and Watts riots, however.

VI

Let us now turn to some other aspects of the report. First, the field of education, where the most blatantly ignored question of integration occurs and a complete lack of sense of priority is demonstrated.

The chapter entitled "Education -- our Fundamental Resource" begins with a measure of class size in Negro and white areas (Negro areas, by the way, are referred to as "disadvantaged areas") To begin with, the classes in Negro schools, i.e. "disadvantaged schools", are slightly smaller. Then the commission blithely goes on to repeat that teachers with more experience teach in the non-disadvantaged areas, then followed is a discussion about double sessions (where there is tremendous overcrowding in the "disadvantaged schools"). On the other hand, the buildings in the disadvantaged areas are in better repair. Whereas, there are cafeterias in the advantaged schools but no cafeterias in the disadvantaged schools. ~~The disadvantaged schools,~~ it is finally admitted, don't have libraries; are limited in special subjects and counseling services, and curriculums. Despite those admissions, even in this sort of topsided order, more space is devoted to environmental factors.

Once again, the commission returns to the Negro home and placing the burden where it does not really belong. The report does make two major recommendations. One is that elementary and Junior high schools in the "disadvantaged areas" which have achievement levels substantially below the city average should be designated Emergency Schools. In each of these schools an emergency literacy program would be established consisting in a drastic reduction of class size to a maximum of 22

students and supported personal added.

The second recommendation is that a permanent preschool program should be established throughout the school year to provide education beginning at age 3. Efforts would be focused on the development of language skills essential to prepare children to read and write.

W. T. Rasset, executive secretary of the Los Angeles, American Federation of Labor, rightfully criticises the report for its failure to deal with education and planning for youth and adults not now in school. And I must add the report does not propose a plan to decrease school segregation.

While most of us now agree that we must have quality integrated schools, we cannot, as the report suggests have the quality without integration. The stated goal of the McCone Commission is first improve the quality of the Negro schools and thus, "increase the tendency to desegregation."

-VII-

The area of housing is treated as inadequately as the other areas. While calling for the liberalization of credit and FHA insured loans in "disadvantaged areas", the implementation of rehabilitation programs, urban renewal and even suggests the creation of a "wide area data bank", it consistently ignores the repeal of Proposition 14 or the creation of a new fair-housing code. The Commission supports the creation of a Commission on Human Relations, but does not present any proposals that would give it the power to carry out any programs that go beyond collecting information and public relations.

-VIII-

The section that demonstrates the most ignorance, lack of imagination, and conservatism is ~~in the~~ ^{the} section on employment. The report

does call for fifty thousand new jobs. But, the suggestions as to how to get those jobs are, at best, vague and, at worst, destrubtive.

Just a few words on the suggestions for youth and retraining. The report suggests that the existing government projects, which were, by the way, woefully inadequate, begin a series of "attitudinal training" programs to help gouth develop the necessary motivation. This is just another example of the commission's continued reliance on public relations rather than on fundamental change.) The fact of the matter is that youth cannot change their attitudes until they see that they can get jobs. People in our society do not change by themsalves but change because the institutions which mold their opinions permit them to change their attitudes.

Similarly, Negro youth, who see about them unemployment, their fathers not going to work, and poverty programs being manipulated on behalf of politicians, no on behalf of the poor, will not change their attitudes. I want to site a concrete example here. I am on the committee which administers the Apprenticeship Training Program of the Workers Defense League. For many years the League had heard that there were not enough Negro applicants to fill various apprenticeship training opportunities. The League also heard from vocational school counselors that, although they tried to teach Negro youth English and mathematics, they absolutely could not pay attention and became drop-outs. The League began its apprenticeship program two years ago now has more than 500 applicants on file and maintains contact with them. The men have shown a sincere dedication.

When Local 28 of the Sheetmetal Workers announced last fall that a new test for admittance into their apprenticeship program was being given on a certain date. The League contacted those youth on its list

who had indicated an interest in sheet metal work. The young men came to the office, filled out a ten page application form, filed a ten dollar fee, returned to the Local 28 office and then came to Harlem, in many cases from Brooklyn and Queens, to be tutored five nights a week in advance of the test. Most of the young men showed up to 15 sessions within a three week period. Eleven of those young men scored in the top thirty-three of the test, fourteen in the top 65. They then went for interviews. Having achieved these high scores they dressed well for the interviews and behaved with admirable poise and confidence. The WDL doesn't attribute its success to any miraculous program, but knows that when young people are told that at the end of a given period there will be work for them, then attitudes are markedly different than when, for example, they are sent off to a work camp.

Secondly, the report contains the following line. "Compensation should not be necessary for those trainees who are receiving welfare support." Earlier in the report the Commissioner pointed out that welfare services had a tendency to destroy family life giving more money to a woman who lived alone. And yet the report has the audacity to ask that such a system be continued while young men are working and being trained. One can rightfully ask how a young boy can be proud of his work if he is not made to feel that it is meaningful and necessary. Rather, the McCone report would have us say, "There, there, young man, we're going to keep you off the streets -- just putter around doing this meaningless work. Thirdly, a young man who collects welfare checks can also hustle on street corners and thereby increase his earning capacity. In short it doesn't pay to work on a welfare salary, which is pitifully low. A man must be paid for his work and not be

voluntarily and with subsidies, can do to help in the unemployment situation. But I believe that the main burden must fall on government.

There are in Watts and throughout the United States, generally unemployable Black and white poor. Among them the children, the aging, and the permanently handicapped. No measure of full employment or of economic growth can put an end to their misery. They must be provided with a decent level of life as defined by American society.

It is outrageous that the McCone Report can blatantly admit that there are dependant children programs which promote separation and divorce because of rules against able bodied males being part of the recipient family and does not suggest that these rules be changed.

The human care of human beings should be a major area of job growth. Los Angeles officials could immediately put women and unemployed youth to work as school attendants, counselors, practical nurses and sanitation workers. The federal government and state of California must aid the people of Watts by beginning a massive public works program. In short the proposal made by A. Philip Randolph for a \$100 freedom budget must be implemented.

To some my proposals may seem sweeping and even incredible. The truly incredible fact is that America allowed Watts to happen, and that a Commission empowered to study the situation should come up with answers that involve voluntary actions by business and labor, new public relations campaigns for municipal agencies and information gathering for housing, fair employment and welfare departments.

We must not teach impoverished Negroes that the only way they can get the hear of America is to rise up in violence.

Bayard Rustin

Why don't Negroes . . .

have more respect for law and order? . . . straighten up their family life and stop asking for handouts? . . . do something to help themselves, the way other minorities have? These questions, lurking in the minds of many white men, are answered honestly and frankly by one of the most prominent leaders of the civil rights movement

Television viewers were shocked some weeks ago to see Negroes attending a conference of the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty demonstrate against Sargent Shriver. To most Americans, I'm sure, this was another demonstration of Negro irrationality, ingratitude and lack of self-discipline.

I opposed and tried to curb that demonstration because it allowed a handful of people to obscure the fundamental criticisms most conference participants had of the antipoverty program. In Indianola, Miss., for example, the chief of police is head of the antipoverty board; in Selma, Ala., Jim Clark controls much of the funds, and for the most part the concept of maximum feasible participation has not been implemented.

I recall the incident because it brought to the fore once again the questions white people often raise about Negroes. For instance: "Why don't Negroes respect law and order?" "Why don't they straighten up their families and stop asking for handouts?" "Why don't they pull themselves up by their bootstraps as we did?"

I don't want to belittle these questions, for even religious people are

deeply confused about some of them. Men of good will cannot sit by, however, and allow programs that were well-intentioned to flounder, nor should they accept unsubstantiated or unthought-out statements about law and order, the breakdown of the Negro family and self-help.

I am going to address myself to those questions in the following pages, but before I do so, I want to say that there are two theses I believe we can all accept. The first is that the Negro family can be reconstructed only when the Negro male is permitted to be the economic and psychological head of the family. The second, that racism is a blasphemy against the fundamental oneness and unity that the world and all its people derive from their Creator; that racists are, in a very precise sense of the term, blasphemers who set themselves up as gods over their fellow men and worship not a human nature created in the divine image, but the accidents of skin color, of nation, of ethnic background. These people would annul that great and enormous truth which is so central to the Judeo-Christian tradition: that God is not the talisman of a tribe, a sort of good-luck

charm for one's warriors as against the warriors of some other god, but that God is indeed one.

The racists, for all their Scriptural quoting, would belittle God, for they turn human beings into non-souls and thus seek to diminish the divine work.

Who is to blame for ghetto violence?

Anatole France once wrote that it is illegal for rich men and poor men alike to sleep under bridges or to steal a piece of bread. At the heart of this wise witticism, there is an understanding of the way in which all the noble words—equality, justice, freedom—have definitions that vary according to one's misery or prosperity. And this sad truth holds most profoundly in the racial ghettos of America, where millions of black citizens live out poverty-stricken lives. In these man-made jungles, there are many who cannot comprehend the very meaning of a phrase like "law and order," for it does not correspond to anything that has ever happened in their lives. Such people are not stupid; far from it. They are being ruthlessly logical in generalizing

from their own experiences, for they have seldom seen the least shred of empirical evidence that there is such a thing as "law and order."

But then, there are those who say that when I talk in this way I somehow "excuse" the violence and nihilism that sometimes erupt in the Negro slum. And that, of course, is not the case at all. It would take a fool or a sadist to celebrate the involuntary, spastic violence of the ghetto or to say that it was a means toward any good. The real issue is: Who is to blame? Is it the Negro man or woman who was born into a miserable, vermin-infested apartment, sent to an overcrowded, inadequate school, not really taught to read, write or count, and actually educated, for all practical purposes, in the street? Is this the autonomous, morally choosing individual whom we shall not excuse for his free choice of violence?

My question should answer itself. But more than that, this line of inquiry should indicate the profound limits on the moralistic advocacy of respect for law and order. The disorder, the alienation, the violence of the ghetto are, to a considerable degree, social consequences that are imposed upon people. It is thus a waste of time to give beautiful sermons filled with words that may make some sense in suburbia, but that the daily reality of slum life has rendered meaningless. Moreover, the root of the violence is in the economic order of the ghetto. The policeman who arrests a young man for selling marijuana, numbers or women is not only preventing crime; he is in fact stopping that young man from earning a living.

The greatest lesson one could teach would be to create a decent, integrated environment in which man's potential for brotherhood, reason and co-operation was a deduction from firsthand experience, rather than an incomprehensible pronouncement broadcast into chaos by philosophers who live in ordered comfort. For, as Western philosophy has understood as far back as Aristotle, the hungry man, the freezing man, the sick man, does not have time or inclination to speculate upon the higher things. He is consumed by his immediate misery, which is the only reality he knows. And so for millions of people living in ghettos, a dis-

cussion of law and order is misleading. For where there is justice and just law, order can exist; where there is injustice and an unjust administration of law, disorder is inevitable.

What are a Negro's job prospects?

Two decades ago, in the Irene Morgan case, Jim Crow was illegalized in interstate transportation. The Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation was handed down almost twelve years ago. The Montgomery bus protest was won eleven years ago. The sit-in movement swept through the lunchrooms and bus stations of the South five years ago. The dogs were unleashed in Birmingham three years ago. It is a year since Selma. And during all this time, while thousands and tens of thousands suffered and faced death—and while some died—the economic and social position of the Negro relative to that of the white has declined. When general unemployment was high, the Negro rate was double the white; when progress in reducing joblessness was made, as in the last two years, the Negro gains were half those of the white. At the same time, New York (where liberal pieties on the race issue are required of all serious candidates for office) maintains ghetto schools that actually work a deterioration on the intellectual ability of a growing number of black students each year.

This situation becomes all the more pathological when one looks at the job prospects of the young, systematically un-educated Negro from the black ghetto. In the next five years, according to the President's Manpower Report of last year, Negroes, who are approximately 10 per cent of the population, will be almost 20 per cent of the new entrants to the labor force. In part, of course, this figure simply reflects the ability of the whites to prolong education (and in their case, more effective education: Scarsdale spends twice as much per capita on education for its children as Harlem). But beyond that, what is going to happen to these hundreds of thousands of young Negroes?

One grim possibility is discernible in the recent government reports of progress in reducing unemployment. The over-all jobless level has fallen to

around 4.2 per cent; the Negro rate, at well over 8 per cent, is as usual double. But—and this is an explosive fact—the Negro teen-age percentages have hardly declined at all, and remain in the neighborhood of 25 per cent. In other words, at the very moment when the New Economics was successfully rescuing whites and some Negroes from unemployment (the Negroes returning to work were laid-off workers, usually with skills), Negro youth was continuing to inhabit a world where work was as hard to find as in the Depression of the 1930's.

It should be emphasized, however, that even the positive figures are overly optimistic. A number of economists have convincingly argued that Washington's unemployment statistics do not take into account those driven out of the labor market (there have been estimates as high as a million and a half) and do not compute the cumulative effect of part-time unemployment and various other forms of under-employment. As a result, Leon Keyserling has concluded that the "true" unemployment rate, even with the much vaunted progress we have recently made, is around 8 per cent and all the numbers for Negroes would show a substantial increase. Beyond this, as the testimony that Clarence Mitchell of the NAACP presented on behalf of the civil rights leadership last year shows, working Negroes are, to an unusually high degree, concentrated in "poverty jobs": domestic work, the janitorial occupations in the service trades, laundry work, etc. These are people who often labor a full two thousand hours a year and who are, nevertheless, bitterly poor. They are in jobs not covered by Federal legislation at all, or in those that pay the official, legal and impoverishing minimum of \$2,600 a year, or \$500 under the poverty line for a man with a wife and two children.

But, then, perhaps Watts can be taken as a summary—and utterly persuasive statement—of my themes. The Los Angeles ghetto was, and is, a way station on the terrible above-ground railway that this economy runs for Negroes. Literally tens of thousands of black men are forced to migrate from the South. They come North to "freedom," where they are packed together in slums and sent out to compete on

Why don't Negroes . . .

the labor market with the black generation that arrived a decade or two ago (Jeremy Larner has estimated that over half the adult population of Harlem is made up of migrants who were not born there). And they also must contend, of course, with white competition. In Watts, then, one found jobless rates—according to the official figures—of nearly 40 per cent. And since the flaming outburst of last summer, many agencies, public and private, have gone into Watts to talk to Negroes there about work. The one thing they have not provided is jobs.

In one form or another, the reality I have described is now common knowledge in the civil rights movement and in the Federal government. What, then, are we going to do about it—besides writing sociological descriptions of it?

The debate over the "Moynihan Report" focuses on one approach. As is generally known by now, one of the principal authors of the report was Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Let me make it clear at the outset that I feel it is unfair to charge Moynihan with being a racist, open or covert, and that, as a matter of fact, he was trying in his report to insist on the social and economic dimension of the race issue—for example, in his showing that prolonged unemployment tended to disintegrate the white family structure and to place particularly difficult psychological burdens on the male. The Negro family, Moynihan shows, has lived in a depression-like atmosphere ever since the 1930's, and the result has been a predictable breakdown. Now, this point has been made previously by Negro scholars—the late Franklin Frazier comes to mind in particular—and it has also emerged from studies of the heritage of American slavery.

But the Moynihan data were presented in a form guaranteed to promote confusion. An intra-office memo on one aspect of a problem, it was taken

by many, both friends and foes, as a comprehensive statement. Thus, even though the report made it clear that Negro family stability had always increased when Negro economic opportunity was on the rise, there were those who claimed that Moynihan had demonstrated that the real problem was a Negro deficiency in facing reality. Don't talk about "handouts," these sermonizers and moralists said whenever anyone spoke of the job of generating programs that could provide a basis for Negro family stability. And they concluded: just have Negroes put their own house in order! Thus chaotic aspects of Negro life that are the direct consequence of the economic and social discrimination practiced by white America were turned into bogus evidence of some kind of Negro inferiority.

And the truncated form of the Moynihan Report also meant that it concentrated almost solely upon what is negative in Negro life. There was no examination of the degree to which the "abnormality" of some of the ghetto mores, when seen from the point of view of a secure white middle class, represents a desperate, but intelligent, attempt on the part of a jobless Negro to adapt to a social pathology. There was no assessment of the extraordinary accomplishment of the civil rights movement in summoning so many to sacrifice and to idealism despite these indignities.

Breakdown of the Negro family

In 1962, Abram Kardiner, M. D., and Lionel Ovesey published their study of the personality of the American Negro, *The Mark of Oppression*. The section in their book that deals with the breakdown of the Negro family is a scientific and compassionate description; it explains a great deal about the interrelationship between personality and economics.

When a Negro male abandons his wife and children, the authors point out, he is blamed for having no sense of responsibility—something generally considered a character trait of Negroes. Research has shown, however, that such a man himself is more often than not the product of a broken home. He had no father to set him a pattern of

stability and protection, and his overburdened mother was irritable and demanded strict obedience. He was thrown into competition with his mother's other children. Hearing men disparaged by his female relatives, and without affectionate attention from anyone, his self-esteem was lowered. The submissive attitude he thus developed toward women limited his ability to enter into a satisfactory marital relationship. When he married, he knew that his wife had much better chances economically than he did. Moreover, neither he nor his wife had much tolerance for each other's faults. Even if he found work, it was hardly ever permanent. Often he tried hard to fulfill his obligations, but he failed continuously. Thereupon his wife began berating and browbeating him. Finally, either she invited him to leave, or he himself abandoned his family.

When a husband moves out, the authors continue, he is generally a defeated man. He drifts from job to job. Often he seeks escape in drink, or satisfaction through expensive clothes or through pleasure with women. Even if he stays married, the husband remains subordinate to his wife. Though he is submissive toward her, he may become domineering over the children. An abandoned wife, on the other hand, usually marries—and often successfully—a second time. If that marriage fails, her lot from then on is one of ceaseless toil. Usually she cannot give her child either attention or love. Often a sister or brother has to take care of the child, who is thus exposed to bitter rivalries with other children. The male child of a broken marriage takes to the streets. Here he elevates his self-esteem through exploits with other boys, obtaining rewards he cannot get at home. Without his knowing it, many of his satisfactions are bought through anti-social acts.

If we study this description of the breakdown of the American Negro family, we find that there is a common reality-factor in that cycle: the economic position of the Negro male. We could attempt to psychoanalyze poor Negroes, to improve their self-image and self-esteem, but in the face of the economic realities, all our effort would be futile.

That is why A. Philip Randolph has

proposed a "Freedom Budget," a multi-billion-dollar social investment to destroy the racial ghettos of America, house the black and white poor decently and create full and fair employment in the process. His approach is fundamental if we are serious about reconstructing the Negro family and allowing the Negro male to be the head of the household.

'Help yourself, like we did'

Misconceptions about Negro family life are often compounded by admonitions to Negroes to help themselves "like we did" (the "we" are the Poles, Jews, Irish, Italians, etc.).

Michael Harrington pointed out, in a recent issue of *Dissent*, that the old immigrant groups came to America when an expanding blue-collar economy had work for grade school dropouts and men who could not even speak English, while the Negro has come to the city as an internal alien in a time of automation, a time when the number of available jobs is decreasing. (Oscar Handlin points out in his book *Race, Nationality and American Life* that without the immigrant labor supply, the development of the cotton goods industry to its present status in New York and other North Atlantic States could not have taken place.)

Saying this does not mean that Negro self-organization is irrelevant. Far from it. It is only when the black ghetto of the North, which has yet to be organized massively by any civil rights group, comes to conscious political life that the full impact of the Negro revolution will be felt. But first of all, the economic and social setting in which such organization becomes possible and even probable has to be created. Just as the semi-skilled factory workers did not create the CIO at the bottom of the Depression in 1932, but only when times were getting better a few years later, so the black masses require some tangible signs of hope and success before they are going to move.

For that matter, the white immigrant groups from Europe, which are so often held up as images of the "self-help" process, benefited from massive government intervention. The great advance made by the first and second

generation workers took place, of course, in the 1930's, and the most important new institutions they created were precisely the industrial unions. But this did not happen in a vacuum. There was the Wagner Act, which, if it did not immediately guarantee collective bargaining rights, put the moral and psychological authority of the government on the side of the labor movement ("Mr. Roosevelt wants you to join," John L. Lewis said in those days). And there were the various programs—the climate of economic hope. Some Negroes participated in this progress; most were excluded because racism had kept them out of the factories, where the decisive events occurred.

In short, the CIO had to organize itself, but it did so under circumstances of Federal intervention that made the momentous task easier to perform. Negroes have to organize themselves. And the Freedom Budget, which is their New Deal 30 years late, will not simply provide full and fair employment and lay the basis for the destruction of the physical environment of poverty. Like the Wagner Act and the social investments of the New Deal, it should also evoke a new psychology, a new militancy and sense of dignity, among millions of Negroes, who will see something more concrete and specific than a promise of eventual freedom.

But secondly, when I talk of the self-organization that the Freedom Budget should make possible, I am not talking about "self-help" in the neighborhood improvement sense. In *Dark Ghetto*, Kenneth Clark tells of how one New York block got together to clean up the street. In the doing, Clark rightly remarks, these Negroes gave tacit assent to the charge that it was their *fault* that the street was dirty, thus accepting one more of the white man's stereotypes about the Negro (i.e., he is guilty of non-cleanliness). What is more, the energy was misdirected. It should have been directed to City Hall as a demand that the city clean up the streets of Harlem the same way it cleans up the streets of the white middle class.

From the time of the American Revolution until the rise of the NAACP in the first decade of this century, Ne-

groes have followed the advice of the self-helpers. When Negroes were thrown out of the Methodist Church in the 18th century, they established the African Methodist Episcopal Church. When they were not allowed to attend white universities, they set up Wilberforce University in Ohio. When insurance companies would not insure Negroes, fraternal organizations and social clubs took on the task. The history of the Negro people in the United States is a history of attempting to build separate self-help organizations. At the end of World War II, the Urban League and the National Council of Negro Women formed "Hold Your Job Committees." The committees conducted educational campaigns in the factories and the Negro community to urge Negroes not to give employers any excuse for discharging them after the war.

More recently, Black Nationalists and Muslims have believed that if Negroes would only follow the Protestant ethic and "Buy Black" (while a number of confused whites have said: "Be frugal"), they could end their economic dependence. But the fact is that if millions of Negroes are to change the conditions of their life, it will be not by becoming shopkeepers or by cleaning up their block, but by winning full and fair employment for black men as well as white.

Negroes, I am saying, should be individually virtuous—and so should whites. But the Negro movement's future does not lie along the line of making over millions of black personalities, one by one. The European immigrants and their children ceased being rude peasants not because they got religion or psychology, but because they got economic opportunity and hope. The Negro movement must now struggle against economic injustices that are more deeply rooted in the management and structure of our technology than anything the immigrants ever faced. And it can win this perilous fight only by way of militant political organization and through national programs.

[BAYARD RUSTIN is the executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute. His article is based on a study paper that he prepared for a recent conference of the John LaFarge Institute.] ■

*Some Lessons from Watts**

BY BAYARD RUSTIN

IN ORDER for me to talk about Watts, it is necessary for me to talk first about the nature of the revolution through which we are moving. Europeans find it very difficult to accept the term, "the civil rights revolution," because a revolution usually is thought of as having aspects that this revolution does not have.

In general usage, a revolution means an attempt, by force, by a group not in power to take power, and to exercise it. That is not what Negroes want. Contrary to some things that Mr. James Baldwin and Leroy Jones have written, I do not know any sizeable number of Negroes who think in terms of seizing power. Secondly, a real revolution postulates a political philosophy which is different from that held by the major groups with which they are contending. I know of no sizeable group of Negroes in this country who want to revise American institutions. They want to be part of those institutions, for good or ill, as they now exist.

Thirdly, revolutions as we have known them invariably have used any form of power and in any degree—whatever it can get into its hands—for the accomplishment of its aim, the achieving of power. By and large, the Negro revolt has denied that it is interested in, nor has it used, violence. It has limited itself in tactics and stratagems to non-violence.

Now, if this be true, how can we use the term "civil rights revolution"? In the Greek—and true—meaning of the term, "revolution" means to go to the roots of things and turn them upside down. There is a revolution, that is a going to the bottom of things and turning them topsy-turvy, in that the Negro subjectively, inwardly, psychologically, declares himself a man, no longer looks upon himself as an inferior. This is important because the history of top and bottom, the history of slave and master, shows that slavery cannot in fact continue far beyond the point at which slaves no longer looked upon themselves as slaves and accommodated to it—as in America we accommodate to two dis-

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Bayard Rustin, Director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, organized the 1963 March on Washington.

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tinctly different but important concepts, that of Uncle Tom and that of Sambo.

NEEDED: A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

There is another sense in which we are in a revolutionary stage—an inner revolution that has nothing to do with the Negroes' objectives. It grows out of the fact that what the American Negro now wants to achieve with nonrevolutionary objectives cannot in fact be achieved unless there is a democratic constitutional revolution in the economic and social life of this country. That is what is truly revolutionary. Now, this is already quite clear in its prerevolutionary form. I do not for a moment think that the changes I am about to enumerate are due exclusively to the Negro in motion; but if other forces did exist and the Negro were not in motion, these changes could not have come about. The ecumenical movement in religion—Catholics, Protestants and Jews cooperating—emerged essentially from Negroes in movement. It is, in fact, only around Negroes that Catholics, Protestants and Jews have been able to coalesce for social objectives. I believe we would not now be examining our school systems and doing what Dr. Cronin—and many other educators—have asked us to do for years except for Negroes in motion. It took Negro school boycotts to get this nation to realize that the school system itself is not training people for the age of automation and cybernation and a technological revolution through which we are passing. I do not believe there would be a war on poverty today if Negroes had not been in motion. I do not believe that there would be the student movement concerned with peace and civil rights and academic freedom had that movement not been inspired by the movement of Negro students in 1960.

A WARNING AND AN APPEAL

It is important to note that I say we are in a pre-revolutionary state precisely because the Negro will no longer consent to look on himself as he has done for 350 years; and because, unless something profound happens, we not only will be unable to solve what we think of as the Negro problem, but we are preparing for a continuous siege, a continuous social dislocation of a violent nature in this country, if we are not able to move rapidly. And this is so precisely because if the Negro's being in motion non-violently causes a number of creative things to happen, if his frustration then causes him to be in motion violently, we will discover that a number of extremely violent things will be visited upon the total nature of our society.

This analysis is important because Watts was a warning and an

appeal. If a few Negroes get drunk and go berserk, that is criminal behavior. If an entire community goes berserk, it signals the presence of a social sickness that has sprung from social germs. A young man in Watts said to me and Dr. King, "You know, we won."

I said, "What do you mean, you won?"

He said, "They finally listened to our manifesto." And he kept talking about the manifesto.

And I said, "Young man, what do you mean, the manifesto? Would you mind letting me and Dr. King see a copy of it?"

He pulled out a matchbox; he pulled out a single match; he lit it. He said, "Daddy, that was our manifesto, and the slogan was 'Burn, baby, burn.'"

I said, "But you haven't told me how you won."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you how we won. We were four years telling these white folks peacefully what we needed. We asked them to come and talk with us. They didn't come. We tried to get some war on poverty. It didn't come. But after our manifesto, daddy, the Mayor, the Governor, you, Dr. King, everybody came."

Now, this is amusing, but it is terribly serious, because Watts has caused thousands of young Negroes in this country to speak not what is untrue but what is precisely true—that the great majority of white people in this country, and particularly those with political power, did in fact, after they had burned, bring in the war on poverty; did in fact, after they had pillaged, pay attention to them; did in fact, after the rampaging and the looting, finally say, "Well, something must be done." The danger is not so much from the looting or the burning; the real danger is that, objectively, from what these youngsters have seen happen, they now believe that looting and burning have become a legitimate means for forcing social change. If anyone is at fault, it is the authorities who have failed to see the first aspect of this revolution, which is dignity.

In Watts, I learned what I had been fearing for some time from the response to Malcolm X and to other black nationalist groups: that the Negro in this country no longer will do what Dollard and others described them as doing in their study at Yale on frustration and aggression. Mr. Dollard and others pointed out that frustration generates aggression, in direct proportion. They cited the great number of fights between Negro women and their husbands during weekends, the number of razor duels in the streets, the fights over gamblings, the murders as evidence that Negroes (apart from the Uncle Tom-Sambo concept) turn their aggressive violence in upon themselves. Watts proved to me conclusively that Negroes no longer are going to express

frustration in self-aggression; but that they will turn it against the people they feel are responsible for their status.

NO LAW AND ORDER IN A VACUUM

Watts taught us that, any way one turns it, no law and order are possible in a vacuum. It is pointless to cry, "Let us maintain law and order," for order does not proceed from the accumulation of law. Law is neutral. Order springs from just law and the pursuit of justice—and where there is neither justice nor evidence of its pursuit, disorder is inevitable. Let me give some concrete examples of what I mean by this. I do not want to discuss police brutality in this context. If every policeman in Watts or Bedford-Stuyvesant or Harlem behaved as an ideal creature, there still would be disorder and it would be directed at the policeman; because people in Watts refer to Watts as the zoo, and the policeman as the zoo-keeper—the blue-coat zoo-keeper. The youngsters in Watts would not have been able to analyze their meaning—and it took me some time to apprehend fully what they were saying, which was something like this:

"Mr. Rustin, they hem us into this zoo on four sides, then they tell Charlie Bluecoat to come in here and keep us still. We don't like the zoo. We intend to break out of it."

And in Watts, in the ten-mile stretch from the center of that community all that way to three or four blocks from City Hall—is complete devastation attesting to the strength of that intention. Even the direction that the destruction took has meaning to those people. When the police officers come in and say to them, "Behave yourselves in this condition," the people say the same thing they said to me and Dr. King—and if they say it to me and Dr. King, how much more do they mean it to the policemen?—those boys said to me:

"Mr. Rustin, don't you and Dr. King come in here and tell us to behave ourselves. We are sick of Negro leaders telling us to behave ourselves; 'cause, Daddy, when you tell me to behave myself, you are asking me to accept this condition, and I don't intend to accept it."

There is another aspect: A young boy came to me and said, "Mr. Rustin, I have been trying for weeks and weeks and weeks to get a job. Whitey is not going to give me a job."

I said, "Well, now, son, what do you mean by that?"

He said, "I'll tell you what I mean, Mr. Rustin—I mean that I am so sick of Whitey and his lording it over me and not giving me any work, that I've been selling pot on the street and making me \$60 a week. What that Bluecoat Whitey doesn't know is that when he comes in

here and tells me not to sell pot, when he isn't going to let me work when I'm able to work and want to work, when that sonofabitch asks me to be lawful, he's trying to take my goddam job away from me."

One of the boys said, "We know that those policemen are scared of us. We had for once to prove to them that they were scared of us, because they come walking in here six at a time and beat us up whenever they want."

WHITE STEREOTYPE FEAR OF NEGROES

What the boy did not know was the basis of that fear. White people are always afraid of Negroes when there are more than two present. I am quite serious. What else would explain why—when the FBI knew all our plans, when every department of government knew, because we had been meeting with them for eight weeks straight—they continued, before the March on Washington, as did every newspaper, to predict that Negroes had to misbehave?

It is very simple: psychologically, it is projection. The average white policeman says to himself, "Look at these conditions they live in. Look how many of them are unemployed. Look at the condition of the schools. Look what we do to them, and how we beat them. Aha! If I were one of them, I wouldn't take it, I would fight back." Therefore he assumes that we are going to make the same kind of response that he would, because inwardly he knows that we are and react in the same way as human beings.

Those kids smelled this, and they had to bring it out.

It is a tragedy that there is not a major civil rights problem to be solved in the North. When one comes up against decent housing and the destruction of slums, quality integrated education and work, one is not dealing with Negro problems; one is dealing with contradictions in a society which happen most grievously to affect the Negro. I am aware that segregation and discrimination are not totally responsible for the conditions that I shall now describe—but the average Negro in Watts is not any more analytical than the average Jew on the lower East Side or the average Italian on Mott Street; he does not want to know the causes; the shoe pinches; there is a monkey on his back; he wants to get it off. Since 1954, the ghettos have gotten larger; there are more rats and more roaches in them. Negro employment is infinitely worse than it was in 1954. Since 1954 there are more Negro children in segregated classrooms than there were. But in addition, all the legislative action, all the Presidential action, all the Supreme Court decisions—excepting the FEPC provisions of the 1964 bill—were not

designed to do anything about the North. They were all designed to do something about the South.

My prediction: There is not a major city in this country—given the revolutionary mood of the Negro youth and their alienation and their separation from the leadership—which may not have a Watts, unless we are prepared to build a coalition of forces, including labor, religious groups, church groups and others, that will come forward with a truly revolutionary plan—a non-revolutionary plan is never adequate for a revolutionary situation.

GRANDIOSE PLANNING NEEDED

There are times when only that which appears to be grandiose is capable of dealing with a situation which is desperate. And therefore this coalition of forces must now demand that where the private sector of the economy cannot provide work, the public sector do so. We need a massive public works program, *with training*. We need to understand that automation and cybernation cannot affect human services to humans. Therefore in addition to having the kinds of work programs that Franklin Delano Roosevelt had, training must be built into them. The unskilled must be given useful work in the wide area of human services to humans; such people can be employed in that realm with very little training. We must face up to the fact that this nation has got to plan, not go on acting as if somehow or other planning is un-American (by which we seem to mean that planning to give billions to the railways is American; planning to give to the poor is socialism or communism).

Let me give you an illustration. I am all for the war on poverty and all it is doing; but the war on poverty is no answer to the basic revolutionary situation we are in. What is Mr. Shriver going to do with those Negro boys he sends to camp, after he upgrades their reading rates, gives them a feeling of being somebody, in a society where there's so little planning that we could not possibly know what is going to be automated next so that we could really train them to go into a job? I'll tell you what those boys are: they are sticks of dynamite with a time fuse, planted in the ghetto with their frustrated expectations—a major part of the future trouble. It is a dangerous thing to take a 17-year old boy off the streets of Harlem and lead him to believe that when he goes to one of these camps for the year and raises his reading rate to the seventh grade, he is then going to make it, when in fact he cannot make it in a society where there are not jobs for anybody with his skills.

JOBS AS A MAJOR REMEDY

A recent Sunday issue of *The New York Times* had two extremely interesting articles: One related that the Negroes in Miami were up in arms because they were fearful that more of their jobs will be lost to Cubans who will work for nothing. (That is quite understandable, especially in a state where there is no minimum wage.) The other story related that Mexican-Americans in California are up in arms because, as they saw it, the Negroes rioted and got something while they remained peaceable and got nothing. The basic problem is not the poor Cubans; it is not the Negroes who may be getting jobs; it is not the Mexican-Americans who rightfully feel resentful. The problem is that in a society where the government does not see to it that every man who wants work can have it, the government, whether it knows it or not, is pitting those men against one another to fight like dogs over a bone for the few jobs that do exist. Nothing less than full and fair employment will get us out of this problem.

Michael Harrington reports that fifty per cent of the people of Watts were without work. If fifty per cent of the American people were out of work, we would not only have rioting and revolt; we would have revolution. Therefore why are we surprised that these people do this? And how chagrined we should be that, having done it, the government then makes a half-hearted effort and a response leading young Negroes to feel that this is one of the ways now to legitimize it.

POLITICAL AGITATORS

A word about political leadership: A riot—or riots—as I have studied them (I've studied the Detroit riots by going to Detroit; I've studied the Cicero riot by going there for the American Friends Service Committee and making a study) whether black or white rioting, happen in the same way. There is frustration, leading to aggression. For no good reason, riots always start over silly things—something bursts. The next step is that the police, with this fear I've been talking about, come in with power far beyond what is needed to contain the disorders. The community reacts to that extraordinary amount of power. That is always the second stage. The third stage is when the worms come out of the woodwork—that is, the thieves in the community see that they can take advantage of the situation; they start breaking windows and stealing. Toward the end of that stage, perfectly respectable people get caught up in the looting. The next stage is when certain political groups—I will not name the ones in Los Angeles because they are still under examination, but will refer back to Harlem

where they were Chinese-Maoist Communists—come in and try to keep it going. This is the way it develops.

Now, the important thing about this development is that, after it's gone a certain distance, there is really nothing to do but let it burn out. I myself was booed, shot at, stoned, and finally run off the streets of Harlem last summer trying to stop the riot there. What we discovered is that if the right groups in the community can be reached, and they can reach some of the young people, they can stop it. We have heard a great deal of ugliness about Watts; but the primary reason that it finally boiled down was not because the police came in with more and more power but because finally two youth groups decided that they were going to organize to stop it.

Every paper in this country said that the Watts riot was the worst in American history; everything that the Negro does is the worst. A judge sits on the bench for twenty years and in that time sends ten men to their deaths. Each time, he says, "This was the most heinous crime in the annals of man." In the year 1863, in New York, the Irish were called "shanties," which means "nigger." In the year 1863, amongst the Irish in New York there was 44 per cent unemployment. In the year 1863, Irish could not buy property in certain parts of New York. In the year 1863, policemen used to come into the Irish district five and six together. In the year 1863 the Irish were dirty, they didn't wash, they stank, they were ugly, they were all the things that Negroes are called today. And in the year 1863, the Irish rioted in New York. They killed over 300 people, lynched over 31 Negroes, did much more property damage than was done in Watts.

Do I recall this because I have animosity toward the Irish? No. I only say that poor frustrated people will riot. And yet, I have yet to hear anyone other than myself recall these facts in connection with Watts.

The Irish got out of the situation they were in because following the Civil War there was a great development, an industrialization, the use of semi-skilled workers which put men back to work. If Negro rioting is to be avoided in the future, it will be because Negroes are enabled to get out of the vicious cycle of frustration that breeds aggression; because this country proves that it is capable of creating a new economic way of life without unemployment, without slums, without poverty. We have the means. Will we find the way to use them wisely, while there is still time?

A Commentary Report

with

Study Guide & Letters

THE WATTS "MANIFESTO"

&

THE McCONE REPORT

BAYARD RUSTIN

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THE WATTS "MANIFESTO" & THE McCONE REPORT

BAYARD RUSTIN

THE RIOTS in the Watts section of Los Angeles last August continued for six days, during which 34 persons were killed, 1,032 were injured, and some 3,952 were arrested. Viewed by many of the rioters themselves as their "manifesto," the uprising of the Watts Negroes brought out in the open, as no other aspect of the Negro protest has done, the despair and hatred that continue to brew in the Northern ghettos despite the civil-rights legislation of recent years and the advent of "the war on poverty." With national attention focused on Los Angeles, Governor Edward P. Brown created a commission of prominent local citizens, headed by John A. McCone, to investigate the causes of the riots and to prescribe remedies against any such outbreaks in the future. Just as the violent confrontation on the burning streets of Watts told us much about the underlying realities of race and class relations in America—summed up best, perhaps, by the words of Los Angeles Police Chief William Parker, "We're on top and they're on the bottom"—so does the McCone Report, published under the title *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?*, tell us much about the response of our political and economic institutions to the Watts "manifesto."

Like the much-discussed Moynihan Report, the McCone Report is a bold departure from the standard government paper on social problems. It goes beyond the mere recital of statistics to discuss, somewhat sympathetically, the real problems of the Watts community—problems like unemployment, inadequate schools, dilapidated housing—and it seems at first glance to be leading toward constructive programs. It never reaches them, however, for, again like the Moynihan Report, it is ambivalent about the basic reforms that are needed to solve these problems and therefore shies away from spelling them out too explicitly. Thus, while it calls for the creation of 50,000 new jobs to compensate for the "spiral of failure" that it finds among the Watts Negroes, the McCone Report

does not tell us how these jobs are to be created or obtained and instead recommends existing programs which have already shown themselves to be inadequate. The Moynihan Report, similarly, by emphasizing the breakdown of the Negro family, also steers clear of confronting the thorny issues of Negro unemployment as such.

By appearing to provide new viewpoints and fresh initiatives while at the same time repeating, if in more sophisticated and compassionate terms, the standard white stereotypes and shibboleths about Negroes, the two reports have become controversial on both sides of the Negro question. On the one hand, civil-rights leaders can point to the recognition in these reports of the need for jobs and training, and for other economic and social programs to aid the Negro family, while conservatives can find confirmed in their pages the Negro penchant for violence, the excessive agitation against law and order by the civil-rights movement, or the high rates of crime and illegitimacy in the Negro community; on the other hand, both sides have criticized the reports for feeding ammunition to the opposition. Unfortunately, but inevitably, the emphasis on Negro behavior in both reports has stirred up an abstract debate over the interpretation of data rather than suggesting programs for dealing with the existing and very concrete situation in which American Negroes find themselves. For example, neither report is concerned about segregation and both tacitly assume that the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 are already destroying this system. In the case of the McCone Report, this leaves the writers free to discuss the problems of Negro housing, education, and unemployment in great detail without attacking the conditions of de facto segregation that underly them.

THE ERRORS and misconceptions of the McCone Report are particularly revealing because it purports to deal with the realities of the Watts riots rather than with the abstractions of the Negro family. The first distortion of these realities occurs in the opening chapter—"The Crisis: An Overview"—where, after briefly discussing the looting and beatings, the writers conclude that "The rioters seem to have been caught up in an insensate rage of destruction." Such an image may

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reflect the fear of the white community that Watts had run amok during six days in August, but it does not accurately describe the major motive and mood of the riots, as subsequent data in the report itself indicate. While it is true that Negroes in the past have often turned the violence inflicted on them by society in upon themselves—"insensate rage" would perhaps have been an appropriate phrase for the third day of the 1964 Harlem riots—the whole point of the outbreak in Watts was that it marked the first major rebellion of Negroes against their own masochism and was carried on with the express purpose of asserting that they would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life.

This message came home to me over and over again when I talked with the young people in Watts during and after the riots, as it will have come home to those who watched the various television documentaries in which the Negroes of the community were permitted to speak for themselves. At a street-corner meeting in Watts when the riots were over, an unemployed youth of about twenty said to me, "We won." I asked him: "How have you won? Homes have been destroyed, Negroes are lying dead in the streets, the stores from which you buy food and clothes are destroyed, and people are bringing you relief." His reply was significant: "We won because we made the whole world pay attention to us. The police chief never came here before; the mayor always stayed uptown. We made them come." Clearly it was no accident that the riots proceeded along an almost direct path to City Hall.

Nor was the violence along the way random and "insensate." Wherever a store-owner identified himself as a "poor working Negro trying to make a business" or as a "Blood Brother," the mob passed the store by. It even spared a few white businesses that allowed credit or time purchases, and it made a point of looting and destroying stores that were notorious for their high prices and hostile manners. The McCone Report itself observes that "the rioters concentrated on food markets, liquor stores, clothing stores, department stores, and pawn shops." The authors "note with interest that no residences were deliberately burned, that damage to schools, libraries, public buildings was minimal and that certain types of business establishments, notably service stations and automobile dealers, were for the most part unharmed." It is also worth noting that the rioters were much more inclined to destroy the stock of the liquor stores they broke into than to steal it, and that according to the McCone Report, "there is no evidence that the rioters made any attempt to steal narcotics from pharmacies . . . which were looted and burned."

This is hardly a description of a Negro community that has run amok. The largest number of arrests were for looting—not for arson or shooting. Most of the people involved were not habitual

thieves; they were members of a deprived group who seized a chance to possess things that all the dinning affluence of Los Angeles had never given them. There were innumerable touching examples of this behavior. One married couple in their sixties was seen carrying a couch to their home, and when its weight became too much for them, they sat down and rested on it until they could pick it up again. Langston Hughes tells of another woman who was dragging a sofa through the streets and who stopped at each intersection and waited for the traffic light to turn green. A third woman went out with her children to get a kitchen set, and after bringing it home, she discovered they needed one more chair in order to feed the whole family together; they went back to get the chair and all of them were arrested.

IF THE McCone Report misses the point of the Watts riots, it shows even less understanding of their causes. To place these in perspective, the authors begin by reviewing the various outbursts in the Negro ghettos since the summer of 1964 and quickly come up with the following explanations: "Not enough jobs to go around, and within this scarcity not enough by a wide margin of a character which the untrained Negro could fill. . . . Not enough schooling to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged Negro child whose environment from infancy onward places him under a serious handicap." Finally, "a resentment, even hatred, of the police as a symbol of authority."

For the members of the special commission these are the fundamental causes of the current Negro plight and protest, which are glibly summed up in the ensuing paragraph by the statement that "Many Negroes moved to the city in the last generation and are totally unprepared to meet the conditions of city life." I shall be discussing these "causes" in detail as we go along, but it should be noted here that the burden of responsibility has already been placed on these hapless migrants to the cities. There is not one word about the conditions, economic as well as social, that have pushed Negroes out of the rural areas; nor is there one word about whether the cities have been willing and able to meet the demand for jobs, adequate housing, proper schools. After all, one could as well say that it is the *cities* which have been "totally unprepared" to meet the "conditions of Negro life," but the moralistic bias of the McCone Report, involving as it does an emphasis on the decisions of men rather than the pressure of social forces, continually operates in the other direction.

The same failure of awareness is evident in the report's description of the Los Angeles situation (the Negro areas of Los Angeles "are not urban gems, neither are they slums," the Negro population "has exploded," etc.). The authors do concede that the Los Angeles transportation system is the "least adequate of any major city," but even here they fail to draw the full consequences of their

findings. Good, cheap transportation is essential to a segregated working-class population in a big city. In Los Angeles a domestic worker, for example, must spend about \$1.50 and 1½ to 2 hours to get to a job that pays \$6 or \$7 a day. This both discourages efforts to find work and exacerbates the feeling of isolation.

A neighborhood such as Watts may seem beautiful when compared to much of Harlem (which, in turn, is an improvement over the Negro section of Mobile, Alabama)—but it is still a ghetto. The housing is run-down, public services are inferior, the listless penned-in atmosphere of segregation is oppressive. Absentee landlords are the rule, and most of the businesses are owned by whites: neglect and exploitation reign by day, and at night, as one Watts Negro tersely put it, "There's just the cops and us."

The McCone Report, significantly, also ignores the political atmosphere of Los Angeles. It refers, for example, to the repeal in 1964 of the Rumford Act—the California fair-housing law—in these words: "In addition, many Negroes here felt and were encouraged to feel that they had been affronted by the passage of Proposition 14." Affronted, indeed! The largest state in the Union, by a three-to-one majority, abolishes one of its own laws against discrimination and Negroes are described as regarding this as they might the failure of a friend to keep an engagement. What they did feel—and without any need of encouragement—was that while the rest of the North was passing civil-rights laws and improving opportunities for Negroes, their own state and city were rushing to reinforce the barriers against them.

The McCone Report goes on to mention two other "aggravating events in the twelve months prior to the riot." One was the failure of the poverty program to "live up to [its] press notices," combined with reports of "controversy and bickering" in Los Angeles over administering the program. The second "aggravating event" is summed up by the report in these words:

Throughout the nation unpunished violence and disobedience to law were widely reported, and almost daily there were exhortations here and elsewhere, to take the most extreme and illegal remedies to right a wide variety of wrongs, real and supposed.

It would be hard to frame a more insidiously equivocal statement of the Negro grievance concerning law enforcement during a period that included the release of the suspects in the murder of the three civil-rights workers in Mississippi, the failure to obtain convictions against the suspected murderers of Medgar Evers and Mrs. Violet Liuzzo, the Gilligan incident in New York, the murder of Reverend James Reeb, and the police violence in Selma, Alabama—to mention only a

few of the more notorious cases. And surely it would have been more to the point to mention that throughout the nation Negro demonstrations have almost invariably been non-violent, and that the major influence on the Negro community of the civil-rights movement has been the strategy of discipline and dignity. Obsessed by the few prophets of violent resistance, the McCone Commission ignores the fact that never before has an American group sent so many people to jail or been so severely punished for trying to uphold the law of the land.

IT IS NOT stretching things too far to find a connection between these matters and the treatment of the controversy concerning the role of the Los Angeles police. The report goes into this question at great length, finally giving no credence to the charge that the police may have contributed to the spread of the riots through the use of excessive force. Yet this conclusion is arrived at not from the point of view of the Watts Negroes, but from that of the city officials and the police. Thus, the report informs us, in judicial hearings that were held on 32 of the 35 deaths which occurred, 26 were ruled justifiable homicides, but the report—which includes such details as the precise time Mayor Yorty called Police Chief Parker and when exactly the National Guard was summoned—never tells us what a "justifiable homicide" is considered to be. It tells us that "of the 35 killed, one was a fireman, one was a deputy sheriff, and one was a Long Beach policeman," but it does not tell us how many Negroes were killed or injured by police or National Guardsmen. (Harry Fleischman of the American Jewish Committee reports that the fireman was killed by a falling wall; the deputy sheriff, by another sheriff's bullet; and the policeman, by another policeman's bullet.) We learn that of the 1,032 people reported injured, 90 were police officers, 36 were firemen, 10 were National Guardsmen, 23 were from government agencies. To find out that about 85 per cent of the injured were Negroes, we have to do our own arithmetic. The report contains no information as to how many of these were victims of police force, but one can surmise from the general pattern of the riots that few could have been victims of Negro violence.

The report gives credence to Chief Parker's assertion that the rioters were the "criminal element in Watts" yet informs us that of the 3,438 adults arrested, 1,164 had only minor criminal records and 1,232 had never been arrested before. Moreover, such statistics are always misleading. Most Negroes, at one time or another, have been picked up and placed in jail. I myself have been arrested twice in Harlem on charges that had no basis in fact: once for trying to stop a police officer from

arresting the wrong man; the second time for asking an officer who was throwing several young men into a paddy wagon what they had done. Both times I was charged with interfering with an arrest and kept overnight in jail until the judge recognized me and dismissed the charges. Most Negroes are not fortunate enough to be recognized by judges.

Having accepted Chief Parker's view of the riots, the report goes on to absolve him of the charge of discrimination: "Chief Parker's statements to us and collateral evidence, such as his fairness to Negro officers, are inconsistent with his having such an attitude ['deep hatred of Negroes']. Despite the depth of feeling against Chief Parker expressed to us by so many witnesses, he is recognized even by many of his vocal critics as a capable Chief who directs an efficient police force and serves well this entire community."

I am not going to stress the usual argument that the police habitually mistreat Negroes. Every Negro knows this. There is scarcely any black man, woman, or child in the land who at some point or other has not been mistreated by a policeman. (A young man in Watts said, "The riots will continue because I, as a Negro, am immediately considered to be a criminal by the police and, if I have a pretty woman with me, she is a tramp even if she is my wife or mother.") Police Chief Parker, however, goes beyond the usual bounds. He does not recognize that he is prejudiced, and being both naïve and zealous about law and order, he is given to a dangerous fanaticism. His reference to the Negro rioters as "monkeys," and his "top . . . and bottom" description of the riots, speak for themselves, and they could only have further enraged and encouraged the rioters. His insistence on dealing with the outbreak in Watts as though it were the random work of a "criminal element" threatened to lead the community, as Martin Luther King remarked after the meeting he and I had with Chief Parker, "into potential holocaust." Though Dr. King and I have had considerable experience in talking with public officials who do not understand the Negro community, our discussions with Chief Parker and Mayor Samuel Yorty left us completely nonplussed. They both denied, for example, that there was any prejudice in Los Angeles. When we pointed to the very heavy vote in the city for Proposition 14, they replied, "That's no indication of prejudice. That's personal choice." When I asked Chief Parker about his choice of language, he implied that this was the only language Negroes understood.

The impression of "blind intransigence and ignorance of the social forces involved" which Dr. King carried away from our meeting with Chief Parker is borne out by other indications. The cast of his political beliefs, for example, was evidenced during his appearance last May on the Manion Forum, one of the leading platforms of the radical right, in which (according to newspaper reports)

he offered his "considered opinion that America today is in reality more than half pagan" and that "we have moved our form of government to a socialist form of government." Such opinions have a good deal of currency today within the Los Angeles police department. About a month before the riots, a leaflet describing Dr. King as a liar and a Communist was posted on the bulletin board of a Los Angeles police station, and only after the concerted efforts of various Negro organizations was this scurrilous pamphlet removed.

CERTAINLY these were "aggravating factors" that the McCone Report should properly have mentioned. But what is more important to understand is that even if every policeman in every black ghetto behaved like an angel and were trained in the most progressive of police academies, the conflict would still exist. This is so because the ghetto is a place where Negroes do not want to be and are fighting to get out of. When someone with a billy club and a gun tells you to behave yourself amid these terrible circumstances, he becomes a zoo keeper, demanding of you, as one of "these monkeys" (to use Chief Parker's phrase), that you accept abhorrent conditions. He is brutalizing you by insisting that you tolerate what you cannot, and ought not, tolerate.

In its blithe ignorance of such feelings, the McCone Report offers as one of its principal suggestions that speakers be sent to Negro schools to teach the students that the police are their friends and that their interests are best served by respect for law and order. Such public-relations gimmicks, of course, are futile—it is hardly a lack of contact with the police that creates the problem. Nor, as I have suggested, is it only a matter of prejudice. The fact is that when Negroes are deprived of work, they resort to selling numbers, women, or dope to earn a living; they must gamble and work in poolrooms. And when the policeman upholds the law, he is depriving them of their livelihood. A clever criminal in the Negro ghettos is not unlike a clever "operator" in the white business world, and so long as Negroes are denied legitimate opportunities, no exhortations to obey the rules of the society and to regard the police as friends will have any effect.

This is not to say that relations between the police and the Negroes of Watts could not be improved. Mayor Yorty and Police Chief Parker might have headed off a full-scale riot had they refrained from denouncing the Negro leaders and agreed to meet with them early on. Over and over again—to repeat the point with which we began—the rioters claimed that violence was the only way they could get these officials to listen to them. The McCone Commission, however, rejects the proposal for an independent police review board and instead recommends that the post of Inspector General be established—under the authority of the Chief of Police—to handle grievances.

THE CONDITIONS of Negro life in Watts are not, of course, ignored by the McCone Report. Their basic structure is outlined in a section entitled "Dull, Devastating Spiral of Failure." Here we find that the Negro's "homelife destroys incentive"; that he lacks "experience with words and ideas"; that he is "unready and unprepared" in school; and that, "unprepared and unready," he "slips into the ranks of the unemployed" (my italics).

I would say, *is shoved*. It is time that we began to understand this "dull, devastating spiral of failure" and that we stopped attributing it to this or that characteristic of Negro life. In 1940, Edward Wight Bakke described the effects of unemployment on family structure in terms of the following model: The jobless man no longer provides, credit runs out, the woman is forced to take a job; if relief then becomes necessary, the woman is regarded even more as the center of the family; the man is dependent on her, the children are bewildered, and the stability of the family is threatened and often shattered. Bakke's research dealt strictly with white families. The fact that Negro social scientists like E. Franklin Frazier and Kenneth Clark have shown that this pattern is typical among the Negro poor does not mean, then, that it stems from some inherent Negro trait or is the ineluctable product of Negro social history. If Negroes suffer more than others from the problems of family instability today, it is not because they are Negro but because they are so disproportionately unemployed, underemployed, and ill-paid.

Anyone looking for historical patterns would do well to consider the labor market for Negroes since the Emancipation. He will find that Negro men have consistently been denied the opportunity to enter the labor force in anything like proportionate numbers, have been concentrated in the unskilled and marginal labor and service occupations, and have generally required wartime emergencies to make any advances in employment, job quality, and security. Such advances are then largely wiped out when the economy slumps again.

In 1948, for example, the rates of Negro and white unemployment were roughly equal. During the next decade, however, Negro unemployment was consistently double that of whites, and among Negro teenagers it remained at the disastrously high figure which prevailed for the entire population during the Depression. It is true that the nation's improved economic performance in recent years has reduced the percentage of jobless Negroes from 12.6 per cent, which it reached in 1958 (12.5 per cent in 1961) to roughly 8.1 per cent today. Despite this progress, the rate of Negro unemployment continues to be twice as high as white (8.13 per cent as against 4.2 per cent). In other words, job discrimination remains constant. These statistics, moreover, conceal the persistence of Negro youth unemployment: in 1961, 24.7 per cent of those Negro teenagers not in school were

out of work and it is estimated that in 1966 this incredible rate will only decline to 23.2 per cent. What this figure tells us is that the rise in Negro employment has largely resulted from the calling of men with previous experience back to work. This is an ominous trend, for it is estimated that in the coming year, 20 per cent of the new entrants into the labor force will be Negro (almost twice as high as the Negro percentage of the population). Approximately half of these young Negroes will not have the equivalent of a high-school education and they will be competing in an economy in which the demand for skill and training is increasing sharply.

Thus there is bound to be a further deterioration of the Negro's economic—and hence social—position, despite the important political victories being achieved by the civil-rights movement. For many young Negroes, who are learning that economic servitude can be as effective an instrument of discrimination as racist laws, the new "freedom" has already become a bitter thing indeed. No wonder that the men of Watts were incensed by reports that the poverty program was being obstructed in Los Angeles by administrative wrangling. (As I write this, the *New York Times* reports that political rivalries and ambitions have now virtually paralyzed the program in that area.)

HOW DOES THE McCone Report propose to halt this "dull, devastating spiral of failure"? First, through education—"our fundamental resource." The commission's analysis begins with a comparison of class size in white and Negro areas (the latter are referred to throughout as "disadvantaged areas" and Negro schools, as "disadvantaged schools"). It immediately notes that classes in the disadvantaged schools are slightly smaller; on the other hand, the more experienced teachers are likely to be found in the *non-disadvantaged* areas, and there is tremendous overcrowding in the disadvantaged schools because of double sessions. The buildings in the "disadvantaged areas are in better repair"; on the other hand, there are "cafeterias in the advantaged schools" but not in the disadvantaged schools, which also have no libraries. This random balance sheet of "resources" shows no sense of priorities; moreover, despite the alarming deficiencies it uncovers in the "disadvantaged schools," the McCone Report, in consistent fashion, places its emphasis on the Negro child's "deficiency in environmental experiences" and on "his homelife [which] all too often fails to give him incentive. . . ."

The two major recommendations of the commission in this area will hardly serve to correct the imbalances revealed. The first is that elementary and junior high schools in the "disadvantaged areas" which have achievement levels substantially below the city average should be designated "Emergency Schools." In each of these schools an emergency literacy program is to be established

with a maximum of 22 students in each class and an enlarged and supportive corps of teachers. The second recommendation is to establish a permanent pre-school program to help prepare three- and four-year-old children to read and write.

W. T. Bassett, executive secretary of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO, has criticized the report for its failure to deal with education and training for adolescents and adults who are no longer in school. Another glaring omission is of a specific plan to decrease school segregation. While most of us now agree that the major goal of American education must be that of quality integrated schools, we cannot, as even the report suggests, achieve the quality without at the same time moving toward integration. The stated goal of the McCone Commission, however, is to "reverse the trend of de facto segregation" by improving the quality of the Negro schools: in short, separate but equal schools that do not disturb the existing social patterns which isolate the Negro child in his "disadvantaged areas."

That the commission's explicit concern for Negro problems falls short of its implicit concern for the status quo is also evident in its proposals for housing. It calls for the liberalization of credit and FHA-insured loans in "disadvantaged areas," the implementation of rehabilitation measures and other urban-renewal programs and, as its particular innovation, the creation of a "wide area data bank." Meanwhile it refuses to discuss, much less to criticize, the effect of Proposition 14 or to recommend a new fair-housing code. To protect the Negro against discrimination, the McCone Report supports the creation of a Commission on Human Relations, but does not present any proposals that would enable it to do more than collect information and conduct public-relations campaigns.

THE MOST crucial section of the report is the one on employment and, not unexpectedly, it is also the most ignorant, unimaginative, and conservative—despite its dramatic recommendation that 50,000 new jobs be created. On the matter of youth unemployment, the report suggests that the existing federal projects initiate a series of "attitudinal training" programs to help young Negroes develop the necessary motivation to hold on to these new jobs which are to come from somewhere that the commission keeps secret. This is just another example of the commission's continued reliance on public relations, and of its preoccupation with the "dull, devastating spiral" of Negro failure. The truth of the matter is that Negro youths cannot change their attitudes until they see that they can get jobs. When what they see is unemployment and their Economic Opportunity programs being manipulated in behalf of politicians, their attitudes will remain realistically cynical.

Once again, let me try to cut through the obscurantism which has increasingly come to

cloud this issue of Negro attitudes. I am on a committee which administers the Apprenticeship Training Program of the Workers Defense League. For many years the League had heard that there were not enough Negro applicants to fill the various openings for apprenticeship training and had also repeatedly been told by vocational-school counselors that Negro students could not pay attention to key subjects such as English and mathematics. The League began its own recruitment and placement program two years ago and now has more than 500 apprentice applicants on file. When, last fall, Local 28 of the Sheetmetal Workers Union—to take one example—announced that a new admission test for apprentices was to be given soon, the League contacted those applicants who had indicated an interest in sheetmetal work. The young men came to the office, filled out a 10-page application form, filed a ten-dollar fee, and returned it to the Local 28 office. Then, five nights a week for three weeks, they came to Harlem, in many cases from Brooklyn and Queens, to be tutored. Most of the young men showed up for all fifteen sessions, and scored well on the test. At their interviews they were poised and confident. Eleven of these men finally were admitted to a class of 33. The WDL doesn't attribute this success to a miraculous program; it merely knows that when young people are told that at the end of a given period of study those who perform well will obtain decent work, then their attitudes will be markedly different from those who are sent off to a work camp with vague promises.

To cut the cost of job training programs, the McCone Commission avers that compensation "should not be necessary for those trainees who are receiving welfare support." Earlier in the report the authors point out that welfare services tend to destroy family life by giving more money to a woman who lives alone; yet they have the audacity to ask that the practice of not allowing men who are on family relief to earn an additional income be maintained for young men who are working and being trained. How is a young man to be adequately motivated if he cannot feel that his work is meaningful and necessary? The McCone Report would have us say to him, "There, there, young man, we're going to keep you off the streets—just putter around doing this make-work." But the young man knows that he can collect welfare checks and also hustle on street corners to increase his earnings. A man's share of a welfare allotment is pitifully small, but more than that, he should be paid for his work; and if one is interested in his morale, he should not be treated as a charity case.

Continuing with the problem of employment, the report recommends that "there should immediately be developed in the affected area a job training and placement center through the combined efforts of Negroes, employers, labor unions and government." In the absence of actual jobs, this would mean merely setting up a new division,

albeit voluntary, of the unemployment insurance program. "Federal and state governments should seek to insure through development of new facilities and additional means of communication that advantage is taken of government and private training programs and employment opportunities in our disadvantaged communities." Perhaps the only thing the Job Corps program doesn't lack is publicity: last summer it received ten times as many applications as it could handle. Nor can new types of information centers and questionnaires provide 50,000 new jobs. They may provide positions for social workers and vocational counselors, but very few of them will be unemployed Negroes.

The report goes on: "Legislation should be enacted requiring employers with more than 250 employees and all labor unions to report annually to the state Fair Employment Practices Commission, the racial composition of the work force and membership." But an FEP Commission that merely collects information and propaganda is powerless. And even with the fullest cooperation of labor and management to promote equality of opportunity, the fact remains that there are not enough jobs in the Los Angeles area to go around, even for those who are fortunate enough to be included in the retraining programs. As long as unions cannot find work for many of their own members, there is not much they can do to help unemployed Negroes. And the McCone Report places much of its hope in private enterprise, whose response so far has been meager. The highest estimate of the number of jobs given to Los Angeles Negroes since the Watts crisis is less than 1,000.

THE NEGRO slums today are ghettos of despair. In Watts, as elsewhere, there are the unemployable poor: the children, the aging, the permanently handicapped. No measure of em-

ployment or of economic growth will put an end to their misery, and only government programs can provide them with a decent way of life. The care of these people could be made a major area of job growth. Los Angeles officials could immediately train and put to work women and unemployed youths as school attendants, recreation counselors, practical nurses, and community workers. The federal government and the state of California could aid the people of Watts by beginning a massive public-works program to build needed housing, schools, hospitals, neighborhood centers, and transportation facilities: this, too, would create new jobs. In short, they could begin to develop the \$100-billion freedom budget advocated by A. Philip Randolph.

Such proposals may seem impractical and even incredible. But what is truly impractical and incredible is that America, with its enormous wealth, has allowed Watts to become what it is and that a commission empowered to study this explosive situation should come up with answers that boil down to voluntary actions by business and labor, new public-relations campaigns for municipal agencies, and information-gathering for housing, fair-employment, and welfare departments. The Watts manifesto is a response to realities that the McCone Report is barely beginning to grasp. Like the liberal consensus which it embodies and reflects, the commission's imagination and political intelligence appear paralyzed by the hard facts of Negro deprivation it has unearthed, and it lacks the political will to demand that the vast resources of contemporary America be used to build a genuinely great society that will finally put an end to these deprivations. And what is most impractical and incredible of all is that we may very well continue to teach impoverished, segregated, and ignored Negroes that the only way they can get the ear of America is to rise up in violence.

Note: This article was written previous to the March, 1966 disturbances in Watts.

Study Guide

The Watts "Manifesto" & the McCone Report

Bayard Rustin

A. What really happened in Watts last August? Presumably it is essential to "get the facts straight." By reading this article carefully, you should be able to draw up a list of "facts" — events, actions, statistics, etc. — agreed upon by Mr. Rustin, the authors of the McCone Report, and just about everyone else. How substantial, or insubstantial, is this agreement? Is Mr. Rustin's quarrel with the McCone Report primarily about the facts or about the interpretation of the facts? Consider the following argument: It is impossible to establish what really happened in Watts on a purely objective basis, because the facts are meaningless unless they are interpreted, and the interpretation depends on one's general political commitments. Do you agree? How might the events in Watts be interpreted by the John Birch Society? The Black Muslims? Are you yourself more inclined to describe the events in question as the "Watts riots" or the "Watts Manifesto"? Why? Were the rioters "caught up in an insensate rage of destruction" or were they engaged in "the first major rebellion of Negroes against their own masochism"?

B. Consider Mr. Rustin's critique of the McCone Report. You will note that he does not totally condemn it; moreover, he provides the reader with a summary of even those recommendations and findings with which he takes issue. In other words, he engages in responsible criticism. How, in your opinion, might Mr. McCone answer this criticism? Do you agree with Mr. Rustin's critique? Why? Why not? Let us assume you do agree: to what underlying cause can the failures of the McCone Report be attributed? Throughout the article, Mr. Rustin makes various suggestions that address themselves to this question. Thus, he asserts that the report repeats "the standard white stereotypes and shibboleths about Negroes"; that the report contains a "moralistic bias . . . involving as it does an emphasis on the decisions of men rather than the pressure of social forces"; that the report is marred by an "implicit concern for the status quo"; and that it shares in the general shortcomings of the "liberal consensus" about Negro deprivation (see the final paragraph of the article). Do you agree with any or all of these criticisms? Is it possible to agree with Mr. Rustin about the inadequacy of the McCone Report while disagreeing with him about the underlying cause(s) of that inadequacy?

C. Is it fair to say that Mr. Rustin views the Negro problem as basically an economic problem? You will note that he speaks of "the Negro's eco-

omic — and hence social — position" and that he considers it to be absolutely crucial that Negroes are "so disproportionately unemployed, underemployed, and ill-paid." (For some other reflections by Mr. Rustin on these problems, see his "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement" in the February 1965 *Commentary*, and "Johnson So Far: II. — Civil Rights" in the June 1965 issue.) In what other perspective(s) might one view the Negro problem? (Consider Norman Podhoretz's "My Negro Problem — and Ours" in the February 1963 *Commentary*.) Yet, however one views the Negro problem, it is impossible to deny that the Negro is economically handicapped, as Mr. Rustin's incontrovertible evidence demonstrates. How can this situation best be remedied, according to Mr. Rustin? There seems to be a vicious circle in evidence: Negroes do not enjoy equal employment opportunities because they have not had equal educational opportunities, but the latter depend to a considerable extent on raising the economic level of Negroes. At what point can this vicious circle best be broken? How does one begin?

D. The United States is basically a liberal democracy. What can the events in Watts teach us about the promises and failures of liberal democracy? Consider the following arguments:

1. "The events in Watts represent a healthy reaction to a sick society. They exposed the hypocrisy of a nation that pretends to be concerned with liberty and equality but denies justice to a substantial minority of its citizens." Do you agree?

2. "The events in Watts represent a sick action against a healthy society. The rioters broke the law, thus acting even against their own interests, for the rule of law is the best — perhaps the only — guarantee that justice will ultimately be done." Do you agree?

3. "Mr. Rustin expects too much. In a liberal democracy, political action depends on the opinions of the majority. For better or worse, the majority of Californians wish to 'go slow' in granting substantial equality to Negroes; witness their repeal of the Rumford Act, a fair-housing law." Do you agree?

4. "Mr. Rustin is himself one of the ornaments of liberal democracy. He is a responsible spokesman for the Negro. He justly reminds the majority of its moral obligations, but during the riots he and Martin Luther King were in Los Angeles, striving to put an end to the violence. He is himself part of 'the events in Watts.' In view of this, one can say that the events in Watts represent a healthy action in a healthy society." Do you agree?

LETTERS FROM READERS

The McCone Report

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am greatly concerned with the gross errors of fact in Bayard Rustin's article in the March issue of COMMENTARY ["The 'Watts Manifesto' & the McCone Report"]. I have examined carefully his three paragraphs describing the Education Section of the McCone Commission Report; he has been guilty of seven important errors of fact and distortions of the Report.

(1) Mr. Rustin states: "The commission's analysis begins with a comparison of class size in white and Negro areas (the latter are referred to throughout as 'disadvantaged areas' and Negro schools, as 'disadvantaged schools')." But in turning to the Report, I find that on the first page of the Education Section the Commission stated: "Five study areas were selected within the Los Angeles City Unified School District. Four of these are disadvantaged areas: Watts and Avalon (predominantly Negro and within the riot area), and Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles (predominantly Mexican-American and outside the riot area). The other study area included Pacific Palisades, Westwood, and Brentwood, which are, by comparison, advantaged areas. Citywide data were also compiled." The study areas were "designated by the Welfare Planning Council, Los Angeles Region, and rank least favorably in the county with respect to the following criteria; family income, male unemployment, education, family status, housing," etc.

In other words, the McCone Commission studied and reported on schools in disadvantaged areas, not just Negro ghetto areas. Clearly, "disadvantaged area" and "disadvantaged school" are *not* synonymous with "Negro area" and "Negro school" throughout the Education Section. This fundamental error on Rustin's part distorts his argument thereafter.

(2) In the same paragraph Rustin stated: "There are cafeterias in the advantaged schools *but not* in the disadvantaged schools." What the Report actually said, however, was that too many schools in disadvantaged areas lacked cafeterias. But a majority of the schools in the disadvantaged areas do have cafeterias. Nevertheless, the commission recommended that, "Action should be taken to provide cafeteria facilities and free or reduced-priced meals for needy students in disadvantaged areas" (page 55).

(3) Rustin added: ". . . disadvantaged schools, which also have no libraries." The commission reported: "Some schools in the disadvantaged study areas do not have libraries while all schools in the advantaged study areas have libraries. In part, lack of libraries is due to the utilization of rooms to meet rapid enrollment growth and to house special classes. Libraries should be provided in all schools." In fact, in the Watts District, all of the secondary schools and sixteen out of the seventeen elementary schools have libraries.

(4) Rustin stated: "The McCone Report . . . places its emphasis on the Negro child's deficiency in environmental experiences." But in fact, the commission wrote: "There is increasing evidence to indicate that *children who live in disadvantaged areas* begin school with a deficiency in environmental experiences which are essential for learning" (page 56). Note that Rustin's first error is now compounded; note also that the commission considered these deficiencies to be "environmental," not "some inherent Negro trait" (Rustin, page 33).

(5) Immediately following these misstatements of the commission's findings, Rustin wrote: "The two major recommendations of the commission in this area will hardly serve to correct the imbalances revealed." But the commission did not consider, nor label, its recommendations on *these* findings as "major," though the McCone Report did, in fact, unequivocally call for their "correction" as follows: "In summary, it appears that inequalities exist with respect to incidence of double sessions, cafeterias, libraries, and course offerings for academically talented students. These differences can and should be eliminated" (page 56).

(6) Rustin paraphrased the two major recommendations of the McCone Commission to include the pre-school program and the reduction of class size to a minimum of 22 with "an enlarged and supportive corps of teachers." The commission carefully explained that along with the teachers needed to reduce class size, "additional supportive personnel to provide special services," would be needed (page 61). Then the commission went on to explain: "To be effective, the teacher in disadvantaged areas needs much more immediately available help with guidance, welfare, health, and social

and emotional problems than do teachers in advantaged areas" (page 59). The commission explained further the intent of this recommendation as follows: "A sharp reduction in class size, together with provision for special supporting services and materials, would offer teachers a more professionally rewarding assignment and would be likely to attract dedicated teachers to seek positions in schools in disadvantaged areas. The commission's study as well as experience elsewhere support this conclusion" (page 59).

The tragedy of this error on Rustin's part is that it obscures the fact that the first education recommendations of the McCone Commission are precisely the specific, massive, expensive, and basic changes that the "More Effective Schools" program in New York has engendered. If Rustin were really interested in accurately assessing the effectiveness of these recommendations, surely he could have observed for himself the "More Effective Schools" program in New York.

(7) Rustin implies that the commission supports "separate but equal schools that do not disturb the existing social patterns which isolate the Negro child in his 'disadvantaged areas.'" In fact, the commission wrote: "It is our belief that raising the level of scholastic achievement will lessen the trend towards de facto segregation in the schools in the areas into which the Negroes are expanding and, indeed, will tend to reduce all de facto segregation. It is our conclusion that the very low level of scholastic achievement we observe in the predominantly Negro schools contributes to de facto segregation in the schools. In turn school segregation apparently contributes importantly to all de facto segregation. We reason, therefore, that raising the scholastic achievement might reverse the entire trend of de facto segregation" (page 60).

FINALLY, Rustin's implication that the commission supports separate and equal schools is contrary not only to the statements of the commission, but is diametrically opposed to the whole tenor of the commission report and recommendations in the field of education. The commission clearly accepts the position of Kenneth Clark and others that the goals of integration and quality of education must be sought together. They are interdependent; one is not possible without the other. The whole Education Section of the McCone Commission Report is based on the

judgment of the commission that neither separate nor simply "equal" educational programs provide an equal opportunity for children from disadvantaged areas to learn.

The commission concluded: "We propose that the programs for the schools in disadvantaged areas be vastly reorganized and strengthened so as to strike at the heart of low achievement and break the cycle of failure. We advocate a new, massive, expensive, and frankly experimental onslaught . . ." (page 58). "If we can provide the most effective possible learning situation for the student and attract able teachers to teach in these areas, we will have made the most important step toward solving the problems of low educational achievement. It is clear that the proposed programs will be costly, but not as costly, however, as failure, delinquency, loss of productive manpower, and social dependency" (page 60).

The errors in Rustin's article regarding the Education Section of the McCone Commission Report are so gross, fundamental, and injurious that to publish the article without concurrent review and rebuttal certainly requires some editorial explanation. Surely errors of this nature on so vital an issue cannot be excused on grounds of style or exaggeration for effect. As a very minimum gesture, you could have published conspicuously the concluding three pages (58-61) of the Commission Report on Education. . . .

KENNETH A. MARTYN
Education Consultant to the
McCone Commission
California State College at
Los Angeles, California

MR. RUSTIN writes:

My major criticism of the section in the McCone Report dealing with education was, first of all, that the authors had no plan for integrating the schools, but instead accepted and even propounded the notion that de facto segregation would disappear when the scholastic achievement of the Negro was improved. And, secondly, that the major cause for concern, as outlined by the commission, was not inadequate schools but the environmental deficiencies of the Negro. Mr. Martyn's letter does nothing to answer those criticisms and, in fact, reinforces them.

But let me answer him point by point:

(1) Mr. Martyn is verbose, but essentially correct when he says "disadvantaged area" and "disad-

vantaged school" are not synonymous with "Negro area" and "Negro school." They are synonymous with nonwhite area and nonwhite school. The Report lumps all disadvantaged schools together, and does not give breakdowns by each neighborhood except in three tables devoted to reading performance. If Mr. Martyn wants me to say the Mexican-Americans suffer as much as Negroes do in Los Angeles, I concede his point.

(2) Just a point of fact: the McCone Report says that two-thirds of the schools which do not have cafeterias are located in districts with predominantly Negro and Mexican enrollment. It goes on to say, "Even in those schools where there are cafeterias, the Los Angeles schools do not provide free or reduced price lunches to needy students." One can assume from reading the Report that cafeteria service is not available to the vast majority of nonwhite students.

(3) I am happy to learn that in the Watts district there are libraries in most of the schools. That fact was not mentioned in the Report. The library deficiency does exist in other disadvantaged areas, however.

(4) I never said the commission ascribed the low reading levels to "some inherent Negro trait," search page 33 of the March COMMENTARY as you will. I did say that the Report places major emphasis on environmental deficiencies rather than on inadequate schools and de facto segregation. I quote from page 56 of the Report: "However, the Commission does not feel that these inequalities or differences in teacher experience or status fully explain the lower achievements of students in disadvantaged areas." The section immediately following is headed "Environmental Factors." I quote: "There is increasing evidence to indicate that children who live in disadvantaged areas begin school with deficiency in environmental experiences which are essential for learning." That section concludes: "His course toward academic failure is already set before he enters school and is rooted in his early childhood experiences." Most tragically, neither the authors of the Report nor Professor Martyn suggest a plan for eliminating the environmental deficiencies, i.e., eliminating the slums.

(5) Professor Martyn must agree, since he points it out, that some recommendations were labeled "major," and printed in bold-

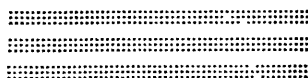
face type, etc. Others were not—such as the one he cites. But even if this "non-major" recommendation is adopted, the basic imbalance and inequalities of the school system will remain. Or does Professor Martyn believe there can be separate but equal schools?

(6) I know precisely what an "enlarged and supportive corps of teachers" entails. I don't believe COMMENTARY readers needed Professor Martyn to spell it out. I have examined the "More Effective Schools" program. It is limited, not massive, but expensive. As conceived in New York, it is an *educational technique*, not a plan for integration. New York City is developing other plans for integration: educational parks, Princeton plan, 4-4 schools etc. If the McCone Report had even hinted at some of these, Mr. Martyn's criticisms of my article might have had some relevance.

(7) I do not understand how raising the scholastic achievement in the predominantly Negro schools will reverse de facto segregation. Mr. Martyn's final bow to quality-integrated education would have been more effective if he had said one concrete word about integration. Instead, he repeats the gobbledygook of the McCone Report. It is neither moral nor educationally sound, on the one hand, to keep Negro children segregated for years and, on the other, to announce that there will be integration when their reading level reaches that of white students. I support a "More Effective Schools" program for all students; I want to see the whole educational system improved. It would be tragic if hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent for a few showplace schools, while the mass of Negro students attend inferior, dilapidated schools, and millions of white students leave the cities to attend insulated, educationally distorting, segregated schools.

Finally, one gets the impression from the length of Professor Martyn's letter and from his language—"gross errors of fact," "distortions," "the tragedy of his error," "if Rustin were really interested," etc., that he is mounting a devastating onslaught. All he has done is to pile up picayune criticisms which take up more space than my original paragraphs. Even if these criticisms were accurate, and they are not, my fundamental critique of the McCone Report would remain intact.

A Commentary Report
with
Study Guide & Letters



THE LESSONS OF THE LONG HOT SUMMER

BAYARD RUSTIN

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