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RACE, CLASS AND BLACK POLITICS:
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ELECTION OF A BLACK MAYOR
FOR THE POLICE AND POLICING IN DETROIT

By

Patrick James Ashton

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ABSTRACT

RACE, CLASS AND BLACK POLITICS:
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ELECTION OF A BLACK MAYOR
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By

Patrick James Ashton

This work explores the relationship between race and class in contemporary U.S. society. It does so through an examination of the impact of the election of a black mayor in a large central city on the social organization of the police department and the conduct of policing in that city. The police were chosen as the focus of the analysis because of the way in which the conduct of policing in any large central city in the U.S. today articulates the issues of race and class. On the one hand, the black community as a whole has traditionally had an antagonistic relationship with the police, as the latter have played a crucial role in maintaining systematic racial inequality. Police/black confrontations have frequently been the flashpoint as well as the major grievance in urban civil disorders. On the other hand, the police play an important role in maintaining the structure of class inequality, which cuts across racial lines.

Given the profoundly felt and widely-experienced nature of black grievances against the police, which involve complaints about brutality, harassment and "overpolicing" as well as--paradoxically--charges that the police fail to pay sufficient attention to crime in the black community, a black mayor necessarily takes office with a mandate to "do something about" the police. This work examines the substance and

implication of what black Mayor Coleman Young did in Detroit between 1974 and 1977.

There are three components to the theoretical analysis which informs this work. First, a Marxist analysis of the historical origins, structural role and internal contradictions of the police function is developed. Next, the argument is made that blacks in U.S. central cities constitute an internal colony which is generated by the logic of exploitation within a racial capitalist society. Using the analysis developed earlier, the police are seen as maintaining both racial oppression and class exploitation in the internal colony. Black police officers, however, constitute a potentially contradictory phenomenon due to their differing class backgrounds, orientation to policing, and relationship to the black community.

The third component of the theoretical argument is an analysis of black politics and the way in which it has both contributed to the election of black mayors and served as a constraint upon them. Other constraints are noted in the nature of the local state and the changed political economy of central cities. A brief survey is presented of the failures and accomplishments of black mayors, particularly with regard to the police.

The empirical section of the work applies the theoretical analysis to a case study of Detroit. Using documents, surveys and interviews, the history of the internal colony, black politics, and police relations with the black community is traced. Particular attention is paid to the context in which Coleman Young was elected mayor in 1973, a context which involved explicit controversy and debate over the role of the

police in the black community.

Mayor Young's success in reorienting the Detroit Police Department is examined in two ways. First, his strategy for gaining control over the internal dynamics of the department is analyzed and assessed. Second, his ability to change the practice of policing in the black community is evaluated in terms of the two manifest functions of policing: law enforcement and order maintenance. With regard to the former, Young's success in reducing crime in the black community is examined; with regard to the latter, his success in reducing police brutality and harassment of blacks. A final section summarizes the argument by noting the simultaneous success and failure of Coleman Young's policies to deal with the contradictions laid out earlier.

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For Roxana,

who made it possible

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The police are a perennial thorn in the side of the black community. "Hating and mistrusting the police," says sociologist, Nicholas Alex, has become a way of life in the ghetto . . . . When the people in a Negro neighborhood hear a police siren they don't ask who is being helped. They want to know who is being punished." Complaints about the police were found to be the number one grievance sparking the civil disorders in black communities in the 1960s. Furthermore, the precipitating incident in nearly every case involved a confrontation between the police and residents of the black community. "The black community," noted one observer, "from top to bottom is angry about what they call mistreatment by police, from verbal abuse to physical brutality."

Nor was this anger unjustified. A sample survey of residents in fifteen Northern cities conducted for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders found that blacks were two to four times more likely than whites to report knowledge of police brutality, harassment, and insulting behavior. Between 28 and 41 percent of the blacks in the survey knew about this behavior through their own experience or that of friends; only 8 to 18 percent of the whites had this direct knowledge. One social scientist estimates that at least one million blacks in the U.S. have been physically mistreated by the police. In a study of seven major U.S. cities during 1973 and 1974, the Police Foundation found that almost 80 percent of the civilians shot by the police (both fatally and non-fatally) were black. Another report showed that, controlling for population size, on a national basis, blacks have been killed by the police in recent years at a rate nine to ten times higher than whites.

It is not surprising then, that blacks have viewed and spoken

about the police as an "alien force," "invaders," and an "army of occupation." Paradoxically, at the same time that blacks complain about being "over-policed," they also demand more extensive and effective policing in their communities in order to combat crime. Black people and black communities are the primary victims of crime in our society, in part because they do not possess the power to resist having crime differentially confined to their neighborhoods, and in part because the police tend to overlook or to take less seriously crimes committed against blacks, particularly if they are committed by other blacks.

Thus the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found in a study of Cleveland in 1966 that the police responded more slowly to calls for assistance in black neighborhoods than they did in white neighborhoods. This was true, they found, for every crime category; in the case of robberies, for example, the response time in black communities was over four times as long. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders study mentioned earlier reported that well over half of the blacks interviewed had experienced slow police response whereas only a third of the whites had had it happen to them. "The black community," says Carl Stokes, a black man who was mayor of Cleveland for two terms, "pleads for police protection, and what it gets is indifference, or patrols by men looking for an excuse to get violent themselves." Blacks are thus twice victimized by the police: by poor protection from crime, and by police brutality and harassment.

Urban police departments have generally not been sympathetic to black demands for a change in this situation. In part this is because the police, numerous studies show, as individuals and as an institution, are hostile to blacks. In part it is because the police benefit from

the existence of crime in the black ghetto. And in part it is because blacks have traditionally lacked the political clout to force changes on the department. Some recent demographic and political changes in the central cities, however, offer blacks, for the first time, the possibility of altering the role and behavior of the police in their community.

U.S. central cities have in recent times become, to paraphrase James Boggs, "the black people's land." While blacks constitute just over eleven percent of the total U.S. population, they make up over 27 percent of the central city residents in large metropolitan areas. More than one-third of the entire black population lives in the 25 largest cities, with nearly 20 percent of the total in just four major cities: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit. In cities with total populations larger than 250,000, blacks are now the majority in Washington, D.C. (where they are 75 percent of the total), Newark, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore and New Orleans. Blacks are very close to being a majority in St. Louis, Cleveland, and Birmingham, Alabama. And they are more than a third of the total population in Chicago, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Memphis, Oakland and Baton Rouge.

The swelling and concentration of the black population has led to increased black political clout. The number of elected black officials, for example, increased from just 103 in 1964 to over 3,500 in 1975. Nearly half of these black officeholders were municipal officials. Even more significantly, blacks have been elected as mayor of seven major U.S. cities: Cleveland (Carl Stokes, 1967), Gary, Indiana (Richard Hatcher, 1967), Newark (Kenneth Gibson, 1970), Los Angeles (Thomas Bradley, 1973), Detroit (Coleman Young, 1973), Atlanta (Maynard Jackson,

1973), and New Orleans (Ernest Morial, 1978).

The election of a black mayor offered blacks in each of these cities the possibility that changes would be made in the police and the practice of policing in their community. Every single successful black mayor had run on a platform of gaining control over the police department and improving the quality and efficiency of police services. "I took my election as a mandate to reform the Police Department," said Carl Stokes. "I saw as one of my most important tasks the reform of the police, the return to having our police as our protectors, men who would enforce the law, do their job, be responsive to the needs of the people."

Have black mayors been successful in their attempts to reduce or eliminate police brutality and harassment in the black community, while simultaneously improving police effectiveness against crime in these same neighborhoods? The evidence, it seems, is mixed. Carl Stokes called his attempt to redirect the priorities of the Cleveland Police Department "my greatest frustration, my greatest failure."

> After four years in office, I could tell myself that the department was better equipped, had better cars and a better communications system, and the men had more opportunities for training and education. But that's about all. The indictment of the department contained in . . . the 1966 Little Hoover study [a business-funded commission that had excoriated Cleveland police practices] is about as accurate today as it was then. The determination of those men to live by the old ways won out; we were never able to penetrate their inward ways, their cohesive hostility to any change.

Yet, a local observer, writing barely a year into Stokes' first term, stated that "to an extent not thought possible a year ago, he [Stokes] has tempered the hostility between Cleveland's police and the black community . . . Cleveland no longer seems like a city under siege."

In the case of Gary, Edward Greer, a social scientist and former

member of Richard Hatcher's administration, has written that "the major achievement of Mayor Hatcher's administration has been a significant reduction in police repression of the black community. This advance, which contradicts the pessimistic view that black urban power is essentially of only symbolic significance, has hardly been noted, let alone analyzed."

In this work I investigate the question of whether or not a similar advance has occurred in the case of Detroit, where Coleman Young was elected as the city's first black mayor in 1973. I also examine the source and types of opposition to changes in the police and policing proposed by Mayor Young which threatened to limit the scope and impact of these changes. This work is divided into two parts. In Part I, I begin by developing a theoretical analysis of the nature of the police and the police function, especially as it relates to blacks. Secondly, I examine the process by which black mayors were elected, and the constraints they face in attempting to deliver benefits to the black community. Third, I explore the historical record of black mayors in their dealings with their police departments, in order to evaluate the level of success the mayors have had in transforming these departments. In Part II, I trace the historical development of the black community and black politics in Detroit, with special emphasis on their relationship to the police. I then examine the election campaign of Coleman Young and the ways it was related to and influenced by the issue of the police and policing in Detroit. Finally, I explore in detail Mayor Young's policies with regard to the Detroit Police Department, his level of success in implementing them, and their impact on the black community in Detroit.

PART I

A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE POLICE, THE BLACK COMMUNITY AND BLACK MAYORS

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

In this section I will develop a theoretical analysis of the nature and role of the police, the relationship of the police to the black community, and the election of black mayors as an expression of black politics. This analysis will then be used to illuminate and explain the historical case study laid out in Part II of this work.

Chapter One presents an overview of the police and police function. Here I will briefly compare and contrast alternative theoretical perspectives, and then proceed to develop a Marxist analysis of the structural contradictions within the police.

In Chapter Two I will make use of this analysis to explain the role of the police in the black community. In order to do this, I will develop a theoretical perspective on the black community as an internal colony, and then show how the police function to maintain it. This chapter will also explore the potentially contradictory phenomenon of black police, based on the significant ways in which they differ from their white counterparts.

Chapter Three will examine the historical development of black politics and will root the origin and dynamics of campaigns to elect black mayors within this history. I shall then explain the organizational and structural constraints upon black mayors, once elected, in

order to better evaluate the possibilities for reform. Finally, I will look at the historical experiences and achievements of the various black big-city mayors, particularly with regard to the police, in order to better anticipate and evaluate the specific problems faced by Coleman Young in Detroit, which is the subject of Part II.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLICE: AN OVERVIEW

Three Views of the Police

The police institution appears to be a prominent and persistent feature of modern industrial society. Social scientists generally agree that the police serve two important social functions in this society: the enforcement of criminal laws and the maintenance of public order (see, e.g., Baldwin, 1977:95). They disagree, however, on how and why the police perform these functions and who benefits from their performance. These disagreements are fundamental and result, not only in different analyses of the police, but in differing prescriptions for social change as well.

According to the conservative view, the parameters of public order are dictated by a consensus about basic moral values which is shared by all members of a community. This consensus provides for a harmonious social order from which all benefit. The proper role of the police is to protect this social order and maintain social integration. They do this, conservatives suggest, by exercising legitimate coercion against those who violate explicit social expectations (i.e., criminal law) as well as against those who pose any threat of disorder or conflict (see J.Q. Wilson, 1968:16; Bordua, 1967:vii-xi; Silver, 1967:13-15).

Liberals point to the diversity within modern society and doubt that any kind of universal value consensus is possible. Instead, they suggest that public order is regulated through a "social contract" which sets the "rules of the game" and to which individuals--at least

implicitly--agree to be collectively bound. Through this social contract the police are granted the authority to use legitimate coercion both against those who explicitly violate this social contract (i.e., commit criminal acts) and against those who threaten to challenge the basis of the contract itself (confirmed deviates, dictators, revolutionaries, etc.). Theoretically, in the liberal view, the police serve everyone's interest by protecting society from the individual and the individual from society (see Dillon, 1975:11-18; Baldwin, 1977:75-91; O.W. Wilson and McLaren, 1972:5-6).

Radical and Marxist social scientists agree with liberals and conservatives that the explicit function of the police is to maintain public order and enforce criminal laws. But they disagree with the idea that this is in everyone's best interest. To enforce the existing public order is to enforce the status quo, radicals would suggest, and in capitalist society this means that the interests of the dominant capitalist class are necessarily enforced against the interests of the subordinate working class. Thus, in this view, (the view that informs the present work), the police serve an implicit class function in society (see Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:9-12, Quinney, 1979:265-302).

This class function of the police is specified by its objective structural location, i.e., as an institutional mechanism within the capitalist state. Marxists define the capitalist state as the complex of public and semi-public institutions charged with reproducing and maintaining a social system based upon private ownership of the means of production and economic exploitation (Miliband, 1969:49-55; Offe and Ronge, 1975; Navarro, 1977:62). Thus, unlike the liberal perspective which sees the state as a pluralist structure which represents the

codification of universal social criteria, Marxists understand the state as firmly rooted within, and highly responsive to, the unequal, exploitative social relations of the capitalist mode of production (McLauchlan, 1975).

The capitalist state derives its role from two sources: (1) the anarchy and competition of the capitalist market economy, and (2) the class inequality and class conflict which this economy inevitably produces. In the first place, the state is necessary because

> not all social functions can be organized in a capitalistic way, either because the production of material infrastructure does not promise any profit or because the required conditions are so general and comprehensive that they cannot profitably be realized by individual units of capital . . . Capital cannot, of itself, through its own actions, produce the social preconditions of its existence. (Elmar Altvater, in Offe, 1973:110)

Thus the first function of the capitalist state is to create an environment in which profitable private accumlation is possible. O'Connor (1973:6) terms this the accumulation function of the state.

Secondly, due to the incessant demands of competition, the capitalist class is fragmented and incapable, in the ordinary scheme of things, of achieving unity as a class. The intervention of the state is therefore required to manage the interests of capital as a whole (Offe, 1974: 31-38). This management role involves not only the provision of economic infrastructure but, more importantly, the protection of the private accumulation process from internal as well as external threats. O'Connor (1973:6) designates this latter role as the legitimization function of the state.

The state legitimates and defends the capitalist system through the development of social welfare programs to mitigate the harshest features of the private economy, the granting of real political

concessions to dissident groups, the development and maintenance of ideology-generating institutions, and ultimately, through its ability to resort to force, or legitimate coercion (Navarro, 1977:62-63). Ideally, force is used as a last resort, since its indiscriminate use undermines the legitimacy of the user. As Tigar and Levy (1977:280) note, one important criterion for legitimacy is "that power must be exercised in a predictable way. This predictability comes about by building up a structure of formal legal rules and procedures that will be used before violence is invoked." These formal rules and procedures constitute the legal system of the capitalist state.

The legitimacy derived from the institution of a formal legal system remains problematic, however. For this legal system is not a value-neutral mechanism; it is bound to support and defend the interests of the capitalist class in the private accumulation process. This is so because the state itself is wholly dependent upon that accumulation process for its very fiscal existence. Thus the state has an "institutional self-interest" in promoting capital accumulation (Offe and Ronge, 1975:139-140), regardless of which social groups actually staff it.[1]

The intervention of the state in the accumulation process politicizes class struggle. It thus makes the state's task of legitimation more difficult. Indeed, O'Connor (1973) and Offe (1974) have both argued that the accumulation and legitimation functions of the state are unavoidably contradictory. This contradiction tends to undermine the legitimacy of the state itself. The result is that the state is forced to make political concessions to the working class. These concessions then become the basis for further demands and struggle. As the state increasingly becomes an arena and an object of class struggle, as well as a product of it, legitimation becomes more problematic, as it becomes

increasingly difficult to contain anti-capitalist challenges within capitalist parameters without the use of force.[2]

The police (along with the military) are the institutional embodiment of the state's coercive power. Their role, as I have noted, is to mobilize this power in order to fight crime and protect the public order. But, as I have also noted, the questions "Whose order?" "Who defines crime?" and "Who benefits from the performance of police functions?" are relevant here. As we have seen, both the conservative and liberal perspectives assume that everyone in society basically agrees on the definition of crime and benefits from its prevention.

Marxist social scientists, on the other hand, suggest that crime is defined politically and that the coercive power of the state is exercised in the interests of the dominant capitalist class (McLauchlan, 1975:16), though not in a monolithic manner and not without contradictions. Thus the Marxist scholars of the Center for Research on Criminal Justice (1977: 11) observe that "although the actual role of the police at any given time--like the role of the state in general in advanced capitalist societies--is complex and should not be oversimplified, it is clear that the police have primarily served to enforce the class, racial, sexual and cultural oppression that has been an integral part of the development of capitalism in the U.S."

The Class Role of the Police

The class role of the police becomes evident when their history is examined. Mainstream sociologists in the Chicago School tradition suggest that, on the contrary, the police institution emerged in the 19th century as a rational response to the growing problem of crime and disorder. This disorder, they argue, was a product of increasing

heterogeneity and social disorganization caused by rapid industrialization and urbanization. The historical facts, however, belie this view of the police institution as a "neutral" solution to the problem of disorder.

Prior to the 19th century, public violence and riots were tolerated as a means of political expression. Polanyi (1944:186), for example, notes that "Tudor governments relied on riots to call attention to local complaints; a few ringleaders might be hanged, otherwise no harm was done." Likewise, Silver (1967:15-20) shows that the English ruling class was content--though not happy--to live with a rather large amount of public violence--even directed at their own persons--so long as it did not fundamentally challenge their prerogatives. It was only when a viable working class movement in fact began to do this in the 19th century that the cry went up for "law and order".

Thus it was the rise of industrial capitalism--and popular resistance to it--that spawned the development of the police. From the point of view of the capitalist class, the huge industrial proletariat needed to be controlled and disciplined to a new and unfamiliar and more directly oppressive system of exploitation than they had previously experienced.[3] Although the absolute volume of property crimes by the newly-proletarianized urban masses undoubtedly increased, Harring (1976:55) argues that the best historical evidence indicates that the most extensive development of police forces occurred at a time when crime rates were actually declining. Citing evidence for both Europe and the U.S., Greer (1978:50) adds that, where the impetus of popular resistance to the imposition of bourgeois power was absent, "extraordinarily high levels of public violence were tolerated without resort to the creation of police."

What was increasing in the 19th century, however, was resistance to the new industrial order by ever-larger numbers of landless--and often jobless-proletarians massed in the cities. Silver (1967:3) suggests that the ruling class of the time greatly feared these people, whom they called the "dangerous classes". He quotes an anonymous English writer of 1844 who lamented the condition of the cities, where "destitution, profligacy, sensuality and crime advance with unheard-of rapidity in the manufacturing districts, and the dangerous classes there massed together combine every three or four years in some general strike or alarming insurrection which, while it lasts, excites universal terrors."

The "universal terrors" were of course terrors mainly for capitalists--terrors that their monopoly over the means of production would be expropriated. Thus they demanded the institutionalization of a regular police force. With an eye toward legitimacy, they spoke of "universal" terrors and demanded that the police be a public institution, as opposed to the private guard system previously employed for purposes of protection (see Silver, 1967: Harring, 1976).

Thus in 1829 Sir Robert Peel secured approval for a bill in Parliament which created the London Metropolitan Police, the world's first public urban police force.[4] In the U.S., Peel's plan of police organization was copied by New York in 1844, and in the next ten years was implemented in Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston. By 1870, the public urban police force was firmly established in this country (Radelet, 1977:3-6). And "its development was [clearly] structured along channels emphasizing the control of strikes and working-class organizations, the control of working-class communities, and the control and re-socialization of immigrants imported to serve the demands of industry" (Harring and McMullin, 1975:5).[5]

Harring and McMullin (1975) illustrate the class role of the police through an examination of the history of the Buffalo police. They show that the major threat to the "peace and good order" of Buffalo during the period 1872-1900 was labor unrest. Crimes were mentioned less often in police reports than labor problems.[6] Furthermore, the police force "was organized to more effectively deal with strikes at the expense of controlling crime." They suggest two pieces of evidence for this assertion. First, the police were organized on a military model--i.e., a platoon system with a strong reserve. This system was far more effective as a riot-control strategy than a community patrol/crime prevention strategy. Secondly, the police were drilled in U.S. infantry tactics--again, more effective against a mass of strikers than individual criminals.

But the Buffalo police did more than simply intervene on the side of employers when a strike occurred. They systematically intimidated and controlled the working-class community through arrests and threats of arrests for minor public disorders, harassment, the encouragement of ethnic antagonisms, and extralegal violence. But this behavior was not unique to Buffalo. Greer (1978:51) notes that the police have regularly been used in all working class communities to suppress "deviant" behavior--drinking, gathering on street corners, etc.--i.e. behavior which would detract from their value to employers as workers. And they have done so with both legal and extralegal violence and vigilantism.

The police, then, arose specifically as a mechanism to control the industrial working class. Innovation and expansion of the police institution are highly correlated with periods of popular unrest and labor militancy (Harring, 1976:55). Even today, the cities with the largest

police forces per capita are manufacturing cities--perhaps as a residue of past labor struggles or out of the need to control Third World communities of surplus labor (Greer, 1979:121). Finally, the class role of the police is confirmed by the fact that "recent large increases in police budgets have taken place in the face of the most unambiguous social science findings that the numbers of police have no perceptible effect on the incidence of criminal assaults" (Greer, 1978:50; see also Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:183).

The class role of the police, however, should not be overstated. While the institutional position of the police within the state structure clearly delineates a class function for them, this function is not automatically carried out in an unproblematic fashion. As Gerda Ray (1977:40) notes: "The police insitution is not monolithic; it is full of divisions and conflicts, reproducing all of the social contradictions of advanced capitalism." There are basically three sources of contradictions with regard to the police.

First of all, contradictions exist within the state itself which, as we have seen, hinder its smooth operation. Not only are the state's functions of accumulation and legitimation inherently contradictory, but within the latter function there exists a dialectic of repression and legitimation. Each side of this dialectic tends to undermine the other, and organization and behavior of the police can be seen to fluctuate between the two poles. This fluctuation generates, and itself becomes a product of concrete political struggles.

Second, there are contradictions within the police labor process and the various responses of the police to it. Structural imperatives, while clearly generating the dominant tendencies of social action, must

always be translated through living, breathing human actors who have the ability to refuse, resist, and follow alternate agendas. Thus Ray (1977: 40) correctly observes that "the fidelity of the police to their repressive function is not a given, but must be continually reproduced through the way in which the job is structured and the rewards available for loyal service."

The third major contradiction in the carrying out of the policing function is closely related to the second. It has to do with the social composition of the police. Objectively, police officers are wage laborers. In this sense they are part of the working class. On the other hand, there are few occupations which more blatantly uphold and perpetuate the dominance of the capitalist class. As Ray notes above, this contradiction is partly resolved by the way the police labor process is structured. But what about the backgrounds of people who go into policing? The police organization, while it may have substantial impact, cannot totally remake them. The difficulty in ensuring the loyalty of the police to their class role is potentially exacerbated if the social background of police officers is working class, perhaps even more so if they are working-class members of an oppressed minority group.

In what follows I will deal with each of the three contradictions raised above: the dialectic of repression and legitimation, the police labor process, and the class background and class position of the police. I will begin with the latter and work up the structural scale to the former.

Class Background and Class Position of the Police

The class background of the police is a somewhat confusing issue. It is confused by a lack of clarity about the meaning and definition of

the concept "class."[7] In the traditional sociological view, class is essentially equivalent to socio-economic status or SES; SES is made up of variously weighted measures of income, education and occupational prestige. The boundaries between classes are decided rather arbitrarily, and there is considerable disagreement among traditional sociologists about both the location of the boundaries and how many there should be--i.e., how many classes there really are. Models range from 3 to 12 or more classes.

The Marxist perspective defines class objectively in terms of one's relationship to the means of production. Most fundamentally, one either owns and controls these means of production or one does not. This distinction divides modern society into a capitalist class and a working class, or bourgeoisie and proletariat. These two classes share a mutually antagonistic relationship which is the driving force of conflict and change in society. Other classes may exist outside of the bourgeoisie-proletariat relationship. They may become important at particular historical junctures, but they are not central to the socio-economic dynamic of capitalist society.

In Marxist terms, the police are objectively wage laborers, and therefore members of the working class. But this is obviously a partial truth. For as we have seen, the function of the police is to repress and control the working class. Clearly this function sets the police apart from that working class; they must have different interests and allegiances. But how different? And different in what ways? Might there be instances when the class background of police comes into conflict with their class function? In what direction is this conflict likely to be resolved? To answer these questions we must examine in

greater detail the class background and current class position of the police.

Marxists face real difficulties in examining the class background of police officers. Nearly all of the primary and secondary data makes use of the traditional sociological definition of class. And, as usual, there is considerable disagreement over these "class" boundaries. Thus Baldwin (1977:22) states: "Depending upon whose study is cited, the police are said to be recruited from the lower socio-economic classes up to the lower-middle class." But, he explains, "the discrepancy seems to lie more in class interpretation than in actual social backgrounds."

This understanding might lead an observer to forego further analysis on the assumption that the issue is settled: police officers essentially come from a working-class background.[8] This is a hasty judgment, I would argue. For within the working class there are class fractions which, though united on a common objective base, nonetheless have differential privileges and standards of living and therefore differential subjective outlooks and differential short-run interests.[9] An examination of the class fraction background of the police can help us to better understand their contradictory position within the class structure and the contradiction inherent within the police role. This is especially true with regard to minority police officers, as we will see later.

The bulk of the empirical evidence on the class background of white male urban police officers (by far the majority of all officers) seems to indicate that they come from a relatively privileged upper fraction of the working class. Greer (1978:49) cites a number of studies that show that the family backgrounds of police officers, both currently and in the past, are disproportionately white collar, skilled craftsmen and

foremen.[10] Few officers come from the mass of unskilled and semi-skilled factory labor. Greer specifically points to a study conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police which showed that almost two-thirds of all police officers come from families where the father held jobs at or above craftsmen or foremen positions. The authors of this report (Watson and Sterling, 1969) conclude that "by and large . . . the data cast doubt on the accuracy of the view that 'most policemen are products of lower-middle-class environments.'"

On the other hand, Baldwin (1977:16-17) found that seventy percent of "Eastern City's" 200-person police force grew up in the city's poorest and toughest neighborhoods. Two-thirds of their fathers were blue-collar workers and "most of them were laborers." Fifty-nine percent of the officers held blue-collar jobs before entering the police department. The apparent conflict between this data and that cited by Greer may be superficial and unreal, however. Since Baldwin doesn't specify "blue-collar" in greater depth, it is entirely possible that these jobs were at the craft and high-skill levels. Indeed, later in his report Baldwin states that 60 percent of the parents of police officers owned their own homes, a feat that requires a relatively steady and high-paying job, and is thus compatible with a privileged-fraction-of-the-working class interpretation.

Confusion over lack of concept specification may also be at the root of Bayley and Mendelsohn's (1969:3-14) finding that nearly half of the Denver police force described themselves as "working class" (as opposed to "poor", "middle" and "upper class") despite the fact that their educational level was "substantially higher" than the Denver population as a whole. Conceptual confusion reaches a peak (or depth)

with Fink and Sealy's (1974:4) summation of the research of Westley (1970) and McNamara (1967). They suggest that this research shows that police recruits are drawn from "low to medium income, lower-middle working class families." (!)

In spite of the difficulty with the data, it seems reasonable to say that white urban police officers are recruited from an upper fraction of the working class. In addition to the empirical evidence, there is a certain class logic in this as well. Ideally, the ruling class would prefer to recruit a separate, intermediary class to repress and control the working class.[11] But the old middle class or petty bourgeoisie has rapidly declined, and moreover the "dirty work" of policing has never held much appeal for them.

Failing to attract an intermediary class, it makes sense that the ruling class would concentrate its recruitment efforts on the upper levels of the working class. Ideologically, this group is easier to coopt with the lure of authority over the lower masses. And capital has never hesitated to use various invidious distinctions (ethnicity, race, sex) to divide and fragment the working class. Recruiting working-class police from that class' upper fraction would only continue this policy.

But even the relatively privileged position within the working class of police recruits does not guarantee their fidelity to capitalist imperatives. The capitalist class must drive a wedge between the police and their roots in the working class in order to reinforce the identification of the police with bourgeois interests. This is accomplished in two different ways: through the structuring of police work as an occupation and through the organization of the police labor

process. I will discuss the former now and turn to the latter momentarily.

From its very beginning, the police occupation has been structured in such a way as to separate it off from working class occupations and create an identity for it as a petty bourgeois "profession". Better pay and greater job security have been well-established means of accomplishing this. In the 19th century in Northern industrial cities, for instance, police wages were about double those of laborers (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:61). Skolnick (1969:383) quotes an eminent urban historian to the effect that "fifty years ago, policemen had an income relatively higher than other trades and there were more applicants than there were jobs." Niederhoffer (1967:16) notes the growing status of the police occupation in New York:

> In the 1930's . . . top-grade patrolmen in New York City earned three thousand dollars a year. They owned houses and automobiles; they could afford luxuries that were the envy of the middle class; and they were never laid off. In the panic of the Depression, the middle class began to regard a police career pragmatically.

The step into the police department has clearly been a step up for most recruits (McNamara, 1967:197). Indeed the wages and benefits to be had here are far greater than those to which they could normally aspire in any other line of work (see Hahn, 1971:449-451). It is not simply the higher pay, though, that is an important drawing card. The current median weekly pay of police is one-and-a-half times that of factory operatives and a fifth above even craftsmen (Greer, 1978:50).

It is the benefits and relative job security, however, that provide the biggest attractions. Hahn (1971:452) points out that study after study has reported that the decision to become a police officer

is based upon job security and economic benefits and not on the intrinsic quality of police work itself, which officers rate as low. In his study of Eastern City police Baldwin (1977:18) found that "the need for security was consciously stated as the major reason for joining the police force in all but two cases throughout the ranks." And in one major study, nearly three-quarters of all police officers with two years of experience or more agreed that it would be difficult to prevent policemen from resigning if it weren't for the salary and other benefits connected with the job (Hahn, 1971:452).

In addition, it has been shown that, like many professions and some skilled trades (and like many members of the bourgeoisie), the police hand down their occupation within the family. Studies in New York, Chicago and elsewhere indicate that one-third or more of all police officers had relatives in the police or police-type work (Hahn, 1971:450); see also McNamara, 1967:193). Among Chicago police sergeants, two-thirds of the Irish officers had relatives in the police, and three-quarters of those relatives were members of the officer's immediate family (Hahn, 1971:450).

Does this mean that police recruits are transformed upon entering the force from members of a working-class fraction to members of the petty bourgeoisie, or middle class? The answer, I would argue, is no. The police occupy what Erik Wright (1976) has termed a "contradictory location within the class formation." Objectively they are wage laborers, subject to an extraordinarily tight discipline at work. On the other hand, their wages and benefits separate them from the higher fractions of the working class, and their structural role requires them to be antagonistic toward it. They are most assuredly not part of the

petty bourgeoisie or old middle class; they are rather part of a new middle "class" which occupies a contradictory position between capital and labor.[12]

The police themselves understand, at least at an experiential level, their contradictory class position. As noted above, intrinsic satisfaction is not a strong motive for entering or remaining in police work. This of course is contrary to most typical professional occuptations. Furthermore, the police recognize that they are doing "dirty work". They feel that in spite of the good benefits and the "professional" orientation, the public ranks their occupation low in prestige. (On various measures of occupational prestige over time, the police consistently rank in the bottom half of occupations--Hahn, 1971:451). As a result, the police themselves rate their prestige as low (Skoknick, 1966:50; Hahn, 1971:451).

But the contradictory class position of the police has ramifications deeper than occupational malaise. For it renders the loyalty of the police to their structural role as controllers of the working class inherently problematic. While relatively good rewards, job security, and "professional" aspirations promote identification with the ruling class, this is only one side of the coin. The police remain objectively wage laborers with little long-run stake in the hegemony of capital. This is especially true in times of crisis, when the pressure on the police to be repressive in defense of the status quo is accelerated at the same time their status as wage laborers becomes more apparent. An important way of suppressing--but not resolving--the contradiction of police class position is through the way the police labor process is structured. This "solution" in turn produces its own contradictions,

as we shall see below.

The Police Labor Process

The police, as we have seen, play a key role in the defense and the reproduction of the capitalist order, both on an everyday basis and as a "last line of defense." Given the importance of their task, the police must be reliable. The state and, ultimately, the ruling class, must be able to depend upon the police to exercise coercion against those who threaten the capitalist order. But given the social background and class position of the police and the really repressive nature of their work, the reliability of the police is always problematic.

One important way of dealing with the contradiction is through strict hierarchical control and direction of the police labor process. "In principle and in rhetoric," note Reiss and Bordua (1967:48), "a police oganization is one characterized by strict subordination [and] by a rigid chain of command." The explicit military organization of the police serves several functions. First, it creates a strict system of discipline which is subject to centralized control; "efficiency" of police operation is thereby presumably insured (Quinney, 1979:276-77).

Second, the martial organization of the police inculcates a world view which predisposes police to favor order over conflict and disorder, and obedience to authority and respect for existing social relations over toleration of differences (Skolnick, 1966:11). But possibly most important of all, the militaristic structure of the police separates and isolates them from the working class. Indeed this is precisely the reason why the earliest police forces were issued uniforms and organized along military lines (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:23).[13]

Not only are police organized along military lines, they are socialized to see their major role as that of a front-line army in the war on crime. Police officers are encouraged to define themselves primarily as law enforcement officers whose fundamental activities revolve around capturing criminals and prevent crime. The irony here is that, in terms of actual police work as it is done on an everyday basis, nothing could be further from the truth.

Bercal (1970-71), for instance, found in a study of three major U.S. cities that the overwhelming proportion of calls for police assistance were non-criminal, service-related requests. Baldwin (1977: 24) estimates that the ordinary patrol officer devotes no more than 10-15 percent of his/her time to activities directly related to law enforcement. About two-thirds of all the Denver officers interviewed by Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969:69) said that not more than 9 percent of their contacts with the public resulted in a citation or arrest. The same authors report on a study done in Syracuse, New York, that found that the proportion of law enforcement calls by the police was not more than 20 and perhaps less than 10 percent of all calls.

Webster (1973:6,13) perhaps best summarizes the sense of bewilderment that these data have caused among traditional social scientists. Based on his own 54-week study of all dispatched calls in one urban police department, he concludes:

> The data indicate that unnecessary and incorrect emphasis is being placed by the public, police administrators and the police themselves on the role of the patrolman as a crime fighter . . . . Instead, what the investigation shows is that crimes against persons . . . actually constitute less of the daily realities of police work and consume far less of the patrolman's actual energies than popular conception supposes . . . . We are left with the astonishing discovery that less than one-third of an urban patrolman's time is involved in

> dealing with personal or property crimes and over half--about two-thirds--of his time is spent in administrative or social service tasks. (Emphasis in original.)

In recognition of these realities of police work, Skolnick (1966:33), Banton (1964:7), Baldwin (1977:95) and others have argued that the police would better be defined as "peace officers" rather than "law officers".

But the fact remains that they are not. In both the police and the public eye, it is the law enforcement function of the police which remains primary (see J.Q. Wilson, 1968:19-20). Why should this be so? Most obviously, the socialization of the police to a "war-like mission" against crime--and the public's perception of the primacy of this role--flows directly from the military organization and presentation of the police (Quinney, 1979:276-277). And this focus on the war on crime in turn serves an important ideological purpose in justifying to the police themselves their essentially repressive role in society.

More subtly, however, the over-identification of the police with their crime-fighting role is rooted in the nature of their position within the state and the way in which this structural location shapes the police labor process. The police, of course, are the institutional embodiment of the state's coercive power within the domestic sphere. But they are also front-line representatives of the state bureaucracy. Michael Lipsky (1976) suggests that the police are most fruitfully conceived of as "street-level bureaucrats", i.e., those who, in regular, face-to-face encounters with citizens, "represent" government to the people.

Lipsky delineates three major characteristics of street-level bureaucrats: (1) they interact constantly with citizens in the normal

course of their work; (2) within the bureaucratic structure of their jobs they are able to exercise considerable independence and discretion; and (3) they have a fairly extensive impact on the lives of the citizens with whom they deal (Lipsky, 1976:196-197). On the first count, there can be little argument. The police are the most visible of all state employees and are familiar to, if not beloved of, nearly all citizens. The second characteristic, dealing with independence and discretion may not seem applicable to the police, given their hierarchical military organization and tight discipline.

But the contradiction is only apparent. The police, in fact, have an enormous amount of discretion in the everyday performance of their law-enforcement duties. As Quinney (1979:270-272) notes, contrary to popular belief, the law provides only the most tenuous framework for guiding police behavior. Few of their activities are specifically regulated by law; those regulations that do exist are a result of court rulings on appeals of individual criminal convictions.

But even these are not extremely constraining. "The legal system is not a seamless web of tightly articulated rules and roles . . . . but a loose-jointed system held together at many points by microsystems of antagonistic cooperation and discretionary decisions." (Reiss and Bordua, 1967:26). The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967a:93) is even more explicit about the reality of police discretion:

> Law enforcement policy is made by policemen. For policemen cannot and do not arrest all the offenders they encounter. It is doubtful they arrest most of them. A criminal code, in practice, is not a set of specific instructions to policemen but more or less a rough map of the territory in which policemen work.

In exercising this discretion, the police do indeed have a fairly serious impact on the citizens with whom they deal. It is their ability to legitimately employ deadly force against people which stands out immediately as a serious potential impact. In fact, as McNamara (1967: 191) notes, the police are able to employ this force with more discretion than any other group in society.[14] This means, as the Editors of Crime and Social Justice (1977:42) point out, that regardless of the actual statistical incidence of police shootings and killings of citizens, the threat of deadly force backs up every police encounter with the public and contributes not only to the effectiveness of repressive control, but also to the legitimation of police discretion.

The position of the police as street-level bureaucrats is not without its contradictions, however. Like other street-level bureaucrats, they frequently lack adequate resources to do their designated job (Lipsky, 1976:198). Moreover, they face expectations about their job performance that are ambiguous and contradictory, and include unattainable idealized dimensions. The formal ideology of the police department, for instance, emphasizes value-neutral behavior by individual officers and fair treatment for all social groups. This is clearly impossible, however, given the structural role of the police as a repressive force and the differing attitudes of individual officers.[15]

With regard to contradictory expectations about job performance, Reiss and Bordua (1963:32-40) point out that the organizational strictures of the police department itself emphasize the enforcement of a specific body of laws, deliberately leaving the procedures for doing so ambiguous and therefore flexible. The larger bureaucratic structure in which the police function--i.e., the courts and the legal system--

on the other hand emphasizes adherence to specific procedures and leaves the content of the laws purposely ambiguous and flexible. The police labor process is caught between these contradictory expectations.

Furthermore, Lipsky (1976:198) notes, the nature of street-level bureaucratic work is such that there are clear physical and/or psychological threats to the bureaucrat's person and challenges to his/her authority inherent in their relations with the public. Nowhere is this more true than with regard to the police. Given their generally repressive role and the fact that most of their "clients" are non-voluntary, it is not in the least surprising that hostility and threats should be directed toward the police.

But the source of this hostility is deeper and its function more complex than this. As perhaps the front-line representatives of government, the police are targets for hostilities generated elsewhere. In Cyril Robinson's (1975:278) words, "the police serve as the convenient scapegoat for a variety of error, ineptitude, malfeasance, and nonfeasance committed or permitted by other institutions." At the same time, though, the aiming of these hostilities at the police deflects them away from their real targets and protects the real sources of power and privilege. Thus Robinson concludes that "simply stated, the political role of the police is to accept the punishment that might otherwise be received by their employers."

In terms of their own labor process, however, the police undoubtedly do not appreciate the role that they play as buffers in the class struggle. The hostility and suspicion directed at them makes their own work difficult. And, like all street-level bureaucrats, the police develop simplifications and routines as coping mechanisms (Lipsky, 1976:

201-204). They develop "working personalities" (Skolnick, 1966:42-70) in an effort to reduce the hostility and threats which the police perceive to be directed against them.

The major elements of the police "working personality" are danger and authority. Despite the fact that the police spend the vast majority of their time in non-threatening activities, the perception of their job as dangerous remains central to their self-definition (see J.Q. Wilson, 1968:19-20). On the one hand, this is a result of a conscious strategy. As Lipsky (1976:203-204) observes, the police acquire a stake in seeing their work as dangerous even if it is not generally so as a way of protecting themselves for those rare times when it is dangerous. They will therefore fight to retain and/or expand their discretion in using force as a threat-reducing mechanism. Public exaggeration of the threat that they face becomes one more tactic in this struggle.

On the other hand, the police perception of their job as dangerous is unconsciously or subconsciously based upon their simplified, polarized world-view (see J.Q. Wilson, 1968:27; Skolnick, 1966:218). As Niederhoffer (1967:9) notes, the police have a generally cynical outlook: "In their Hobbesian view the world becomes a jungle in which crime, corruption and brutality are normal features of the terrain." In the face of great public hostility and indifference, the police alone, in their view, stand against these dark forces (J.Q. Wilson, 1967). Those who would challenge police routines and views, then, become threats in and of themselves.

This brings us to the element of authority and its role in the police "working personality". The police demand respect for their

authority in citizen encounters, and they will respond to a perceived lack of it in various ways--both sanctioned and unsanctioned (Quinney, 1979:282-85). They will often "test" those with whom they come into contact through leading questions and gestures. In the case of those whom they consider "symbolic assailants" (Skolnick,1966:45-48), the police will often create self-fulfilling prophecies by "baiting" them or engaging in "oversurveillance" (see, e.g., McNamara, 1967:17; Werthman and Piliavin, 1967:74,90-94; Skolnick, 1966:84ff). They will also use coercion as a "preventive" measure in order to ensure that respect will be gained in future encounters (Westley, 1953).

From the point of view of the police, the demand for respect and its enforcement through coercion if necessary is a threat-reducing mechanism. As Lipsky (1976:203) cogently observes, rather than being a rare or irregular occurrence, physical and symbolic intimidation are employed as often as possible because the perceived risks are simply too great to employ these mechanisms sporadically. From a systemic point of view, this perception and the behavior which flows from it further separates the police from the public and makes it easier to get the police to perform their repressive functions.

The repressive function of the police, their structural isolation and their perception of public hostility and threat combine with the formal organization of police work to generate an unusually high degree of occupational solidarity among the police. United by the unique tasks of law enforcement and the maintenance of public order and the experience of public distrust and hostility, the police department becomes a closed organization which "takes care of its own" (Skolnick, 1966:52-65). Moreover, police solidarity extends beyond the boundaries of work.

More than any other occupational group, police officers tend to restrict their social contacts to those with whom they work (Banton, 1964: 188-219; Skolnick, 1966:52; J.Q. Wilson, 1967:157).

Police cohesion and solidarity are not without their drawbacks, however. Restricted social contacts cut officers off from contact with, and therefore (possibly) comprehension of other social groups. And occupational isolation and a sense of being embattled promote identification with and loyalty to group norms as opposed to toleration of differences and alternative ethics. A premium is placed on "going along" and being "a team player", even to one's own individual detriment, or in violation of one's values. In addition, the organizational prohibition against lateral entry into the force, coupled with the militaristic hierarchical form of organization creates tremendous pressure on individual officers to identify with and conform to formal as well as informal organizational standards (Ruchelman, 1973:249).

Nonetheless, police officers have been able to make use of their unparalleled occupational solidarity and interpersonal loyalty to gain a degree of control over their own labor process. Hahn (1971:453-457) argues that these factors combine to allow extensive resistance by rank-and-file officers to management directives. As every rookie cop finds out, the "real" way policing is carried on is learned, not in the academy, but from veterans on the force. Interpersonal cohesion and strict informal norms of group loyalty reinforce this message and in turn tend to protect the discretion of the front-line officer. The result is at least a partial subversion of militaristic discipline and the undermining of management control.

At the same time, developments in the technology of policing have

tended to reinforce and extend management control over the police labor process. For example, as Reiss and Bordua (1967:49-50) note, advances in communications technology have been implemented with an eye toward making patrol officers both more controllable and more accountable. This extends from the corner call-box, which forced the beat officer to stay in touch regularly, to miniaturized two-way radios which open the officer to constant direction and reporting. Accountability is enhanced through computerized record-keeping, which can easily compile and print out for superiors any quantifiable aspect of officer performance: number and frequency of citizen complaints, number of occasions on which an officer used his or her weapon, etc.

In the face of this increased managerial control of the police labor process, rank-and-file officers have attempted to resist and to regain some control over their work by forming professional organizations and unionizing. These efforts are rooted in, and build on the base of, police fraternal organizations.

These police fraternal organizations are as old as the police institution itself.[16] They were originally self-help societies that pushed for higher wages, improved working conditions, and retirement benefits. The organizations were extremely conservative in outlook; they not only did not challenge, but actually worked to reinforce the formal hierarchy within police departments. Moreoever, in many cities these police societies were an accepted part of the local political machine. Thus local politicians generally found it expedient to substantially meet the demands of the police for good wages and job security. And they tended to do so regardless of the level of overt political activity by the police.

But fraternal organizations proved inadequate in the long run; police therefore began to consider unionization. Police attempts at unionization have occurred during three distinct historical periods. The first period of police unionization occurred during and immediately after World War I. With the growing attack on the urban ethnic political machines by the Progressive movement, the police were losing their allies at city hall. At the same time, their benefits were being severely eroded by the wartime inflation. In the context of widespread militancy at this time--political victories by the Socialist Party, industrial warfare led by the Wobblies, etc--the police sought to affiliate with the conservative wing of the labor movement, the American Federation of Labor. Over 4,000 police joined AFL-chartered locals during this period.

The unionization of the police was a source of serious concern to corporate capital, itself heavily involved in industrial warfare at this time. Unionization, it was argued, would promote the identification of the police with the industrial working class and undermine their role in maintaining "law and order". The issue became moot, however, when police unionization was halted in the wake of the breaking of the Boston police strike of 1919. Fifteen hundred of Boston's 1900 police officers had walked out in support of 19 officers suspended for union activity. The National Guard was called in, and after four days and a great deal of property damage in the city, the strike was broken. Twelve hundred policemen lost their jobs and the union was destroyed. Ironically, and as an incentive to keep their loyalties in the right place, the newly-hired police officers were given nearly all the benefits the union had demanded (Burpo, 1971:5).

The second wave of police unionization conincided with the period of renewed labor militancy in the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, despite the fact that the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) chartered nearly 60 locals during this period, most of the organizing energies of the police went into developing units affiliated with the conservative Fraternal Order of Police. Though even the FOP was resisted, a fraternal organization was far more acceptable to the authorities than a police trade union.

The latest upsurge in police organizing began in the 1960s, escalated in the 1970s, and shows no signs of abating in the 1980s. The roots of this militancy are to be found in the political and fiscal crises of the state. On the one hand, the rise of popular militance in the 1960s--i.e., the civil rights, black liberation, anti-war, women's, and anti-poverty movements--singly and collectively challenged the legitimacy of the state. Under simultaneous attack from a number of sources, the state called upon the police to control and, ultimately, to repress these movements. Confrontation, conflict and increased public hostility toward the police were the inevitable results.

On the other hand, the police were experiencing an erosion of their economic position. The mass protest movements generated economic concessions by the state and created a set of entitlements and political priorities which diverted economic resources to new areas.[17] Then in the early 1970s the system moved into a period of extended economic crisis. State revenues were severely squeezed, and with them the salaries of the state employees.

The pay squeeze was especially apparent to the police, whose salaries had risen dramatically in the 1960s, due in part to the tight

labor market and in part to the willingness of the ruling class to pay for "law and order" in this period. As a result, the police stepped up their unionization efforts and, where organized, engaged in many classic union tactics--e.g., strikes, work slowdowns, "sick-ins", etc.

The extensive unionization of the police has once again made them a strong force in local politics. Their organized strength, coupled with their key ideological position and crucial role in maintaining "law and order", put structural restrictions on elected public officials. Levi (1977:153) explains:

> Given the limitations cities face in finding additional revenues, major economic gains by municipal workers tend to intensify both inflationary pressures and the urban fiscal crisis. They also tend to discredit the elected officials and administrators in the eyes of the voters. Although it remains unclear as to the extent unionization is responsible for these large gains, the public tends to blame the unions for the resulting crisis and to blame the mayors for permitting the unions to get out of hand. In any case, the unions must certainly influence who gets what in the city system. As the demands of the stronger unions become mandated budget items, the mayor loses the power and flexibility to allocate city funds to best political advantage.

In addition, police organizations have been increasingly effective political voices for the self-interest of their memberships, a self-interest defined in an extremely conservative and even reactionary way. Thus they have endorsed and campaigned for right-wing candidates like Goldwater and Wallace on the national level. On the local level, they have promoted pro-police "law and order" candidates, helping to elect former policemen Thomas Bradley and Frank Rizzo as mayors of Los Angeles and Philadelphia, respectively. Police unions have campaigned against judges perceived to be "soft" on crime and police lobbies have exercised increasing clout with state legislatures as well

as with city councils (see Skolnick, 1969:278-286).

Not only have the police backed conservative criminal justice legislation and candidates, they have also attempted to use their organized power to protect and extend control over their labor process. Police unions have lobbied against cutbacks in personnel, replacement of police officers with civilians in clerical and desk jobs, and unpopular working conditions, like single-officer cruisers. Police unions have also used their political clout to defeat initiatives which would introduce outside accountability and oversight of their work. New York City police, for example, succeeded in abolishing that city's civilian review board through a bitter, emotional referendum in 1966 (Skolnick, 1969:278-280; Robinson, 1975:306-307).

Perhaps even more ominous is the police use of their organized solidarity to resist or circumvent management directives and to redefine their role in right-wing "law and order" terms. In New York City in 1968, for example, the president of the local Patrolman's Benevolent Association instructed his members to ignore and violate if necessary orders which would require them to overlook or tolerate legal infractions. In Cleveland, police refused to ride in integrated squad cars. Many other examples can be found (Skolnick, 1969:276-278).

The independently conservative viewpoint of the police and the actions which flow from it tends to separate the police from the working class, or at least from major elements of it. This in turn makes the repressive functions of the police somewhat easier to carry out. Likewise, the success of the police unions in securing economic benefits has come largely at the expense of working-class taxpayers. This further isolates the police from their background and their base within

the working class.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that a permanent effective barrier has been erected between the police and the working class. As Platt and Cooper (1974:4-5) note, any analysis of the police must take into account their "dual role as victimizers and as victims." Although they do in fact repress the poor, minorities, and the working class, the police

> are also themselves exploited not only by miserable working conditions and social isolation but also as instruments of laws and policies over which they have little control and from which they derive no benefit. The police protect private property but do not own it; as guardians of the peace, the police defend government policies of imperialism and racism but do not profit from them; and in their repression of popular movements, the police legitimize a political order which they did not create.

Police organization, then, has come largely as a response to these contradictory conditions. Rank-and-file police officers have developed an independence and a militance which they have been increasingly willing to use to protect themselves and their jobs. Whether or not they will be inclined or able to use these weapons to transcend their own narrow interests in the long run and to form alliances with their public sector "clients" remains an open question.[18] But it is clear that this possibility and others are continuously evolving in the context of a growing crisis of legitimacy. With increased political struggle, the capitalist state as a whole, and the police in particular, are caught up in a dialectic of repression and legitimation, in which each pole tends to constantly undermine the other.

The Dialectic of Repression and Legitimation

As I noted earlier in this chapter, there is an inherent contradiction between the accumulation and legitimation functions of the

capitalist state. On the one hand the state must actively intervene in the economy to ensure profitable private accumulation; on the other hand it must maintain an image of class neutrality, respond substantively to political demands by various classes and class fractions but in ways that do notchallenge capitalist prerogatives, and dilute challenges to the system by attempting to deal with the frequently devasting "externalities" inflicted on the populace by the normal workings of capitalism (e.g., pollution, unemployment, disease, runaway plants).

While this political balancing act is extremely difficult in the best of times, it becomes all but impossible in times of economic crisis. In the first place, the decline in capital accumulation decreases state revenues. Yet private capital requires even greater active support in this crisis situation. The result is that there is a dramatic decline in the amount of resources available for legitimation purposes. This at a time when the very crisis itself presents a challenge to the legitimacy of the system, and the state is called upon to redouble its efforts in this area.

The first response of the state in a situation of crisis is to bolster the forces of repression (i.e., the police and the military) since the accumulation process must be protected at all costs. At the same time, however, an attempt is made to portray the threat to capital as universal and state action therefore as in the interest of all. Within parameters narrowed by ideology and the real lack of resources, the state may actually be required to make concessions to various groups in order to maintain legitimacy.

With regard to the role of the police in this process, the Center for Research on Criminal Justice (1977) calls the first strategy, that of repression, The Iron Fist. The second strategy, that of legitimation,

The Velvet Glove. Both strategies are meant to control the working class and preserve the system.[19] But each strategy tends to undermine the other, as a brief historical analysis will show.[20]

In the first two decades of this century U.S. capitalism faced serious economic and political problems. On the one hand, a period of economic stagnation set in which slowed investment and created unemployment (Baran and Sweezy, 1966:227-234). On the other hand, militant reform groups like the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World attracted widespread popular support and challenged the legitimacy of the existing system. Since much of this radical political activity was centered among the masses of Southern and Eastern European immigrants in the cities, police strategy focused on repressing and controlling these communities.

Police experts argued that an aggressive, preventive strategy was necessary to control "crime" and preserve order:

> The average police department is still too much merely an agency of law enforcement, divorced from responsibility for the causes of crime. Its energies are consumed in defensive measures, in efforts to correct the manifestations of crime rather than attact its roots. So long as this is the case, the policeman will continue to represent, as he does in so many places at present, the city's bewildered and futile attempt to beat back the spasmodic outcroppings of disorder which are continually in process of manufacture in the inner currents of city life (Raymond Fosdick, quoted in Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:35).

At the same time, these experts were concerned that the police were too closely tied to the urban ethnic communities to perform this repressive function effectively and reliably. Many police officers were themselves ethnic immigrants with personal ties to the neighborhoods they patrolled. Furthermore, the police were connected organizationally to

these communities through local rackets and the ethnic political machine (themselves closely allied). These ties, in the view of the business-oriented Progressive reformers, needed to be severed.

It was not only the reliability of the police that troubled the reformers, however. The legitimacy of the police institution was also in question. Police ties to racketeers resulted in widespread corruption; the integration of the police within the political machine meant blatantly political appointments and gross inefficiency (Skolnick, 1966: 3-4). But what bothered the reformers the most was that the regular use of physical brutality was undermining the legitimacy of the police.

This blatant use of repression provided rhetorical fodder as well as converts for radical movements. In the words of one Progressive reformer, brutal policing could "work more potently to breed discontent and anarchy than all the enhortations, and invocations, and denunciations of soap-box corner orators." Even more ominous, lawless policing "permits the delinquent classes to understand that our institutions are hypocritical, that there is no law or real justice in the land;" ultimately, "it breeds vengeful reprisal against the police, the law, and society itself" (Jerome Hopkins, quoted in Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:34).

To prevent this from happening, and to insure the reliability of the police, the Progressives proposed the "professionalization" of the police. The first component of this strategy was the centralization of police decision-making and its removal from local politics. Progressives argued for concentrating authority at the highest levels of the police administration, and removing this command as much as possible from the electoral process. These moves were justified ideologically

by posing them as the only alternatives to the threat of anarchy. August Vollmer, a Progressive police administrator, put it this way:

> Friction between classes and between races, and between those of differing political, social, or religious beliefs, seems to be a universal law. As long as this is true, there will be a need for police to preserve order, protect lives and property, and finally, to preserve the integrity of state and nation. Whatever else may be said of the American police, this fact should be more widely known; namely, that without the police and the police organizations, with all their many defects, anarchy would be rife in this country, and the civilization now existing on this hemisphere would perish (quoted in Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977: 33).

Having separated police command functions from working-class politics, Progressives next sought to isolate the police rank and file from the rest of the working class. They attempted to accomplish this by defining police work as a science which required high intelligence, special skills, and intensive training. With this justification Progressives redoubled their efforts to recruit only from the upper fractions of the working class. They also called for the abolition of all community residency requirements for the police, presumably to insure the availability of those possessing the supposed specialized background and skills needed for police work. The latent function of this change, of course, was to separate the police from their ties to the local community.

Another aspect of the development of "scientific" policing during this period was the introduction of technology to policing. The dual function of this technology, in the cause of both repression and legitimation, was clearly recognized by the reformers. On the one hand, the introduction of patrol cars, radio communications, police laboratories, and elaborate record-keeping systems made the police both more

"efficient" and more manageable. On the other hand, the Progressives perceived that the mediation of science and technology would provide greater legitimacy in police contacts with the public and would seem more neutral than brute force; it was thus more likely to obtain the "permanent submission and genuine acceptance of society's authority" which they demanded from dissident groups.

Given the huge scope of this repressive task, Progressive reformers recognized that they had to do more to generate legitimacy for the police. They thus advocated strong public relations programs which would build upon the ideology of professionalism. August Vollmer wrote that

> The public must drop its childish attitude of hostility and learn to appreciate this friendly, reassuring helpfulness, unceasing vigilance, and other service that the professionally trained policeman stands ready to give to all the people, high and low, rich and poor (quoted in Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:39).

This message was to be presented through newspaper and magazine articles, public speeches, and especially through "the wise presentation of the case to civics classes in the schools."

The police drive for legitimacy through professionalization was undermined, however, from the start. Most fundamentally, it was eroded by the continuing need for the police to repress social groups which threatened the existing system. Given the constant tendency of that system toward economic and political crises, organized resistance was likewise a constant tendency. For example, immediately after World War I, the labor movement made demands for a share of the huge wartime profits and better working conditions. Their actions were extremely militant: there was a general strike in the city of Seattle and the entire steel

industry was struck in 1919. Capitalists responded by trying to break the unions. The police, of course, were in the forefront of this effort as they beat and arrested thousands of workers.

In 1920, more than 10,000 Socialist Party and labor leaders were arrested in the infamous Palmer Raids. The Depression in the 1930s spurred greater militance by the labor movement and the massive numbers of the unemployed, and this required increased police repression; likewise the increasing legitimacy and appeal of the Communist Party in this period.

The post-World War II experience essentially repeated the developments which occurred after the First World War, but on a larger scale. Over eight million workers went out on strike in 1945-46, and over 27 million between 1945 and 1955. The police, once again, were called out to suppress this challenge. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, blacks engaged in widespread civil disobedience as they demanded equal rights and an end to exploitation. The inability of the system to fundamentally meet these demands led to the explosion of the Northern urban ghettoes in the mid-60s. Police responded even more brutally than usual to these black challenges; well over a hundred blacks were shot in the streets by the police, and thousands were beaten and brutalized.[21]

Other challenges came from the anti-war movement, which mobilized tens of thousands of protestors in demonstrations and marches. Organized protests by women, by Chicanos, by Native Americans and other disaffected groups also occurred. The massive and widespread nature of these protests required massive police response. And it was this massive repressive response which called into question the professionalism of the police and seriously undermined their legitimacy.

The response of police administrators, policymakers, and members of various crime commissions to this crisis of legitimacy for the police was twofold. On the one hand, they recommended, once again, increased professionalization of the police. This was to be accomplished through upgraded training and education programs, the introduction of modern management techniques, and the increased utilization of advanced information and weapons technology developed by the military and tested during the war in Vietnam. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) was created in 1968 as a vehicle to accomplish these tasks.

On the other hand, those concerned with the crisis of police legitimacy saw a need for the police to redouble their efforts to create positive images of police and police work within the community. Thus was born the concept of police-community relations. The goals of police-community relations programs were to establish a dialogue between the police department and the community, to improve the department's reputation and image, and to develop supplementary materials on "human relations", "sensitivity" and "conflict management" for police training programs. The Police Foundation was established in 1970 with a $30 million grant from the Ford Foundation as the major vehicle for developing this concept.[22]

But despite elaborate plans and experiments with community advisory boards, decentralized patrolling, and citizen ride-along programs, a U.S. Department of Justice report in 1973 stated that police-community relations programs were largely failures (Wasserman et al.,1973:1-4). Where they existed, the programs were marginal to the department's normal operations, there was little administrative commitment, and efforts were confined almost wholly to the area of public relations. But while the Department of Justice report ascribes this failure to poor management,

the real reason is structural. For serious community involvement in the police department is antithetical to the basically repressive functions of the police within that community. Furthermore, the police-community relations thrust is contradicted by the continuing drive for the professionalization of the police.

As Milner (1971) and Lipski (1976) points out, professionalization typically decreases the identification of the police with their "clients," the local community. Despite the fact that as street-level bureaucrats the police deal regularly with the public, professionalization encourages them not to view that public as a significant reference group. Moreover, as Skolnick (1966:235-243) shows, the drive for professionalism is based upon a model of managerial efficiency in which concern for efficient output overrides concern for the community or even concern for legality. Thus increasing professionalization of the police seems implicitly contradictory to the idea of viable community relations.

Yet police-community relations efforts continue, as indeed they must. For the legitimacy of the police must continually be sold to the public, even as police repression and professionalization constantly undermine it. It is as if an ever-larger air-pump is required to keep up with an ever-larger leak in a tire. Yet, while various radical attempts at patching the tire will continue to be tried from time to time, there is no chance that, under the present system, the tire will be replaced. For the repressive role of the police in support of the status quo is a requirement of that status quo. The question is how best to legitimize the role of the police within that framework.

Thus the dialectic or repression and legitimation plays itself out. And as each side undermines the other, contributing to and exacerbating

the current social and political crisis, possibilities for struggle and change are created. In major urban areas today, these possibilities increasingly revolve around insurgent black movements which have captured local political power. And though there are no simple or quick strategies for gaining control over or redirecting the role of the police, the fact that the police are still subject, for the most part, to local political control opens up political possibilities. Moreover, these possibilities are potentially enhanced by contradictions within the police labor process and in the class composition and class position of the police. The ability of a local black power structure to creatively make use of these contradictions will be examined in the remainder of this work.

Notes to Chapter One

[1]Draper (1977:262) puts the class nature of the state in perspective and shows that conspiracy theories of capitalist domination are unnecessary in the face of a solid structural analysis:

> In sum: the class nature of the state is attested not by the fact that every act is necessarily, equally, and exclusively in the direct interest of the ruling class only, but by the fact that all other interests are regularly subordinated to the interests of the ruling class, that the acts of the state are decisively shaped by what the ruling class and its representatives conceive its interests to be, and take place only within the framework of those interests . . . . The needs of society, no matter how class-neutral in origin or intention, cannot be met without passing through the political (and other) institutions set up by a class-conditioned society; and it is in the course of being processed through these channels that they are shaped, sifted, molded, modeled, and modulated to fit within the framework established by the ruling interests and ideas. This is how the class nature of the state and society asserts itself, even without malevolent purposes or sinister plots.

See also Miliband (1977:66-117) for an extended discussion of these same issues.

[2]Esping-Andersen, Friedland and Wright (1976) provide a cogent analysis of the politicization of class struggle through the state and its implications. Following Offe (1975; see also Sardei-Biermann et al., 1973), they suggest that the state largely avoids relying on direct force to suppress anticapitalist threats through the establishment of "selective mechanisms" within the state which systematically (and therefore apparently "neutrally") weed out, co-opt or rechannel these threats. This fragmentation of the state structure simultaneously protects its accumulation function and reduces challenges to its legitimacy, thus mitigating (but not overcoming) the contradiction between these two functions. For an analysis of this process within the local state see Friedland, Piven and Alford (1977).

Notes to Chapter One

[3]Polanyi (1944:186-187) suggests another reason for capitalists' aversion to public violence: "The market system was more allergic to rioting than any other economic system we know . . . . In the nineteenth century breaches of the peace, if committed by armed crowds, were deemed an incipient rebellion and an acute danger to the state [unlike earlier situations of tolerance]; stocks collapsed and there was no bottom in prices. A shooting affray in the streets of the metropolis might destroy a substantial part of the nominal national capital."

[4]These policemen became known with some affection by Britain's middle classes as "bobbies", after their founder. Little affection was felt, however, by those upon whom these police were imposed. In Ireland, where this same police organization attempted to repress and control the population, the "bobbies" were popularly known as "the bloody Peelers". (Wasserman, et al., 1973:1)

[5]Don R. Derning, a police chief, mentions that there was little early support for the police institution among American immigrants because, based on their European experience, they saw the police as "instruments of tyranny and oppression." But, somehow, he claims, some "national leaders" saw the police system "as a means to preserve and defend freedom and advance our democratic values" (in Cohn and Viano, 1976:24-25). This is a typical mystification of the class role of the police, which doesn't square with the evidence that follows.

[6]Similarly, the Lynds (1937:38-39;351) reported in their second study of Middletown that the major expansion in Muncie's police force which occurred in 1935 was the result, not of an increase in street crime, but due to trade union organizing at the local General Motors

plant.

[7]The following discussion contrasting the traditional sociological with the Marxist view of class is illuminated in theoretical and empirical detail by Loren (1977). See also Stolzman and Gamberg (1973-74) for a good short theoretical discussion of this topic. Wright and Perrone (1977) attempt to translate traditional class data into Marxist class categories.

[8]Others would go even farther and suggest that the class background of police officers is irrelevant. Silver (1967:14), for instance, takes this position because, in his view, the police institution, like all other societal institutions, brings out the moral consensus of the society which then compels insitutional behavior in line with it. This is an extremely naive view, based upon incorrect assumptions, as I have argued earlier.

[9]For a discussion of fractions within the working class, see Freedman (1975) and Edwards (1979:184-199).

[10]The relative privilege of this fraction of the working class is discussed by Freedman and Edwards. See note 8 above. Greer, a Marxist, creates some confusion by suggesting that this upper fraction of the working class constitutes a separate class entirely, which he calls the lower-middle class. Ray (1978) successfully (in my opinion) refutes this position by arguing that craftsmen, skilled workers and even foremen are wage laborers who own no means of production and lack substantial control over their own labor process. They thus constitute, not a separate class, but a fraction of the working class.

[11]In the early history of capitalism, there was in fact an

intermediary class of rural petty bourgeois who were recruited for the task of policing the working class. And they evidently were quite effective. Allan Silver (1967:9) observes that in England, before the institutionalization of the police, the Yeomanry, a cavalry force whose characteristic tactic was the sabre charge, was largely composed of small landowners who were especially zealous in police duty against mobs and riots. They were especially disliked by working people. "For these reasons," he says, "the Yeomanry were particularly popular among the landowning classes as a means of defense."

[12]Harry Braverman (1974:407), in his discussion of the changing occupational structure of advanced capitalism, makes this point well:

> The old middle class occupied that position by virtue of its place outside the polar class structure; it possessed the attributes of neither capitalist nor worker; it played no direct role in the capital accumulation process, whether on one side or the other. This 'new middle class', by contrast, occupies its intermediate position not because it is outside the process of increasing capital, but because, as part of this process, it takes its characteristics from both sides. Not only does it receive its petty share in the prerogatives and rewards of capital, but it also bears the mark of the proletarian condition.

Braverman's point stands as a clear refutation of Greer's (1978) notion that the police are part of a separate class grouping, the lower middle class. See note 10.

[13]There is some evidence that the military organization and discipline of the police is neither unfamiliar to nor unexpected by police recruits. McNamara (1967:203-205) points out that (1) a large proportion of police recruits have had some military experience; (2) the previous jobs of recruits are ones which typically involve tight supervision and negative sanctions; and (3) his data show that two-thirds

of all new recruits expect supervision in police work to be close and strict. Their subsequent experience only reinforces this perception.

[14]McNamara states that the decision by a police officer to shoot at someone is tantamount to a decision to kill, since the police aim at people's abdomens. The only other people in society who can legitimately make these kinds of life-or-death decisions are (1) judges, whose decisions are strictly governed by legal codes and procedures and in any case do not make decisions on a split-second basis, and (2) military personnel, who kill in much more controlled circumstances and with much greater supervision.

[15]The liberal model assumes that the model of value-neutral police behavior can and should be implemented. Cohn and Viano (1976:10-11), for instance, state that

> Because the police have an obligation to "serve" the community, they must appreciate various social processes that occur in as value-neutral a way as possible. That is, the police have a responsibility to enforce and uphold the law, but society does not give each policeman (nor a police department) the right to determine who or what is good or bad. The beliefs and value judgments of the policeman are expected to be held in check as he or she performs his or her duty. It is when the policeman fails to hold such beliefs in check, when he actually discriminates against those with whom he interacts, that hostilities and antagonisms are fostered and nurtured.

This perspective reduces the structural role of the police to a problem of individual attitudes and overlooks or denies the historically repressive function of the police laid out earlier in this chapter.

[16]The following section on the history of police organizations relies heavily on Ray (1977) and Center for Research on Criminal Justice (1977:60-70).

[17]This redistribution of state benefits was neither fundamental nor

large, however. Piven (1973) argues that the really big winners of the economic benefit sweepstakes of the 1960s were organized municipal workers. Levi (1977:153) presents data that indicate that police and firefighter wages rose 67 percent faster than the Consumer Price Index in the late 1960s and early 1970s, for an average annual increase exceeded by no other organized group, though equalled by urban teachers and federal classified employees.

[18]On the possibility of alliances between state workers and their clients, see O'Connor (1973:236-256).

[19]The liberal perspective, with its emphasis on the neutrality of the state, denies or misses this structural role of the police. Thus, in contrast to the Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove, Roger Baldwin (1977: 2-3) talks about the police as "the sore thumb on the administrative hand of the body politic of society," as if their frequently repressive role was an aberration, or a malady to be "cured".

[20]This historical analysis relies heavily on Center for Research on Criminal Justice (1977:32-124).

[21]A thread running through the entire period since World War I is the increasing black migration to cities, especially major ones in the North. The economic marginality and ghettoization of this population generated crime; all of these factors required "management" of the black populace which the police largely carried out through systematic brutality and terrorism. This process will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

[22]For a discussion of the origin, rationale, and components of the police-community relations concept, see Lohman and Misner (1966), Fink

and Sealy (1974) and Cohn and Viano (1976).

CHAPTER TWO

THE BLACK COMMUNITY: CLASS, RACE AND THE POLICE

Perspectives on the Police in the Black Community

In the previous chapter we saw that the police play a basically repressive role in society. Although important contradictions exist within the police institution which prevent it from being monolithic and render it vulnerable to challenge, policing as it is currently constituted is structurally antagonistic to the interests of subordinate social groups. This means that the police inevitably come into conflict with these groups.

Nowhere is this conflict more apparent than with regard to the black community. Blacks are almost universally suspicious of the police. "Hating and mistrusting the police," ways sociologist Nicholas Alex (1969:23-26), "has become a way of life in the ghetto . . . . When the people in a Negro neighborhood hear a police siren they don't ask who is being helped. They want to know who is being punished." The police, in turn, seem to have a particular antipathy for the black community, which serves to further inflame black antagonism. Werthman and Piliavin (1967:56) explain:

> From the front seat of a moving patrol car, street life in a typical Negro ghetto is perceived as an uninterruped sequence of suspicious scenes. Every well dressed man or woman standing aimlessly on the street during hours when most people are at work is carefully scrutinized for signs of an illegal source of income; every boy wearing boots, black pants, long hair, and a club jacket is viewed as potentially responsible for some item on the list of muggings, broken windows, and petty thefts that still remain to be

> cleared; and every hostile glance directed at the passing patrolman is read as a sign of possible guilt.
>
> The residents of these neighborhoods regard this kind of surveillance as the deepest of insults. As soon as a patrolman begins to interrogate, the suspect can easily see that his moral identity is being challenged because of his dress, his hair style, his skin color, and his presence in the ghetto itself.

Why does this mutual hostility and suspicion exist between blacks and the police? Conventional social scientists have suggested a number of answers to this question. All of these answers are, however, from the point of view of this work, false, misleading, or at best partial explanations.

First of all, conventional social scientists have argued that the police suffer black antagonism simply because they are convenient symbols of the larger society which discriminates against blacks. Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969:141) provide a good example of this point of view.

> The police are important for minority people not just because of what they do but because of what they are. Minority people recognize that other problems must be solved if substantial improvements are to be made in the quality of their lives. Yet what they experience at the hands of the police is of enormous emotional significance. It symbolizes for them the backhanded treatment they receive from society as a whole. The police are the ubiquitous, public, authority-laden symbols of their own second-class citizenship. Upon them is vented the accumulated frustrations of lifetimes of inequality and subservience . . . . Minority people project upon him [the police officer] their emotional reactions to deprivation at the hands of the majority.

While what they say is undoubtedly true to a certain extent, this analysis mystifies the problem of the relationship of the police to the black community by making police-community antagonism into an unfortunate byproduct of some larger, unexplained condition. The actual behavior of the police in the black community, and the reasons for that behavior, are left largely unexamined. Moreover, the problem is defined in emotional, symbolic, attitudinal terms, which tends to

downplay or deny the actual reality of police repression, as well as to ignore its economic and political basis.

Along this line, a number of writers have suggested that the problem is not so much one of systematic police repression in the ghetto, or inherent black hatred of the police, but the unfortunate result of a climate of mutual suspicion, whereby relatively minor and isolated incidents become exaggerated in the minds of both parties. Alex (1969: 23), for instance, observe that

> much of the racial violence that has erupted over the past few years, including race riots, has stemmed directly from the conviction expressed by many "rioters" that the police department is "brutally" anti-Negro. While this feeling may be ill-founded, the fact of its existence and persistence cannot be ignored.

Niederhoffer and Smith (1974:35) provide a similar analysis which is at the same time even more pessimistic:

> Where harmony between police and ghetto seemingly exists, it is a temporary facade that barely camouflages the endemic and permanent core of reciprocal antagonism. These pockets of resentment are mutually aggravating, and it makes no difference that many of them are exaggerated.

Again, while there is no doubt truth to these assertions, they fail to get to the heart of the matter by analyzing where the resentment originally comes from, and why incidents are, in fact, likely to be blown out of proportion by both sides.

Another approach by conventional social scientists to the question of police/black community antagonism has been to see the problem as one of prejudice--by police toward blacks, and by blacks toward the police. Lipset (1969), for example explains police prejudice toward blacks as a result of the "working-class authoritarianism" inherent in the social backgrounds of most police officers. Skolnick (1966) denies inherent prejudice on the part of the police, but suggests that police officers

develop a "working personality" which makes them suspicious and distrustful of minorities. While this argument is superior to Lipset's largely-discredited notion, it borders on blaming the victims of prejudice for causing it in the first place.

Other theorists are more explicit about blaming blacks for police prejudice. Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969:107-108), for instance, state that

> the factor of race is clearly a specific cue in the policeman's world. Policemen associate minority status with a high incidence of crime, especially crimes against the person, with bodily harm to police officers, and with a general lack of support for the police . . . . Minorities . . . especially Negroes, in the eyes of the police personnel, demand the most, raise the greatest amount of anxiety about personal safety, pose the greatest criminal threat, are the most hostile, and on top of it all are as likely to be truculent in their appeals against officers as prosperous Dominants [whites]. . . . One can understand why policemen often show a sense of being aggrieved, mistreated and put-upon by minorities.

Still other analysts go beyond the idea of prejudicial attitudes and admit that the police engage in repressive behavior in the black community. But, incredibly enough, they suggest that blacks themselves are ultimately responsible for these acts. Bent and Rossum (1976), for example, in a standard police/community relations textbook suggest that "overly aggressive action" by the police in the black community occurs as a result of abuse, both verbal and physical, which that community heaps upon the police, thereby creating fear in the police and leading them to overreact.

Like all perspectives which blame the victim, this viewpoint begs the question of why the victims behave as they do in the first place. Why do blacks (or at least some of them) hate and abuse the police? What is the source of this hostility and antagonism? To answer these

questions we must bring together a structural analysis of the position and role of the black community in the larger society and relate this to the structural role of the police discussed in the previous chapter.

The Black Community As An Internal Colony

It is my position in this work that blacks constitute an internal colony within U.S. society. Following Hill (1977:15), internal colonialism is understood as "a structure of capital accumulation and social control which corresponds to the logic of exploitation within a racial capitalist society." The benefits of this model are that it (1) theoretically links class exploitation and racial oppression; (2) places these social relationships within the overarching dynamic of capital accumulation; and (3) emphasizes the spatial character of these relationships.

In order to explain the phenomenon of internal colonialism it will be necessary to examine four basic issues: (1) the logic of class exploitation and capital accumulation; (2) the nature of racism and its connection to class exploitation; (3) the mechanisms which maintain this dual oppression, especially as they express themselves spatially; and (4) the issue of who does and who does not benefit from this situation, which includes an analysis of class within race, i.e., black class structure. I will examine each of these issues in turn.[1]

In Marxian terms, exploitation refers to the appropriation by a ruling class of the surplus labor of a producing class. Surplus labor is understood as labor over and above that which is socially defined as necessary to sustain the producers. It is appropriated from the producers through a variety of coercive and ideological mechanisms. In capitalist society surplus labor is appropriated in the form of

surplus value.

The basis for the appropriation of surplus value is this: in capitalist society the production of commodities, i.e., objects produced specifically for the purpose of exchange, becomes generalized. Human labor itself becomes a commodity. This is due to the fact that the means of production are concentrated in the hands of a relative few; the majority of the population are thus unable to produce their own subsistence. As a result, they are forced to sell their labor in order to survive.

It is not labor, i.e., actual work, however, which the capitalist purchases from the worker in the marketplace, but labor-power, or the worker's ability to produce. Like any other commodity, the value of labor-power consists of the amount of socially necessary labor time which is required to produce it. In the case of labor-power, this refers to the minimum subsistence level at which the working class is able to reproduce itself. This level is not fixed, but is the product of historical class struggle.

In the normal scheme of things though, workers receive the full value of their labor-power in the form of wages. Exploitation occurs, not in the marketplace, but in production. The capitalist has purchased the worker's labor-power for a given amount of time. According to the logic of profitability which is at the heart of the capitalist mode of production, this time is always longer than the amount of time that it takes for laborers to reproduce themselves. The remaining time is surplus labor time, which is appropriated by the capitalist in the form of surplus value. The rate of surplus value, or rate of exploitation, expresses the ratio of surplus to necessary labor time. The magnitude

of this rate is determined by the existing productivity of labor as well as the outcome of historical class struggle.

While some portion of surplus value goes to capitalist consumption, the major part of it is reinvested in production. This is capital accumulation, a process made necessary by the logic of capitalist competition. Under this logic, each capital must continue to grow or face extinction or absorption by larger capital.

Capital accumulation tends to create a rising demand for labor-power. Under the normal operation of the market, the price of labor-power should therefore rise. Theoretically, capital faces a dilemma at this point: unlike other commodities, labor-power cannot be produced on demand, due to political and ethical problems with mandated fertility and the fact that humans are not available to be workers for a rather large number of years after birth. The increasing demand for labor-power in the face of limited supply thus threatens to all but wipe out surplus value.

How does capital prevent this from happening? Marx's answer to this question is found in his concept of the "reserve army of labor" or the "relative surplus population." (see Marx, 1967:612-712) Essentially he argues that capital creates an aritificial surplus of workers in order to hold down the price of labor (i.e., to keep it in balance with its value) and to act as a brake on the demands of the employed working class, which otherwise (i.e., in a situation of full employment) would confront capital with equal power.

In the early stages of capitalist development, the reserve army is created through the destruction of precapitalist modes of production and the consequent setting free of their labor. In a mature

capitalist society, the process of mechanization renders a portion of the labor force surplus, either by directly displacing them or by failing to provide enough jobs due to the increasingly capital intensity of work. This mechanization comes about as a response to the rising wages of labor and increased class struggle in the workplace; capitalists thus have constant incentives to replenish and increase the size of the relative surplus population. Workers fight a never-ending rearguard action to restrict this process.

As members of a capitalist society, black people are as susceptible as any other group to the systematic exploitation and inequality which is characteristic of this mode of production. In addition, however, blacks in capitalist society suffer from racism. Racism can be defined as the "systematized oppression by one race of another" (Boggs, 1970:147) and "the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group" (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967:3).[2]

Historically, racism developed as a result of the international expansion of the capital accumulation process. While capitalism did not invent racial prejudice and discrimination, it nevertheless systematized and institutionalized it. As Blauner (1972:21) notes:

> the conquest of people of color by white Westerners, the establishment of slavery as an institution along color lines, and the consolidation of the racial principle of economic exploitation in colonial societies led to the elaboration and solidification of the racist potential of earlier modes of thought.

Racist ideology thus developed out of the material conditions of capitalist expansion, in conjunction with the efforts of the ruling class to keep the labor and resources of colonial people exploitable (Cox,

1959:349,475; Rex, 1973:75).[3]

The institutionalization and systematization of racist thought and practice has set blacks apart in contemporary U.S. society. Just as all whites, regardless of class, share to a certain degree in the benefits of white skin privilege, all blacks are oppressed to a certain extent by racism. Class and racial oppression are separate forms of oppression and not reducible to each other.[4] Yet they are interrelated, both historically and in terms of the contemporary dynamic of capital accumulation. What provides the link between them?

The answer is to be found in the role of black labor in the U.S. political economy. "Labor and its exploitation," says Blauner (1972: 29), "must be viewed as the first cause of modern race relations." Baron (1971) suggests that the demand for black labor in this country has moved through three historical stages: (1) slavery; (2) debt peonage; and (3) metropolitan enclave. The first two stages encompass the historical oppression of the vast majority of blacks in the rural South from the early eighteenth century up until the second quarter of the twentieth century. The third stage, that of metropolitan enclave, describes the situation of blacks today in the urban internal colonies.

"Modern-day racial insitutions . . . were forged in the early twenties when Negroes entered the labor force in large numbers," note Baron and Hymer (1972:297). At this time blacks began a relatively rapid transformation from an overwhelmingly Southern and rural people to the most urbanized group in the U.S., with half their number outside of the South.[5] The immediate impetus for this transformation was found in the conditions of labor demand in the North.

World War I contributed to a boom in industrial production. At

the same time, the disruption of the war, coupled with the restrictive immigration laws which followed it, severely constricted the supply of labor in the North. Furthermore, labor militance was increasing under these conditions.[6] Capital thus looked around for a new supply of labor, anxious to find workers who would be more docile.

The black population in the South fit the bill. Not only were blacks unfamiliar with industrial labor, making them less likely to provide organized resistance, but their recognizable racial characteristics could be used to keep them separate from white workers and thus undermine organized labor. Moreover, the stabilization of Southern agriculture after the turn of the century made many black farm workers superfluous and thus available to the Northern industrial system.

Thus it was that labor recruiters toured the South, telling of potential high wages in the North and offering blacks free transportation to get there (Baron, 1971:20-21).

The introduction of blacks into the Northern industrial economy resulted in what Bonacich (1972, 1975, 1976) has called a "split labor market." This phenomenon occurs, she says, when there is a difference in the price of labor of two ethnically distinct groups. Assuming that the price of labor includes the efficiency, reliability and docility of the workforce, capitalists will prefer to employ the labor of the cheaper ethnic group. The other ethnic group (or groups) will, of course, resist this plan. The actual outcome depends upon the relative power of the groups.

Bonacich suggests four possible types of outcomes. Displacement, she says, will occur when capital is able to either directly employ cheaper labor or to reduce the costs of employed labor by using the

cheaper ethnic group a a reserve army. Exclusion occurs when the employed workers are strong enough to drive the weaker ethnic group out of the territory. A caste solution is a form of compromise between capital and organized labor, whereby the weaker group is excluded from certain high-paying, more attractive jobs. A fourth alternative involves a radical coalition between the two groups against capital.

The preferred alternative from the point of view of capital is, of course, displacement. And this is exactly what they tried to do in encouraging black migration out of the South. From the point of view of employed white labor, however, the ideal solution is exclusion, which they attempted with great vigor. The result of both of these strategies was interracial violence on a massive scale in the industrial cities from the time of World War I up through the period of the Second World War.[7]

Neither capital nor labor was able to impose its own ideal solution, however, and the result was a caste resolution of the split labor market. This involved a merger of two organizational principles of labor: the ethnic hierarchy in production and the unfree status of black labor.[8]

In a certain sense, blacks were moved in at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy. But in another sense their position was and is qualitatively different, due to the existence and persistence of racism. When, following World War II, blacks were forced off the land in the South in massive numbers due to the mechanization of agriculture, they crowded into the industrial cities. Because of geographical, occupational and industrial segregation, many of them were unable to find jobs, or at least jobs that were stable and paid decent

wages, (see Fusfeld, 1973:16-26). The black population came to make up the bulk of the relative surplus population in major metropolitan areas. As such they became the main component of the industrial reserve army, fated to be the primary shock absorbers of the capitalist boom and bust cycle.[9]

But the impact of the split labor market on blacks runs deeper than this. Because blacks tend to be systematically segregated by industry, by occupation, by business firm, and by department or job category within firms,[10] and because they are heavily concentrated in the relative surplus population, the brake on wages and heightened labor discipline of the reserve army are disproportionately directed at employed blacks. These black workers are thus superexploited.

Superexploitation refers to the fact that, relative to whites, black workers produce a higher rate of surplus value for their capitalist employers (Hill, 1977:11-13). This occurs in two different circumstances: (1) Relative to whites with the same skills and instruments of production, working at the same task, blacks are forced to be more productive and/or are paid less; and (2) because of the aforementioned segregation into certain occupations, firms, or industries in selected geographical locations, and because there are restrictions on black geographical and social mobility, black workers are forced to be more productive and/or are paid less.[11] In both of these cases it is the pressure of the heavily black reserve army which generates superexploitation.

The analysis of superexploitation and the role of blacks in the reserve army provides the link between the phenomena of class exploitation and racial oppression. But the link is broader still. Class and

race meet not only at the point of production, but are intertwined in the whole complex of institutions which give the internal colony spacial expression and help to maintain it. As Baron and Hymer (1972:302) put it:

> The overall effect of Northern racial institutions--housing segregation, school segregation, employment discrimination--operating concurrently is not confined just to the labor market. There is an overriding system of race relations characterized by the social and economic subjugation of the Negro via the whole constellation of institutions . . . . None of these particular racial practices could persist by itself if there were not an array of reinforcing social, economic, psychological and geographical elements supporting it.

From the beginning of black migration to the cities in the 1920s until the present, blacks have been segregated into separate--and unequal--ghettoes. Unlike earlier ethnic ghettoes, these black enclaves have been neither voluntary nor temporary (Blauner, 1972:85-87). They are located in the oldest and most decrepit parts of town. Here, too, blacks play a "scavenger role" for the rest of society:

> In the same way that blacks have been forced to take on the old substandard jobs, disdained and discarded by socially mobile whites, they have been confined to used homes, used schools, used churches, and used stores . . . . For the used homes and churches they made excessive payments which add to the total capital available for new buildings, new plants, new churches, new homes. As in the days of primitive accumulation, the entire white community benefits, not only from the direct receipt of interest and principal on these homes and churches but in terms of new industries with their streamlined buildings and their increasingly skilled jobs (Boggs, 1970:155).

Coupled with the superexploitation of the black labor force, this resource drain creates a situation of chronic depression in the black ghetto (Fusfeld, 1973). The underdeveloped metropolitan enclave comes to resemble a superexploited colonial satellite (Tabb, 1970). The function of this internal colony is that of management and control of black labor, which, far from being peripheral or superfluous, plays a

central role in the capital accumulation process.[12]

The identification of the black community as an internal colony has become even more compelling recently as its boundaries have come more and more to coincide with the political jurisdictions of central cities. This means that class struggle over the state takes on an increasingly racial dimension. "There appears to be a rough correspondence," says Hill (1977:21) "between the manner in which the class struggle over a split labor market in the private economy fosters a caste-like resolution and class struggle over state tax and expenditure policy fosters racial segregation among local municipal governments in metropolitan areas." Using the class analysis of the state budget developed by O'Connor (1973:13-39), Hill explains the basis of this phenomenon.

O'Connor divides the state budget into three categories, which correspond to Marx's departments of production. Social capital outlays are those which contribute to profitable private accumulation. This category may be further divided into (1) social investment (social constant capital), which constitutes expenditures on fixed capital projects which increase the productivity of labor (e.g., transportation networks, utilities, industrial parks); and (2) social consumption (social variable capital) which constitutes expenditures designed to lower the reproduction costs of labor (e.g., schools, commuter facilities, health and unemployment insurance). Social expenses ("luxuries") are neither directly nor indirectly productive of private profit. They are expenditures required to maintain social harmony and legitimize the system (e.g., welfare, prisons and the police).

It is in the interest of capital to maximize social investment

("social profit") and keep social consumption ("social wage") and social expenses ("social waste") to the minimum necessary for the ongoing stability and productiveness of the society. It is in the interest of workers, on the other hand, to maximize the share of the budget that goes to social consumption (the social wage). Often this means attempt- to restrict the shares that go to either social profits or social waste.

Since the bulk of state revenues come from taxes on wages and profits, the state acts as a redistributor of wealth. The struggle over the state budget is, then, truly a class struggle. Fiscal exploitation can be defined as that outcome of the state budget process whereby the real wage of the working class is lowered through the transfer of its resources through the taxing mechanism to the capitalist class in the form of social profits. Fiscal superexploitation occurs when, relative to another group of workers which receives the same real wage, a group of workers (1) pays a higher tax rate, or (2) pays the same tax rate, but has less of its taxes allotted to social consumption expenditures, or (3) some combination of the two.

The world-wide crisis into which capitalism has been plunged since the early 1970s has put increased political pressure on the state budget at all levels. Political class struggle has intensified as each party battles to keep from falling behind. At the local level, one way that both capital and white workers have chosen to deal with this reality is through abandonment of the central city jurisdiction, with its characteristically high tax rates and relatively huge expenditures on social expenses or social waste.[13] These social expenses are necessary in order to control and manage the black internal colony which is left behind.

The Black Internal Colony: Who Benefits and Who Loses?

Who benefits from this system of internal colonialism in metropolitan areas? Those capitalists who directly employ blacks in situations of superexploitation are, of course, the most immediate beneficiaries. Many of these capitalist employers are located in suburbs within large metropolitan areas. This location allows them to draw upon the black central city labor pool without having to pay either the costs of its reproduction or the social expenses associated with its management and control. In addition, a large number of petty capitalists benefit from the captive population in the internal colony. Real estate and banking interests speculate on central city properties. Slumlords, merchants and organized crime pump exorbitant profits out of black neighborhoods.

But regardless of whether they employ or deal directly with blacks, all capitalists benefit from the existence of the internal colony. First, racism divides the working class and thereby dilutes its strength. Moreover, blacks provide a convenient scapegoat for the oppression which is endemic to capitalism, which in turn allows capital to deflect hostility which would otherwise be directed at it. Second, the internal colony stabilizes the system by hiding within itself much of the social cost of the capitalist economy. The black reserve army, economically and politically isolated, disproportionately bears these costs.

The latter points suggest that white workers, too, must benefit from the existence of the internal colony. In the short-run, I would argue that this is true. All whites benefit from feelings of superiority over the black pariah group. And nearly all whites benefit from a higher standard of living because of the superexploitation of black workers. Those workers who are in a position to take advantage of the

caste resolution of the split labor market receive specific additional benefits. Likewise those suburban workers who benefit from a higher social wage due to fiscal superexploitation of blacks in the internal colony.

On the other hand, there are groups of white workers who do not benefit directly from the existence of the internal colony: women workers, for instance, who generally are denied access to the upper levels of the split labor market. In addition, those white workers who do live within central cities suffer a real reduction in social wages due to the high cost of social expenses (which are unlikely to come from the fund of social capital). Moreover, Reich (1970) has found that the economic benefits of racism flow primarily to the white upper class. And, finally, the existence of racism divides the whole working class and dilutes its strength in its struggle against capital. Thus, in the long run, the perpetuation of the black internal colonies is not in the interests of white workers.

Do any blacks benefit from the existence of these internal colonies? Certainly the vast majority of blacks, who are workers, do not.[14] They suffer the dual oppression of race and class. But Galtung (1971), in his analysis of the phenomenon of colonialism, suggests that it is based upon a bridgehead which the ruling class of the dominant society establishes within the subordinate society. While the majority of benefits flow outward to the dominant ruling class, the bridgehead, or comprador bourgeois class in the peripheral society also benefits from this system. It is therefore tied to to the dominant ruling class in a basic harmony of interest. The extent to which this bridgehead may be found within the black internal colonies in the U.S. requires a

brief analysis of black class structure.

The structure of class within the black community has been profoundly affected by the role of black labor in the larger U.S. political economy. As noted earlier, blacks were incorporated en masse as laborers into U.S. society, first as slaves, then as rural peons within the Southern plantation economy, and finally as industrial proletarians and a reserve army of labor in the modern urban economy. In the first two periods, it was the structural position of blacks, which encompassed nearly the whole of the black population, coupled with a heritage of African communalism which lacked a commercial or exploitative tradition, and the existence of explicit racial barriers, which initially inhibited the development of a class of black entrepreneurs.[15] Similarly, black artisans and professionals were few in number.

The African communal heritage and the requirements of survival as an oppressed people led blacks to more collective-type solutions to economic problems in the days after slavery. Thus black fraternal organizations united and held the black community together in the post-bellum period. Private businesses like black banks emerged as depositories for these fraternal organizations, not as capital-accumulating or speculative ventures. Those black entrepreneurs who did go into private business were found almost entirely in the service sector.

The establishment of the racially-segregated internal colonies in the cities in this century opened up new opportunities for black business. But again, these businesses were invariably service-oriented rather than producers. In addition, they were usually small, and with a black-only market had limited possibilities for expansion. This situation remains essentially unchanged today. Despite aggressive

government-and corporate-sponsored "black capitalism", black businesses remain small, marginal, risky and not very profitable.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1978) in 1972 ninety-four percent of all black businesses were sole proprietorships and four percent were partnerships. Only two percent were corporations. The gross receipts of these black businesses constituted only 1.7 percent of the total for all U.S. businesses.

Eighty-four percent of all black businesses had no paid employees at all in 1972, while those who did averaged just six. Furthermore, the number of black businesses without paid employees was on the increase (up 31 percent since 1969), while those with paid employees were decreasing (down 17 percent since 1969). Finally, nine out of ten black businesses fail within the first two years (Marable, 1980:95).[16]

Given their economic marginality and the fact that few black businesspeople exploit wage labor, it is difficult to argue that there is a viable black capitalist class. In fact, as Marable (1980:62) notes, until very recently one could not even identify a black petty bourgeoisie. What Frazier (1962) described as the "black bourgeoisie" was not, as he himself noted, delineated by control of economic resources, but rather by education and lifestyle. It was, and is, as Frazier's subtitle indicates, a middle class, one which is greatly elevated above the mass of blacks, but still below the white middle class (see Kronus, 1971:4-8).

Who constitutes this black middle class? Marable (1980:94-95) suggests that it has three components: the politicans, the professionals, and the entrepreneurs. As we have just seen, the third group remains small and relatively powerless. The first two, however, have increased

dramatically. Due to the growing political power of the black population concentrations in central cities (recognized and encouraged by the Democrats since Roosevelt), the success of black voter registration drives, and the ideology of black pride and power, the number of black elected officials increased from a total of 103 in 1964 to 4,311 in 1977 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978:179). The number of black public administrators at all levels has grown too as a result of affirmative action pressures and programs. For many of the same reasons, the number of black professionals has increased as well.

This emerging black elite represents the bridgehead which the white capitalist class seeks to establish within the internal colony. The task of securing this bridgehead was made more urgent by the ghetto rebellions of the 1960s. At that point corporate capitalists began to sponsor the development of a black urban leadership class which would protect their business interests in the central city and at the same time maintain stability in the black community. Analagous to the post-liberation development of indigenous leaders in overseas colonies, this situation may properly be termed internal neocolonialism (Hill, 1977:16-17; Allen, 1970:193-245).

Given the emergence of this black neocolonial elite, what can we say about the class structure of the internal colony today? What is the salience of race versus class in the contemporary black community? Galtung (1971) suggests that there is greater disharmony of interest in the peripheral, or subordinate society than in the dominant one. Economically, this appears to be so in the black internal colonies. Black income is definitely more unequally distributed than white income (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1978:34; Berkey and Hill, 1976:17).[17]

Against a backdrop of stagnating or deteriorating conditions for the majority of blacks, the black elite is improving its economic position relative to whites.[18] For instance, while the ratio of total black median family income to white median family income began dropping off after reaching a high of .62 in 1975, the income level of the top five percent of blacks rose to 75 percent of that of the top five percent of whites in 1979. Black family heads between 55 and 64 years old with college educations and incomes over $25,000 (an admittedly tiny group) had a total accumulation of wealth equal to 86 percent of the figure for whites in 1971 (Marable, 1980:96). The unemployment rate for the managers and professionals who make up the new black elite is one-third to one-half that of black clerical, industrial, and service workers.

To what extent, though, is there really a disharmony of material interest between the black elite and the black masses? Cruse (1968:90) puts the disharmony argument in bold relief:

> Today, except for the issue of civil rights, no unity of interests exists between the Negro middle class and the Negro working class. Furthermore, large segments of the modern Negro bourgeoisie have played a continually regressive "non-national" role in Negro affairs. Thriving off the crumbs of integration, these bourgeois elements have become de-racialized and de-cultured, leaving the Negro working class without voice or leadership, while serving the negative role of class buffer between the deprived working class and the white ruling elites. In this respect, such groups have become a social millstone around the necks of the Negro working class.

Cruse's assessment undoubtedly rings true with regard to those blacks who serve as neocolonial managers of the black community. They are, as Cloward and Piven (1975:252) note, not only oriented to the needs of white capital, but largely dependent upon it for their very positions.

On the other hand, the fact remains that the black bourgeoisie is, after all, not much of a bourgeoisie. Very few of its members are

involved in the direct exploitation of black--or any other color--labor; those that are do so on a relatively small scale. And with regard to the overall U.S. political economy, this bourgeoisie is destined to remain marginal. This means that the class structure among blacks, while real, is far less consequential that it is among whites. Blacks as a group thus have an objective basis for some kinds of unity.

The possibility for some sort of harmony of interest among blacks is enhanced by the persistent salience of racism in American life. As Oliver Cox (1959:380) pointed out long ago, in societies where racial ideology and barriers exist

> people of color tend to be humbled, not only by the engrossing importance of their color but also by the fact that the color interest is inevitably common to them all. Here the colored person of the lowest class has an intuitive way of quickly establishing rapport with the most advanced colored gentlemen, for the basis of their sympathy is elemental. It tends to keep the social-class hierarchy among them quite obtuse.

Marable (1980:60-61) finds an objective basis for a cross-class black nationalism in, among others, these three factors: (1) group unity in the face of white supremacy and ethnocentrism; (2) opposition to a subordinate caste or racial status; (3) the advocacy of ethnic pride and group awareness of historic cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual traditions.

The extent to which there is potentially a harmony or disharmony of interest among blacks is an empirical as well as a political question. Unity or disharmony is likely to vary depending upon the issue and the interests at stake. With regard to the police and their role within the black community, I would suggest that the basis for unity exists. The black elite are not large property owners in U.S. society and therefore do not benefit from the repressive role of the police discussed in the

previous chapter. Moreover, blacks as a unitary group are harmed by the explicitly racial practices of the U.S. police departments, both on the streets and in the station houses. It is an analysis of these police practices that I now turn.

The Role of the Police in the Black Community

Blacks' perceptions and evaluation of the behavior of the police in their communities differ significantly from those of whites. A 1955 nationwide Gallup Poll, for instance, found that while 35 percent of all black males believed that police brutality existed in their neighborhoods, only 7 percent of all white males felt that this was true in white communities. A 1964 New York Times study reported that 43 percent of Harlem's residents believed that police behaved brutally in their area (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968a:302). Walker and Richardson (1974:12) report on two studies: one in Washington that showed that over half of all blacks, but only one-quarter of all whites thought that "many police enjoy giving people a hard time;" the other study, conducted statewide in North Carolina, found that blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to report that they were dissatisfied with police encounters (27.3 to 13.0 percent).

Similarly, Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969:111-112) report that in Denver blacks were over three times more likely than whites to rate the performance of the police as bad, while whites were over twice as likely to rate police performance as excellent. While three-quarters of the whites in their study thought that the police were usually or always fair, less than half of the blacks agreed. A survey done by Jacob (1971:73) in three Milwaukee neighborhoods (black, white working class, and white middle class) generated the statistically significant findings that

blacks perceived the police as more corrupt, more unfair, less intelligent, lazier, more cruel, more unfriendly and more excitable (as opposed to calm) than whites in either of the other two neighborhoods. Although differences did emerge between the two white neighborhoods, they were more similar to each other than to the black neighborhood.

With regard to the alleged causes of civil disorders, black and white views are likewise highly discrepant. A Louis Harris national survey (Newsweek, August 21, 1967) showed that while blacks felt two to one that police brutality was a major cause of the urban civil disorders, whites rejected this proposition by an eight-to-one margin. Only 16 percent of all whites agreed that police brutality toward blacks even existed. Similarly, when Bayley and Mendelsohn (1969:140-141) asked their Denver sample about the primary cause of riots and violence among minority people, police brutality and harassment was the second most important reason chosen by blacks, but the least important one chosen by whites. Thirty-five percent of the whites blamed the riots on outside agitators, Communists and troublemakers, while 36 percent of the blacks blamed them on general discrimination and unequal treatment. "With respect to the police," they conclude, "minority and majority people live in completely different worlds."

It is important to note that this separate black reality with regard to the police encompasses the entire black community. The black elite as well as the black masses are hostile to the police. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice(1967b) in its Task Force Report on the Police lists a dozen different studies which confirm the discrepancy in black versus white attitudes toward the police--and the fact that these views are shared by all strata of

the black community (including black police officers--a fact to which I will return later). Bayley and Mendolsohn (1969:115) illustrate the salience of racial identification over social status in their finding that blacks in Denver with college educations were almost as likely to be stopped and arrested by police as blacks with only eighth-grade educations.

It is little wonder, then, that Burton Levy (1965:264) concludes that "the black community, from top to bottom, is angry about what they call mistreatment by police, from verbal abuse to physical brutality." Robert Wintersmith's (1974:90-95) study provides an interesting illustration of this point. He interviewed 33 blacks from 11 black organizations in an unidentified "average size" city. The organizations ranged from militant to conservative. At least one person from every organization volunteered the following words in answer to the question "What do police do in your community?"

Vigilantes	Corrupt	Harassers
Occupational army	Brutalizers	Enemy
Colonizers	Intimidators	Authoritarians

All of the organizations had discussed police practices, and thirty of the thirty-three respondents believed that police officers would not stop harrassment and intimidation of blacks even if they thought their superiors would find out because superiors encourage or permit it. In sum, said Wintersmith, "it is clear that the study population believed that the style of police behavior is motivated and determined by the race of the suspect confronted."

The difference between black and white perceptions of the police is not simply one of <u>attitudes</u>, however, as many conventional social scientists would have it. There is a great deal of evidence to indicate

that police behavior in black and white communities differs significantly.[19] For instance, in its first investigation of Northern ghetto life, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found in a study of Cleveland in 1966 that police responded more slowly to calls for assistance in black neighborhoods than they did in white neighborhoods for every crime category. In the case of robberies, for example, the response time in black communities was over four times as long. The Commission concluded that black residents in Cleveland were "often arrested without a warrant, without probable cause, and without an offense being committed in the presence of the police officer, and are detained for as long as 72 hours under a nonexistent charge known as 'investigation' which makes them ineligible for bond" (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:82).

Similarly, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968b:42-43) reported that a sample of respondents in fifteen Northern cities showed that blacks were two to four times more likely than whites to report slow police response, insulting police behavior, and police harassment and brutality. Between 28 and 41 percent of the blacks were directly aware of police misbehavior in their communities (through personal experience or the experience of someone they knew), while only 8 to 18 percent of the whites had this direct knowledge.[20]

In their survey of Denver Bayley and Mendelsohn found that 23 percent of the blacks reported unfriendly or prejudiced police treatment, while only 4 percent of the whites had experienced this. The Washington survey reported by Walker and Richardson (1974:12) found that 10 percent of all black males, and zero percent of all white males had actually witnessed unjustified police use of violence. Even more revealing is the finding that fully half of all black youth in Watts in 1966 had

witnessed police brutality in their community (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968a:302).

What is the source of this differential police behavior in the black community? The answer is to be found in an examination of the two basic functions of the police discussed in the previous chapter: (1) the enforcement of criminal laws, and (2) the maintenance of public order.

With regard to their role in crime control, Nicholas Alex (1969: 8) observes that the police "serve as a buffer. Their job is not only to inhibit and minimize crime, but also in part to contain crime within an area where it is less likely to be a threat to the person or property of the dominant groups in the society." The area within which crime is contained is the turf of the black internal colony.

There are several reasons for this. First, the economic and political dependence of the black relative surplus population makes it difficult for them to resist the containment of crime within their neighborhoods. Second, this same dependence itself generates crime within the internal colony.[21] Lack of access to, and the resources to participate in, legitimate economic institutions forces blacks to turn to an illegal "irregular economy" of underground goods and services. It also opens the door to the unscrupulous dealings of white-controlled organized crime, which further drains the black community of resources (see Fusfeld, 1973:34-40).

Third, the structural pressures upon the police department, coupled with the personal backgrounds, prejudices and experiences of police officers lead them to define blacks as somehow outside of the law and legal entitlements. Thus they tend to overlook or fail to take

seriously crimes committed against blacks, particularly if they are committed by other blacks (see Reiss and Bordua, 1967:31; J.Q. Wilson, 1968:157ff). The result is that blacks are more likely to be victims of crimes than are whites. With regard to homicide, for example, blacks are seven times more likely to be victimized than whites (Beaubien, 1979:9).

Fourth, the police themselves benefit from the existence of crime in the black internal colony and thus have incentives, not to control or eliminate it, but to protect and manipulate it. This is true not only of organized crime, which the police allow, and often encourage, through a system of payoffs and illegal entrepreneurship (Greer, 1979: 123-124), but of all types of petty crime as well. Staples (1976:226) puts it this way:

> Many white officers covet assignments in the Black community because it is financially lucrative. They find it easier to collect extortion money from petty ghetto criminals and are less likely to be detected, investigated, or convicted since Blacks believe it to be futile to report corrupt police officers. They also have a greater opportunity to receive outstanding merit citations based on the number of arrests they make or crimes that they solve. These awards allow them to achieve more rapid promotion, greater authority, and higher salaries.

Moreover, the police as an institution require the black ghetto and its crime--and its crime statistics--to justify their existence and growth as a bureaucratic organization (Cooper, 1980:50-51).

The role that the black relative surplus population plays in the U.S. political economy is so crucial that it must be maintained at all costs. This means that the police function of maintaining public order becomes in the internal colony that of controlling the black population.[22] Blacks are subject to control not only as workers, but as superexploited <u>black</u> workers. Control of the black internal colony takes place through

a variety of legal and other mechanisms, in which the police act as the agents of the bureaucratic state.[23] Perhaps more significant, however are the quasi-legal and illegal mechanisms of control involving force and violence through which the police actively repress the black community.

Greer (1979:243) suggests that police brutality, or the illegal use of force by the police, takes three basic forms: (1) the use of force against an individual for whom there is no legal basis for making an arrest (e.g., harassment); (2) summary physical punishment after an arrest; and (3) the use of substantially more force than is required to make a lawful arrest. In order to control and intimidate the black population, it is not necessary that these techniques be used on every black person the police encounter; it is only necessary that they be used often enough to remind every black person of their place and the importance of staying in it.[24]

That the police do engage in brutal behavior toward blacks, and that this behavior is differentially directed at blacks, seems unquestionably true. Stark (1972:77) estimates that at least one million blacks in the U.S. have been physically mistreated by the police. In a study of seven major U.S. cities during 1973-74, Milton et al. (1977: 19) found that almost 80 percent of all civilians shot by the police (both fatally and non-fatally) were black. A 1972 study concluded that a black person in Chicago was over six times as likely as a white person to be killed by the police (Platt and Cooper, 1974:166). And the Editors of Crime and Social Justice (1977:34) report that, controlling for relative population size, on a national basis blacks have been killed by the police in recent years at a rate nine to ten times higher

than whites.[25]

Not only does this actual use of violence by the police intimidate the black community, but what adds to the intimidation is the black community's knowledge that the police are free to use it at will. In a study funded by the Police Foundation, Milton et al. (1977:28) reported that eighty to more than ninety percent of all police shootings of citizens in the seven cities surveyed were either found to be justified by the police departments involved or at least resulted in no punishment of police personnel. Incidents not considered to be justified were punished with a reprimand, rather than a suspension or termination. The authors conclude that "department discipline in shooting cases seems lenient if not perfunctory in many cities. Apparent violations of both the letter and the spirit of department policies have been condoned either by outright justification or by extremely mild discipline" (Milton, et al., 1977:81).

The control of the black population by the police goes beyond personal and collective intimidation. Blacks are geographically controlled as well. There is an unspoken apartheid in our major metropolitan areas that confines blacks to their internal colony in the central city. And while the police did not create this situation, they play a crucial role in maintaining it. Thus, "public order" comes to mean a control of black movement in space.[26] Reiss (1968:14) provides a rather dramatic--but far from unusual--example of the police use of illegal violence to enforce the geography of the internal colony. This incident was recorded by a ride-along observer in a major U.S. city:

> Shortly after 10 p.m., a white man and a woman in their 50s flagged [the two white police officers] down. Since they were obviously "substantial" middle-class citizens of the district, the policemen listened to their complaints that a

> Negro man was causing trouble inside the public transport station from which they had just emerged. The woman said that he had sworn at her. The older policeman remarked, "What's a nigger doing up here? He should be down on Franklin Road!" With that, they ran into the station and grabbed the Negro man who was inside. Without questioning him, they shoved him into a phone booth and began beating him with their fists and a flashlight. They also hit him in the groin. Then they dragged him out and kept him on his knees. He pleaded that he had just been released from a mental hospital that day and, begging not to be hit again, asked them to let him return to the hospital. One policeman said: "Don't you like us, nigger? I like to beat niggers and rip out their eyes." They took him outside to their patrol car. Then they decided to put him on a bus, telling him that he was returning to the hospital; they deliberately put him on a bus going in the opposite direction. Just before the Negro boarded the bus, he said, "You police just like to shoot and beat people." The first policeman replied, "Get moving, nigger, or I'll shoot you." The man was crying and bleeding as he was put on the bus. Leaving the scene, the younger policeman commented, "He won't be back."

This incident, besides showing the police perception of the need to control the movement of blacks in the city, clearly illustrates the techniques by which the police administer and maintain the internal colony: actual violence, the threat of violence, and racial degradation. We have already seen the ways in which violence and the threat of violence are used to control the black population. I will now examine the issue of police racism.

Studies of police attitudes, says Skolnick (1969:242), reveal unanimity in findings on this point: the majority of rank and file policemen are hostile toward black people. In a study of over 600 police officers in three major cities in the mid-1960s, Albert Reiss found that over three-quarters of the white officers working in predominantly black neighborhoods had voluntarily expressed, in front of identified observers, "prejudiced" or "highly prejudiced" attitudes toward blacks. Only one percent of the officers expressed attitudes

which could be described as sympathetic to blacks (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968a:305-306; Moss, 1977:2).

Skolnick's own study of an urban police department revealed that a negative attitude toward blacks "was a norm. If a policeman did not subscribe to it, unless Negro himself, he would be somewhat resented by his fellows." While these police officers would deny that they were racially biased, they would admit that--for self-defined legitimate reasons--they hated blacks (Skolnick, 1966:80-86). Finally, the Los Angeles Police around the time of the Watts uprising affectionately referred to their nightsticks and riot batons as "nigger knockers" and regularly greeted one another with the old Lucky Strike slogan "L.S.M.F.T.," which in its new guise meant "Let's shoot a motherfucker tonight."

All of this is not new. It appears to go back at least as far as the early post World War II period when the black internal colonies were taking shape in metropolitan areas. William Westley, who did a survey of the police at that time, reported that "no white policeman with whom the author has had contact failed to mock the Negro, to use some type of stereotyped categorization, and to refer to interaction with the Negro in an exaggerated dialect, when the subject arose" (quoted in Skolnick, 1969:243).

White police, along with some social analysts, attempt to explain the antipathy that they have for blacks by pointing to the hostility which blacks direct at the police. "When somebody hates you," one white officer told Skolnick (1966:81). "you get to hate them." Similarly, a young California police officer who was also a graduate student at a local university told Bent and Rossum (1976:240) this story:

> I was a college graduate before I joined the department . . . . All through the Academy I couldn't wait to get out on the

> street to make certain that all of the people got even-handed treatment. I was really eager to right all the wrongs in society. But, being on the streets changed all that . . . . The hatred, the unreasoning hostility that blacks hold for police changed that . . . . They have a wall between themselves and us. There's just no getting through . . . . They would just as soon see you dead than doing your job. You should see the hatred . . . . They insult you and taunt you and threaten you. You take your life in your hands to be out there.

Again, two-thirds of the police officers interviewed by Werthman and Piliavin (1967:88) admitted to being prejudiced against blacks, but argued that they had become so in the course of their work. The reasons they gave included lack of respect among blacks for the law and the police, and a perceived lack of interest among blacks in school, jobs, and social mobility.

What is the real source of the racism of white police? In part they bring it to the job with them as an artifact of living in a society where race is an important basis of social oppression. And, given that white police are generally drawn from an upper fraction of the working class, one that most likely benefits from the caste resolution of the split labor market, racism no doubt expresses the immediate material occupational interests of white police officers. Finally, while the white police undoubtedly receive verbal abuse and hostility from the black community, it is <u>as a result of a policing system based on upholding racial as well as class oppression</u>.

The black community reacts to the white police as to an occupying army. The police are invaders in black territory; they are outsiders; their role is one of repression, oppression and control. James Baldwin (1962:65-67) brilliantly captures the objective reality of the police role in the internal colony:

> The only way to police a ghetto is to be oppressive. None of the Police Commissioner's men, even with the best will in the world, have any way of understanding the lives led by the people; they swagger about in twos and threes patrolling. Their very presence is an insult, and it would be, even if they spent their entire day feeding gumdrops to children. They represent the force of the white world, and that world's real intentions are, simply, for that world's criminal profit and ease, to keep the black man corralled up here, in his place. The badge, the gun in the holster, and the swinging club, make vivid what will happen should his rebellion become overt . . . . It is hard, on the other hand, to blame the policeman, blank, good-natured, thoughtless, and insuperably innocent, for being such a perfect representative of the people he serves. He, too, believes in good intentions and is astounded and offended when they are not taken for the deed. He has never, himself, done anything for which to be hated--which of us has? And yet he is facing, daily and nightly, the people who would gladly see him dead, and he knows it. There is no way for him not to know it. There are few things under heaven more unnerving than the silent, accumulating contempt and hatred of a people. He moves through Harlem, therefore, like an occupying soldier in a bitterly hostile country; which is precisely what, and where he is, and is the reason he walks in twos and threes.

Yet, despite this hostility to the white police, the black community has a real need for policing functions. As noted earlier, crime is rampant in black neighborhoods and provokes a demand for protection. Moreover, because services--both public and private--are generally so poor in black neighborhoods, the police, because they are always there, become the fallback agency for a myriad of needed family, health, social and personal services (Cooper, 1980:84-85).

At the same time, the racism and hostility of the white police make it difficult for them to provide these services. This in turn undermines the legitimacy of the police institution. Police departments have generally responded to this problem by (1) providing human relations and sensitivity training to white police officers, and (2) developing community relations units to hear neighborhood complaints. Neither of these two strategies has been particularly effective.

White officers have widely resisted and refused to take seriously attempts at sensitivity training. And police/community relations units, as noted in the previous chapter, have typically been more involved in public relations and promotion of the official department point of view than in providing a forum for community input.

The failure, or at least the ineffectiveness of these strategies has led police administrators to the adoption of a third strategy: the recruitment of black police officers. This strategy became particularly urgent after the urban civil disorders of the mid-1960s, in which police behavior in the black community was almost universally a significant precipitating cause. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968a:315) in its policy recommendations, remarked that

> for police in a Negro community to be predominantly white can serve as a dangerous irritant; a feeling may develop that the community is not being policed to maintain civil peace but to maintain the status quo. [The Commission] further found that contact with Negro officers can help to avoid stereotypes and prejudices in the minds of white officers. Negro officers also can increase departmental insight into ghetto problems, and provide information necessary for early anticipation of the tensions and grievances that can lead to disorders.

From the point of view of policymakers, then, the hiring of black police represents a way to reestablish the legitimacy of the police institution among blacks. From the point of view of the black community, more black police offers the possibility of more humane and responsible policing of their neighborhoods. Whether or not this possibility is actualized depends primarily upon two things: the administrative orientation of the police department as a whole, which I will discuss in the next chapter, and the differential attitudes, behavior and orientation of black police officers, an issue to which I now turn.

Black Police: A Different Breed?

Are black police officers significantly different from their white counterparts? Accumulating evidence indicates that indeed they are, and in ways which have significant impact on policing in the black community. First of all, the class background of black police officers differs from that of white officers. Unlike white police applicants, who tend to be drawn from an upper fraction of the working class, black police prospects emerge not only from the lower levels of the industrial proletariat, but from the marginal reserve army as well. Again in contrast to whites, very few black applicants come from police families. Thus the background of black officers is far less privileged than that of white officers (Greer, 1978).

Moreover, black police tend to be less committed to the police institution and the ideology of policing than white police. The vast majority of black police officers interviewed by Alex (1969:38-46), for instance, selected police work as only one possibility among many other civil service jobs. Their goal was not police work per se, but the benefits (financial and relative lack of discrimination) of a civil service job. They told Alex that if they had had all the opportunities of whites, they definitely would not be police officers. This lack of primary commitment to the job makes black police less vulnerable to the ideology of policing and orients them more toward the black community.

The differences between black and white police, particularly in their relationship to the black community, are clearly illustrated in a study done for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968b: 104-114). The researchers interviewed 437 police officers--one quarter of them black--in eleven different cities. All of the officers worked

in predominantly black neighborhoods. The researchers found that white police officers were twice as likely as black officers to feel that the community perceived them as enemies, in spite of the fact that ninety-five percent of the white officers believed that blacks are treated equally or better than other groups by the police. On the other hand, more than half of the black officers felt that the black community was treated less well than the white community by both police and public officials.

With regard to the causes of civil disorders, one-half of the white police interviewed blamed them on faults within the black community (disrespect for the law, broken families, susceptibility to militant agitators, etc.) and only one-fifth blamed the disturbances on the system (poverty, unemployment, poor housing and schools, etc.). Just the reverse was true for the black officers, with fifty-four percent blaming the system and twenty-four percent blaming the victims. Furthermore, black police were twice as likely as their white counterparts to believe that the disorders were caused by lack of attention to complaints from the black community (52 percent of all black officers), and six times more likely than white officers to feel that police brutality was a factor (25 percent of all black officers). Conversely, one-third of the white officers, but only eleven percent of the black, believed that a subculture of violence and disrespect among blacks contributed to the disturbances.

But the most significant difference between black and white police officers was in their relationship to the patrol neighborhood. Black police were one and a half to three times less likely to be isolated from various social groups (shop owners, residents in general, community leaders, teenage and youth leaders, etc.) in their patrol areas than

white police, with the notable exceptions of "organized crime figures" and "continual trouble makers." Isolation meant that the officer didn't know anyone from these groups well enough to stop and have a casual conversation with them.

Overall, black police were three times more likely than their white counterparts to live in their patrol neighborhood (37 percent of all black officers did so), four times more likely to have relatives living in their work area (56 percent of all black officers), five times more likely to socialize "a lot" with friends from the patrol neighborhood (30 percent of all black officers), and more than twice as likely as white officers to attend meetings in their work neighborhood (37 percent of all black officers did so.)

Harlan Hahn (1971:459) pulls together evidence from a number of other studies which confirm these differences between black and white police officers. Studies of officers who worked in the black ghettoes of Boston, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. found that forty-one percent of the black police, but only twenty-six percent of the white police said that they liked their assignments because they knew the people well. Eighty percent of the black police, but only forty-eight percent of the whites, claimed that it was easy to get to know people on their beats. And while seventy-eight percent of the black officers had received complaints regarding police practices from people on their beats, only forty-six percent of white officers made this claim.

Although lack of public support was the most common complaint about police work in ghetto neighborhoods, most officers--black as well as white--stated that they would not prefer to be transferred. The reasoning behind this, however, differed by race. The largest proportion of

of black officers cited their familiarity with local residents as the aspect of their current assignment that they liked most. A plurality of white officers, on the other hand, said they liked their current patrols because they were "active."

Similarly, Alex (1969:46-48; 78-81) found that the black officers he interviewed were highly community-and service-oriented. They downplayed the law enforcement and dramatic, shoot-em-up role of the police in favor of community service. They defined good cops as good people who wished to serve the community in which they worked. This flies in the face of those arguments which suggest that, in order to prove themselves in a white institution, black police must necessarily be more brutal toward blacks.

The real, community-oriented perspective of black police officers is perhaps best summed up by Officers for Justice, a black San Francisco police organization:

> We will no longer permit outselves to be relegated to the role of brutal pawns in a chess game, affecting the communities in which we serve. We are husbands, fathers, brothers, neighbors and members of the black community. Donning the blue uniform has not changed this. On the contrary, it has sharpened our perception of our responsibilities as black males in a society seemingly unresponsive to the needs of black people. We see our role as the role of a protector of this community, and this is the role we intend to fulfill.

What emerges from these findings is the unmistakable impression that there are two levels of reality in contemporary urban police departments--a white reality and a black reality. These levels of reality encompass different conceptions of policing as well as a different relationship to the black community. Furthermore, as Teahan's (1972) interviews make clear, although black officers seem quite aware of the two realities, white officers seem only to be aware of their own

reality, and to assume that it is shared by all.

The separate reality of black police officers is reinforced by their experience within the department. First, there is the overt racial hostility of white officers. Juris and Feuille (1973:171), for instance, report that "every one of our black officer interviewees from several different cities related incidents of racial abuse by white colleagues." And the newsletter of the Guardians of Michigan, a black police organization, stated that "it is common knowledge among veteran black police officers that the climate at most police precincts is not conducive to the occupational growth of young uniformed black patrolmen or black uniformed supervisory officers below the rank of inspector" (quoted in Fink and Sealy, 1974:131).

This statement points to the second problem faced by black officers within the department: institutional discrimination in promotions and discipline.[27] Police promotions are largely based on knowing someone at a higher level in the system who is willing to act as a sponsor (Baldwin, 1977:110-113; McNamara, 1967). Black patrol officers are likely to be outside of this system, due to a lack of blacks in higher positions and the unwillingness of white officers to sponsor them.

But discrimination runs deeper than this. In a study of the New York Police Department, Cohen and Chaiken (1972:1-25) found that black and white police officers did not differ significantly on I.Q. or civil service exam scores, the number and type of jobs prior to becoming an officer, or in the number of previous arrests or summonses. The only significant difference was in favor of blacks: they were twice as likely as white officers to have attended college for at least one year.

Nevertheless, blacks did not progress through the ranks as well as

whites. After fourteen years, only six percent of black officers were lieutenants and sergeants as compared to fifteen percent of white officers. And while a high score on the initial civil service exam was a good predictor of subsequent promotion for white officers, this was not true for blacks. The reason for this phenomenon lay in the differential evaluation of the officers. Despite the fact that there were no significant differences in background characteristics between white and black officers, the departmental background investigator had given blacks lower ratings than whites. And black officers accumulated sixty-five percent more departmental disciplinary charges than whites, in spite of the fact that there was no racial difference in numbers of civilian complaints, allegations of harassment, or criminal charges.

A third problem faced by black police officers is departmental suspicion of them and their loyalties. The class background of the vast majority of black officers makes them immediately suspect. Add to this their racial identification with the oppressed black community and their advocacy of a more community-oriented style of policing and blacks become for many white police officers enemy infiltrators with the department. Thus black police are patronized within the department, and treated as unworthy to be trusted with full police authority and responsibility.

Because of this, and because of the oppressive way the black internal colony is policed, black officers frequently express fear for their lives at the hands of their white colleagues. This is especially true when out of uniform. Blacks know that a black with a gun is automatically assumed to be a criminal unless otherwise proven. And, given the "shoot first, ask questions later" way in which black neighborhoods

are patrolled, black officers fear that they will be shot by fellow officers before they can identify themselves. This happens often enough to make it more than an idle fear (see Cooper, 1980:118-119)

Black police have responded militantly to these difficulties. But rather than protest these conditions within the department on an individual basis, as in the past, black officers have recently been forming militant black police organizations which are oriented to the black community. In a 1971 study, Juris and Feuille (1973:165-175) found black officer associations in almost every city with more than twenty-five to thirty black officers. All of them were militant, whether they had evolved from earlier social-fraternal organizations or whether they had been founded specifically to deal with racial discrimination.

These black police associations were found to have two main areas of concern: relations between black and white police within the department, and the relationship between the police department and the black community. In the first area they addressed discrimination in hiring, promotion, and job assignment, unjust discipline, and the personal prejudice and hostility of white officers. In the second area the black officer associations were concerned with efforts to recruit black officers, protesting mistreatment of black prisoners, offering assistance to black citizens in filing complaints against the police, sponsoring social, athletic and recreational programs for black youth, and forming alliances with black activist groups within their city. A similar survey by Burpo (1971:10) found essentially the same outlook among black police associations in major cities.

What, then, are the implications of substantial numbers of black

officers policing the black internal colonies in large central cities? Greer (1979:131) argues that the effects are positive for the entire black community because these black police officers are inevitably oriented toward meeting the needs of that black community. He gives five reasons for this. First, black officers do not come from a privileged fraction of the working class. They are, as we have seen, from the mainstream of the black relative surplus population. Given their class background, and their lack of commitment to policing as a profession, black officers are less likely to be open to ideological manipulation designed to separate them from the community in order to maintain their fidelity.

Second, blacks are on the force as a result of their historical struggles as an oppressed group. Breakthroughs in the hiring (and promotion) of blacks came about as a result of the civil rights movement which generated political pressures for affirmative action. The necessity for this pressure is ongoing as third, blacks continue to suffer from racism and discrimination on the force. This fact serves as a constant reminder to all black officers that they are <u>black</u> and therefore less than equal. This in turn increases their identification with fellow blacks in the community. The head of the Afro-American Patrolman's League in Chicago expressed this view neatly when he recently remarked that "what the black policeman is beginning to get away from is that old thing of being a Tom. Before, we've always been the good mercenary in a colonial situation. Now we're saying we're black men first and policemen second" (quoted in Fink and Sealy, 1974:134).

Fourth, says Greer, the black police today are not tied in with the old ethnic political machine, as were their white ethnic predecessors.

Thus their opportunities for profiting from police work in the form of graft, bribes, and illegal payoffs are considerably lessened. Black officers are thus less likely to tolerate and manipulate crime in black neighborhoods. In addition, as we have seen, black police are very likely to live in the neighborhoods they patrol, thus acquiring a material interest in the prevention and control of crime in the internal colony.

A fifth reason given by Greer for greater identification by the black police with the black community is that the black ownership class is simply too small to coopt them. The absence of a significant black bourgeoisie means the absence of significant black property to protect. Moreoever, the barrier of racism dilutes identification with the white capitalist class and leaves the black police more open to serving the mass of black workers who own no property.

To Greer's five reasons I would add a sixth: Black police are more likely to identify with the outlook and needs of the black community because they continue to live there. When other generations of white ethnics became police officers, they reflected the newfound security and status of their jobs by moving to new neighborhoods, first within the city, and later in the suburbs. Due to racial discrimination in housing and the need to share in a unique racial culture, black police officers remain residents of central-city black neighborhoods. They are thus more in tune with the needs and desires of that community as a whole.

As street-level bureaucrats working in the black community, black police are unlikely to be threatened by their clientele in the same way that white police are. Black officers are less likely to develop those "working personalities" which perceive the community as a dangerous

jungle which must be constantly managed through intimidation and exhibitions of authority. Instead, black police perceive themselves as organically linked to the communities which they patrol.

The black community, in turn, generally feels positive about the black police. In Bayley and Mendelsohn's (1969:122) study of Denver, for example, only eight percent of all blacks surveyed lacked respect for the black police or saw them as traitors to their race. Seventy percent of the black community, on the other hand, thought that black police officers were doing a good job, had respect for the officers, and felt they were helping the cause of racial justice. Wintersmith (1974:105) found cautious but positive endorsement of the black police by the black community leaders he interviewed.

The identification of the black police with the outlook and needs of the black community and the reciprocal support of this community for the black police has been reflected in the greater effectiveness of black officers in black neighborhoods. Morton (1972:20) notes that "the new black cops identify with the black community and, unlike some of their predecessors (both black and white), they are not turning their heads away from the crime rampant there, but are working hard to provide the needed protection from it."

Preliminary evidence indicates that increased numbers of black police result in decreased crime rates in black neighborhoods (Greer, 1978:56). If this is so, it is probably due to greater citizen cooperation with the police. Black officers not only have better connections within the black community, they are likely to provoke less antagonism in obtaining cooperation. As Werthman and Piliavin (1967:68-69) and Reiss and Bordua (1967:40-48) both show, the police solve crimes, not

in classic detective-story fashion (i.e., by isolating a single suspect through logical deduction), but by matching "known" suspects with known crimes. To most white police, the entire black community is a pool of potential "known" suspects. Black police, however, are not so heavy-handed and make finer distinctions, thus provoking less hostility.

Another reason for the lessened hostility between the black police and the black community is the fact that black officers are not "outsiders" within it. As Werthman and Piliavin (1967:58ff) point out, the internal colony constitutes a "home territory" for blacks. That is, they consider all aspects of it to be their own, i.e., private, space. This includes even such apparently "public" places as streets and sidewalks. Thus the time-honored custom of "hanging out" can be understood as a way of laying claim to this territory. Invasion of any part of this "home territory" has all the psychological and social consequences of the invasion of a middle-class white person's home.[28] The presence of the white police is, of course, the most offensive intrusion of all. Black police, on the other hand, are not intruders; they are insiders too and can move relatively freely through this private space. Thus they can police it more effectively.

Morton (1972:25) provides an example of this effectiveness. After two sensational murders in the black community of Roxbury in 1969, the Boston Police Department created the "Soul Patrol"--an all-black thirty-four member force to patrol this neighborhood. In addition to patrolling, this special detail solved three "unsolved" murders and made almost 100 felony arrests in the first month-and-a-half--without firing a single shot. The potential threat that the success of the "Soul Patrol" posed, however, is illustrated by the fact that the Boston

Police Patrolmen's Association challenged the unit on the grounds that it (1) violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and (2) could lead to community control of the police.

This latter possibility would be desirable, of course, from the point of view of the black internal colony. But despite the fears of the white Boston police officers, this was one of the less likely possibilities. Other scenarios of the effect of an influx of black police onto the force and their deployment in the black community are far less optimistic.

It may be, for instance, that the effect of black police on the force is to increase the legitimacy of the police in black neighborhoods without changing their basically repressive mission. In the metaphor of the Center for Research on Criminal Justice(1977), this would represent a shift from the strategy of the Iron Fist to that of the Velvet Glove. Either way, the black community would remain under the thumb of oppression.

With this in mind, urban police departments have made serious attempts to recruit blacks to the force since the civil disorders of the 1960s. Indeed, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968:315) itself pointed to the importance of doing so when it concluded that black police officers "can be particularly effective in controlling any disorders that do break out."

Similarly, Alex (1969:23-31) notes that black police have lessened community hostility to the police department. One black nationalist told him that "the assignment of more Negro patrolmen to the Bedford-Stuyvesant area will go a long way to improve community relations with the police." Another civil rights leader reported that the recruitment

of black police had made a "dramatic difference" in the perception of the police in the black community. "It's more difficult for the inhabitants of Harlem to look upon the police as their enemy when he's the same color they are."

Moreover, some black police have been used as a means of obtaining otherwise-difficult intelligence information on the black community. After the Watts disorder in 1964, for example, the U.S. Justice Department realized that it did not have good intelligence on the black community. Thus it directed local police departments to get this information. Black undercover police officers were the primary means of accomplishing this task. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders applauded and recommended the intensification of this strategy (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:115).

Black police have, however, resisted being used to coopt, cool-out or spy on the black community. In Pittsburgh, for example, a black police group refused to participate in a campaign to recruit black police officers because, they said, they would not become "Judas goats," leading young blacks "to something that is totally against the very principles of decency and humanity for which we stand." Likewise, when the New York Police Department wanted to transfer some black undercover narcotics officers to political surveillance, the officers resisted. The president of the black police officers group protested the department's request, then made the incident public. "It is my job," he said, "to inform my community of what's going on in the police department. And I'll take my chances with any disciplinary action that may come as a result of it." (Morton, 1972:24-25)

Given this orientation to the black community, black police officers

are bound to come into conflict with a police administration bent on the traditional repression of the black internal colonies. In a crisis, these black officers may prove "unreliable," i.e., unwilling to act against fellow blacks. Thus there is concern among some police administrators about having too many black officers on the force.[29]

On the other hand, black police may be in a position to benefit the black community by providing needed protection and circumventing or refusing to implement oppressive laws and regulations. The potential significance of these acts is illustrated by the positive supporting role placed by disaffected Portuguese troops during the revolutions in Angola and Mozambique. But, short of a revolution in the black internal colonies, the supportive role that black police can play is likely to be dictated and circumscribed by the administration of the police department and, even more importantly, by the local city political administration. What happens if these administrators and politicians are black as well? It is to this issue that I now turn.

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[1]The analysis which follows, especially that of exploitation and discrimination, relies heavily on the already-mentioned work of Hill (1977).

[2]Blauner (172:22) defines a racist society as follows:

> Systematic inequality and systematic injustice are built into the very nature of stratified societies. But when these inequities and injustices fall most heavily upon people who differ in color or national origin because race and ethnicity are primary principles upon which people are excluded or blocked in the pursuit of their goals, such a society is in addition racist.

[3]This contrasts with the traditional view of American sociology, which has most frequently looked at race and racial conflict as an aberration, or as Blauner (1972:6) puts it, as "epiphenomenal and ephemeral."

[4]Social analysts of widely varying political orientation have disagreed, suggesting that either race or class should really be subsumed under the rubric of the other concept. For example, Banfield (1970), a conservative, argues that race is really a phenomenon of class behavior which is obscured by skin color. Szymanski (1975) and Winston (1977) are examples of leftists who believe that racial oppression can be understood entirely within the framework of class.

[5]In 1900, over 90 percent of the 8.8 million blacks in the U.S. lived in the South. Of these, over 80 percent were rural tenant farmers, sharecroppers and farm laborers (C.H. Hamilton, 1964). In 1910, 89 percent of all blacks were still Southerners; by 1920 outmigration had doubled to approximately 50,000 per year. These blacks headed to the industrial cities of the North: Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, New York (Baron, 1971:20). By 1940, half of the total black population

was urbanized. In the 1950s and 60s the flood reached high tide as nearly two and a quarter million blacks left the South. Today nearly 9 out of every 10 blacks live in urban areas, a figure much higher than that for whites. Moreover, 75 percent of all blacks live in metropolitan areas, and 58 percent in central cities, as compared to 67 percent and 25 percent of whites, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978).

[6]Strikes during the war years of 1916-1918 averaged 2.4 times as many workers per strike than those in 1915. The year 1919 saw strikes in every major industry, including bitterly contested battles in coal, railroads and steel, and culminating in the famous Boston police strike and the Seattle General Strike in which the entire local economy was shut down and then run by the unions (Brecher, 1972:101-143).

[7]Between 1915 and 1919 eighteen major race riots occurred (Rudwick, 1964:3). Typically, these riots took the form of massacres of ghetto blacks by whites. In nearly all cases, relatively defenseless blacks were beaten by marauding bands of whites while legal authorities stood by and watched or actively participated by disarming and arresting blacks (Rubenstein, 1970:117-118). The year 1919 saw 25 major race riots in its first 6 months alone. Black poet James Weldon Johnson called the middle of the year "The Red Summer" because of all the blood that flowed in racial confrontations (Grant, 1968:177). The most serious and deadly riots occurred in Washington, D.C.; Omaha, Nebraska; Charleston, South Carolina; Longview, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; and Knoxville, Tennessee. In each case whites "invaded" black territory in an effort to drive them out of the area. The whites were generally met with armed resistance, either in bloody confrontations or through

sniping. Eventually, however, the blacks were overwhelmed by superior forces of white violence. Severe reprisals were carried out against blacks who had defended themselves. Other major racial confrontations occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921; Harlem in 1935 and 1943; and Detroit in 1943 (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968a: 217-224).

[8]For an excellent discussion of the ethnic hierarchy in production and its historical development, see Aronowitz (1973:338-345). Blauner (1972:51-81) provides an extended discussion of the important differences between colonized and immigrant minorities. Finally Rex (1973:154-156) discusses the unfree status of colored labor when it migrates to and is incorporated within the metropolitan economy.

[9]As evidence of this assertion, observe that official black unemployment rates are consistently double those of whites (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978). And in an examination of the U.S. Census data from 1890 to 1960, Richard Freeman (1972) found that, although the overall occupational distribution had shifted markedly during this period, the relative concentration of black males in the lowest-paid occupations had changed very little.

[10]Baron and Hymer (1972) illustrate this phenomenon in a classic study of the Chicago labor market.

[11]In a study of imperialism, Amin (1980) notes that the ratio of productivity to wages is far higher in the periphery than in the center, and thus workers in the periphery are superexploited. Conceptually, this fits in with the logic of internal colonialism laid out here. Boggs (1970:155), summing up much of my argument to this point, argues

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that superexploitation of black workers is a result of their "scavenger role" in production, a role forced upon them by both white workers and capitalists:

> As blacks began to move into the cities in this country, white workers acted as the principal human agent assisting American capitalism to counteract the fundamental contradiction between constantly advancing technology and the need to maintain the value of existing plant. They have done so by collectively and often forcibly restricting blacks to technologically less advanced industries or to what is known as "common labor" inside the modern plant or in construction . . . . This is the scavenger role in production which white workers, acting consciously on behalf of their own social mobility and unconsciously on behalf of constantly advancing capitalism, have assigned to blacks and other colored peoples.

[12]This view is in sharp contrast with those of writers like Wilhelm (1970) Yette (1971) and Cooper (1980). Each of them argues that blacks are no longer important to the U.S. economy; indeed, they say blacks are today superfluous. Wilhelm and Yette therefore present black genocide as a real possibility. Cooper (1980:61-78) calls the black ghetto a "social wastebasket" and an "institutional scrapheap where society can junk its human throwaways." I have tried to show, on the contrary, that the black internal colony is absolutely central to the capital accumulation process in the U.S.

[13]For a succinct analysis of this process of suburbanization, see Gordon (1978) and Ashton (1978). For a look at the racial dimensions, see Hill (1978).

[14]According to Geschwender (1978:260), three-fourths of all black males are blue collar workers, and three-fifths of all black men are employed in blue collar manufacturing jobs.

[15]This discussion of the history of black entrepreneurship is based

on Ofari (1970:11-48) and Staples (1976:185-187).

[16]The U.S. Bureau of the Census (1978:75) report concludes that "Despite increases in black entrepreneurship during the period 1969 to 1972, black-owned firms remained a marginal sector of the business community in every industry." Only two-tenths of one percent of black businesses fall outside of the Small Business Administration's definition of "small business" and the combined receipts of the 347 remaining "large" black businesses "would only place 143rd on Fortune magazine's list of the 500 largest industrial corporations in 1971." (Browne, 1973:106)

[17]Unless otherwise indicated, all of the figures in the next several paragraphs are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1978).

[18]Berkey and Hill (1976:17-18) did not find this to be so. However, their data only runs up to 1974 and the impact of capitalism's continuing world crisis and stagnation has increased its disproportionate effects on blacks significantly since then. For example, since the 1975 recession the number of poor black families has increased by 124,000 while the number of poor white families has decreased by 298,000 (Beaubien, 1979:7).

[19]Herbert Jacob (1971) provides a good example of the failings of liberal analysis. He compares black/white interactions with the police and concludes that blacks do not have significantly greater interaction with the police than whites, ignoring the differing types of contacts (call for help, auto accident, traffic ticket vs. being arrested or stopped) which his own data shows. Although he does admit "blacks appear to have most contacts in which they are severely threatened or sanctioned (i.e., arrests) . . . such circumstances also surround many of the

contacts of working-class whites" (75). Again he ignores the nature of the interaction (e.g. whether it involves brutality/abuse) to focus on the nominal categories only. He suggests that the bad reputation/ perception of police in black neighborhoods is due to a "neighborhood culture" in which bad experiences with the police are well known and thus cause even those who are satisfied with the police to rank them lower than in other neighborhoods. Thus "neighborhood culture" comes to substitute for actual police behavior.

[20]The specific findings are summarized in the following table (in percents):

Type of Police Behavior	Directly Aware of Police Misbehavior		Don't Think It Happens In Their Neighborhood	
	Black	White	Black	White
Brutality	28	8	41	78
Unnecessary searches	37	11	41	75
Insulting language	41	18	33	75
Slow response	58	32	33	60

Source: Adapted from National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1967b:42-43).

[21]It is no accident, then, that the U.S., with its heavy dependence upon the superexploitation of Third World people--especially in the core central cities--has higher crime rates than any of the other developed capitalist countries (see Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977: 15). To paraphrase Lord Action, "powerlessness corrupts, and absolute powerlessness corrupts absolutely."

[22]Blauner (1972:22) observes in this respect that "the various forms of social oppression all involve exploitation and control. To generate privilege, certain people have to be exploited, and to be exploited they must be controlled--directly or indirectly. The mechanisms of control,

ranging from force and violence to legal restrictions to cultural beliefs, ideologies, and modes of socio-economic integration, are therefore central to an understanding of oppression."

[23]For example: one mechanism of legal control by which the police reproduce the internal colony is through establishing arrest records for black youth, thereby "branding" them in the labor market and consigning them to low-wage marginal jobs which are nevertheless centrally important to the economy.

[24]Thus it is not strictly the statistical frequency of violent repression which is important, but the recognized and acknowledged capacity of the police to exercise these powers which results in intimidation and control (Editors of Crime and Social Justice, 1977:42). That this message come across loud and clear to all levels of the black community is illustrated by Wintersmith's (1974:95-96) finding that his respondents, regardless of their expressed militancy or conservatism, were unanimous in believing that the police are not in the black community to deter crime, to apprehend criminals, to protect and be of assistance to the black citizenry, but rather to control, to contain, to "keep niggers in their place," and to protect white-owned property and businesses. "In other words," he concludes, "while the study population both fear and despise crime and the criminal, they perhaps fear and despise the police and their behavior even more."

[25]Statistics on civilians killed or injured by the police are hard to obtain, as even a Police Foundation-funded study discovered (Milton et al., 1977:4). The FBI collects these figures by city but does not make this information public.

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[26]The earliest form of police action designed to control black movement was the establishment of slave patrols in the Old South. Police harassment of blacks who are discovered in white neighborhoods today recalls this (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:20-21). The movement of blacks to the cities and their incorporation as wage laborers reduces the social distance between blacks and whites and potentially blurs the relationship of dominance and subordination within the metropolitan political economy. The black ghetto--and the formal and informal confinement of blacks within it--is one solution to this problem (see Rex, 1973:76-77).

[27]Although more blacks are being recruited onto the force, they are not getting into the command structure. Greer (1978:54) reports that in 1975 only 61 of 1200 sergeants in Detroit were black, only 2 of 29 captains in Newark, and only 32 out of 268 officers of lieutenant rank and above in Washington, D.C were black.

[28]The effects of this invasion can be seen in the fact that the precipitating incident in nearly every civil disorder of the mid-1960s involved a confrontation between white police and black suspects within the black "home territory."

[29]This is analogous to the concern of national policymakers that there are too many blacks in the army, making those forces unreliable if they are called upon to invade a Third World (i.e., non-white) country (see Kelly, 1980).

CHAPTER THREE

BLACK POLITICS, BLACK MAYORS AND THE POLICE

U. S. Central Cities: Black People's Land?

In deomographic terms, large central cities in the U.S. are rapidly becoming--to paraphrase James Boggs--"the black people's land." Since the Second World War, large numbers of blacks have migrated into these cities at the same time that large numbers of whites were leaving them for the suburbs. The result is that today blacks are proportionately far more concentrated in central cities than whites. Over 55 percent of the total black population lives in large central cities while less than 25 percent of the white population does so. Approximately 42 percent of all whites live in suburbs, while just 5 percent of all blacks are found there. Thus, while blacks constitute just over 11 percent of the total U.S. population, they make up more than 27 percent of the central-city residents in large metropolitan areas (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978: 15, 171).

Furthermore, blacks tend to be concentrated in the largest central cities. More than one-third of the black population lives in the 25 largest U.S. cities, with nearly 20 percent of the total in just four major cities: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980:20-22). In cities with total populations larger than 250,000, blacks are now the majority in Washington, D.C. (where they are 75 percent of the total), Newark, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore,

and New Orleans. Blacks are very close to being a majority in St. Louis, Cleveland, and Birmingham, Alabama. And they are more than a third of the total population in Chicago, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Memphis, Oakland, and Baton Rouge (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977:seriatim).

This concentration of the black population in large central cities has led many liberal political commentators to suggest that, like the white ethnic groups that preceeded them, blacks will inevitably translate their population numbers into political clout.[1] As evidence that this process is underway, these analysts would point to the fact that the number of elected black officials increased from just 103 in 1964 to over 3500 in 1975; nearly half of these officeholders were municipal officials (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978:157-159). Even more dramatic, and perhaps more significant, they would argue, is the fact that blacks have been elected as mayor in seven major U.S. cities: Cleveland (Carl Stokes, 1967), Gary, Indiana (Richard Hatcher, 1967), Newark (Kenneth Gibson, 1970), Los Angeles (Thomas Bradley, 1973), Detroit (Coleman Young, 1973), Atlanta (Maynard Jackson, 1973), and New Orleans (Ernest Morial, 1978).[2]

Critics of this optimistic view point out that the statistics are deceiving. Despite their rapid increase, black officials still constitute less than one percent of all elected officials in the U.S. Moreover, less than 4 percent of these black officeholders are mayors and 77 percent of these mayors run cities of less than 25,000 people (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978:155-159). Even more significant, radical critics argue, is the stark reality that having elected black officials is not necessarily synonymous with having black political power. Piven and Cloward (1968:262-263) put it this way:

> The prospects for black urban power . . . . rest on the erroneous assumption that American politics are formed by voting numbers alone. The conventions of electoral politics are regularly subverted in many ways. Those already holding power will not yield the spoils of office quickly or easily to new majorities. Even when official representation is achieved, responsiveness by government requires a constituency capable of watching over and pressuring officials. To be sure, blacks will assume nominal power in the cities because of the sheer weight of their numbers; but compared to earlier groups, blacks have few organizational ropes to keep rein on their leaders.

Thus, for any group that aspires to political power in the American system, a distinction must be made between an electoral and a governing coalition, i.e., between the symbolic trappings of political power and the actual exercise of that power. But as Piven and Cloward note, because of their unique history of oppression and exploitation, blacks are structurally less able to convert the former to the latter. This means that they are unlikely to get the political system to pay off (i.e., provide tangible rewards and benefits) for them the way it did for earlier white ethnic groups. Curvin (1975:228-229) observes in this regard:

> The payoff, then, for Blacks in any city like Newark where a Black mayor has been elected will not be significant, for the election of a Black mayor is not a critical factor in and of itself. The most important factors are the inequality of Blacks shaped by a devasting experience and a dispersed system of power. Neither a Black mayor nor a Black majority can alter these factors. Thus the mobilization of bias--the flow and orientation of power--cannot be significantly changed simply because one group, however large, moved a man of its own into what appeared to be a position of power and promise.

Curvin here points to another factor which inhibits the ability of black mayors to deliver benefits to their constituents: the structural limitations of the power of the local state. The limits of local power are, of course, exaggerated when a black mayor must operate in a larger political environment that is both white and hostile.

Yet another factor which tarnishes the black political triumph in central cities is the historically altered political economy of

those cities which produces a continuous tendency toward social, political, economic and fiscal crises. In the face of this tendency, says Greer (1979:12-13), the best a black mayor can hope to do is to slightly retard the inevitable downward slide of the city. Commenting on the task facing Carl Stokes in 1967, Weinberg (1968:7-8) observed that "it would take a miracle worker to cure the urban disease that infects Cleveland, Ohio, perhaps more critically than any other urban area in the United States. It is unreasonable to expect that the deterioration of our cities that has occurred under the rule of white mayors can, in the foreseeable future, be cured by black mayors."

Thus for these three reasons--the historical limitations of black politics and their organizational implications today, the structural limitations on the power of the local state, and the historically altered political economy of cities where blacks have won control--radical commentators have suggested that black political control of the central city is likely to be a "hollow prize."[3] In what follows I will examine each of these three factors and show how they have limited the potential accomplishments of black mayors. I will then turn to an examination of the effect of the election of a black mayor on the police department and policing in the black community.

The Limitations of Black Politics

Black politics in this country has historically been a politics of dependency.[4] Contrary to the pluralist model of free and open competition among groups desiring access to the political process, the U.S. political system is more accurately characterized as a system of "stable unrepresentation" (Gamson, 1969) from which blacks have been excluded and by which they have been controlled.[5] Within this framework, the dual burdens of

class exploitation and racial oppression have generated a black political culture that is necessarily survival-oriented as well as crisis-laden (Hamilton, 1970).

Moreover, structural economic dependency has significantly robbed blacks of both the opportunities and the resources with which to create indigenous political institutions. This has left them vulnerable to political manipulation by outsiders. "Historically," says St. Clair Drake (1965), "blacks have not determined the ends for which they struggled, nor the means."

Black progress, when it has occurred, has typically come about in times of crisis, when the normal operation of the system has broken down and left it vulnerable to challenge by out-groups (Gamson, 1969). This vulnerability has been limited however, by the pre-existing distribution of power resources, a distribution which has consistently disfavored blacks. Thus black progress through the political system, though real, has been limited. An assessment of the extent of real progress and its current limitations requires a brief historical analysis of black politics in the U.S.

With regard to the grist of politics--i.e., benefits--Robert Dahl (1961:52) has made a useful distinction between divisible and indivisible benefits:

> Certain benefits are <u>divisible</u> in such a way that they can be allocated to specific individuals; jobs, contracts and welfare payments are examples of divisible benefits. Other benefits are more nearly <u>indivisible</u>; parks, playgrounds, schools, national defense and foreign policies, for example, either cannot be or ordinarily are not allocated by dividing the benefits piecemeal and allocating various pieces to specific individuals.

From the time of slavery up until about the 1920s, a period when the vast

majority of blacks in the U.S. lived in the rural South, blacks were totally outside the benefit-allocating political system in this country. They were able to achieve neither divisible nor indivisible benefits because they lacked political power. The one glaring exception to this, of course, was the period of Reconstruction after the Civil War, when blacks elected officials at all levels throughout the South.[6] This brief experiment collapsed, however, after 1877 in a surge of restrictive political legislation and Jim Crow laws, backed up by pervasive white terrorism against blacks.[7]

By 1910 blacks in the South were completely disenfranchised; i.e., they were structurally excluded from the benefits of the political system. In response to this situation, a number of black leaders like Booker T. Washington counseled the avoidance of politics in favor of vocational education and economic self-improvement. As a result of these twin objective and subjective barriers, notes Hamilton (1973:3-4), blacks in the South failed to develop either a political tradition or a viable political culture.

The mass migration of blacks out of the South beginning around the time of World War I suggested the possibility of a change in the political organization of blacks. In the North they could vote. Moreoever, because blacks migrated to a relative handful of industrial cities in the North, their concentrated voting numbers offered the possibility of real political clout for the black community. This possibility, however, was not realized.

On a national level, at least until after World War II, the black community was unable to translate its votes into significant political power. But it was not for lack of trying. As Katznelson (1973:45-61)

notes, black leaders in the first third of this century tried to achieve political benefits by attempting to end reflexive black Republicanism, or failing that, to at least secure patronage from the Republicans in exchange for mass support. Both efforts failed, as did an attempt to secure anti-lynching legislation from Congress, due to lack of numbers, lack of organization, and racism.

On the local level, blacks migrating into Northern cities in the first three decades of this century were confronted with two contradictory types of political organization: ethnic machines and Progressive reform governments. Both of these forms of organization, however, effectively limited the terms of black political participation. Blacks, says Katznelson (1973:62-88), were incorporated into these existing political systems through buffered relationships that left them isolated and forestalled their independent political action.

The urban ethnic political machines isolated and subordinated blacks through the creation of separate and dependent black sub-machines. Theoretically, machine politics should have been as open to blacks as it was to the white European ethnic groups. The black migrants were poor, unskilled, and lacking in a policital culture and political organization, as were the more recent European immigrants. Yet, while the existing political machines, in their vigorous pursuit of the white immigrant vote, incorporated these groups into their structure in ways which contributed to group solidarity and political mobilization, conferred divisible benefits upon numerous individuals, and provided avenues of upward mobility, they did no such thing for the black migrants (see, e.g., Nelson and Meranto, 1977:22-23).[8]

In an examiniation of the black political experience in New York

and Chicago through the 1930s, Katznelson (1973:62-119) shows very clearly that blacks were incorporated into the ethnic political machines in a dependent relationship that was unlike that of the white ethnics. In New York, the black sub-machine was created as a "parallel institution" based on race, not residential districts like the main machine. Individual high-status blacks were coopted to run the sub-machine and deliver black votes. But the benefits delivered to blacks in return were almost entirely indivisible symbolic ones. The really important divisible benefits which the machine had to offer, i.e., patronage jobs, were not distributed to blacks in numbers anywhere near their proportion of the population. And, as Katznelson's data show, the few political jobs obtained by blacks were the same type of service jobs available to them in the private sector.

In Chicago, blacks had a greater potential opportunity to achieve full partnership in the political machine, due to the existence of a multitude of wards and the mosaic pattern of ethnic settlement based on residential segregation. And, as black numbers grew, they did in fact capture a proportional share of municipal employment. These patronage jobs were, however, heavily menial. Moreover, they were not generally obtained through the political clout of black leaders; rather they were distributed by white politicians as a means of enhancing the image of selected black leaders (see Katznelson, 1973:86-104). This happened because black politicians had been detached from their political base and made dependent upon outside (white) financing. The result of this subordination was the lack of political mobilization in the black community as well as a strategy by black leaders that emphasized individual, not group solutions to black problems and generally supported the economic

status quo.[9]

In city after city where large numbers of blacks were concentrated, they were deprived of appropriate divisible benefits as well as the politicization of ethnicity through the institutionalization of the black submachine. St. Clair Drake (1965:45) sums up this experience:

> While the development of machine politics has brought some gains to Negro communities, it has also resulted in various forms of indirect victimization. Local Negro leaders often co-operate with the city-wide machine in the protection of the 'rackets'--policy, dope, and prostitution--and sacrifice group welfare to personal gain for self and party. They have not hesitated, in some places, even to drag their heels in the fight for residential desegregation rather than risk wiping out the base of their power. Being saddled with a 'bought leadership' is one of the greatest burdens Black Ghettos have had to bear.

It was not simply a lack of appropriate leadership, however, which prevented blacks from achieving the level of political participation characteristic of white ethnic groups. Black political dependence was a structural reflection of black economic dependence. The incorporation of blacks into the metropolitan economy as a superexploited reserve army of labor resulted in, and indeed required, their political management as well.

In a number of cities, the beginning of large-scale black immigration coincided with the Progressive reform of local government. Instituted in part as a business response to the endemic corruption of machine politics, these reforms excluded blacks from what Gamson (1969) has called the "competitive establishment" even more effectively than the political machines. The institution of nonpartisan at-large rather than ward-based elections meant that blacks had little hope of electing candidates to city government in the absence of a clear black majority of residents. Furthermore, the curtailment of ward patronage and the

development of a civil service system independent of politics cut blacks off from access to city jobs. These changes undermined the credibility of black patronage-type leaders and further isolated them from a potential political base within the black community. (Piven, 1973).

The political dependence and vulnerability of the black urban population was intensified in the middle decades of this century. The pull of labor shortages in Northern industry during World War II and the push of technological displacement from Southern agriculture in the decade following the war dramatically increased black migration to the cities. This, and a high rate of natural increase among the young black migrants created a black urban population explosion. Disproportionately young, poor and unskilled, this rapidly-expanding black population put a tremendous strain on city services, particularly welfare, education and the police (see Fusfeld, 1973:17-26).[10]

In the face of this rapid demographic expansion, population densities in the black ghetto increased enormously; eventually it spilled over its boundaries and into white areas. Dismayed at the increased black demand for city services, threatened by competition with blacks, fueled by racism, and aided by massive government subsidies, much of the white middle class followed the logic of labor market competition and left the central cities for the suburbs (Ashton, 1978:72-81). This exodus, coupled with the earlier decentralization of industry to the suburbs and beyond severely eroded the central city tax base. This occurred at a time when it was becoming necessary to remake that central city to better articulate with the new Corporate stage of capital accumulation (Gordon, 1978:47-55). The result was what Mollenkopf (1978) refers to as a "central-city land-value fiscal crisis."

In response to this crisis, the heads of locally-based corporations brought together central-city politicians, a new breed of technically-oriented planning bureaucrat, central business district real estate and commercial interests, and construction unions in local "pro-growth coalitions" (Mollenkopf, 1978:134-137). Blacks, however, were completely excluded from these coalitions. This is not surprising, in that they were defined as one of the chief sources of the "problem," and were to become the chief victims of the solution.

The local growth coalitions aimed to promote the economic redevelopment of the central business district into an office and shopping district. Thus they pressed the federal government to finance "urban renewal." The goal of this program was "to throw a wall around a creeping 'blight'," i.e., to protect the central business district from the black population. Thus it was that urban renewal came to be synonymous with Negro removal, as hundreds of black neighborhoods were bulldozed to make way for office parks, medical centers, luxury apartments, and expressways. Lacking political clout on both the local and the national levels, blacks were powerless to stop it.

Two separate political developments, however, were converging in the late 50s and early 60s which would provide the basis for a black presence in local politics. The first of these was the civil rights movement, beginning in the South with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. The second development was rooted in a changing national political strategy on the part of the Democratic party. This change made the black urban vote in the North a crucial factor in electing a Democratic president; it also made that president more vulnerable to black demands.[11]

The civil rights movement of the late 50s and early 60s was essentially a Southern movement. The freedom rides, sit-ins, voter registration drives, and non-violent demonstrations were aimed at overturning the legal segregation of blacks and whites in the South. Though the movement had little direct effect on the status of blacks in Northern cities--where de facto segregation remained the rule--its rhetoric was bound to have an effect. Not only did the black migrants have an enduring memory of conditions in the South, they recognized that their situation in the North was not significantly better. Furthermore, although the civil rights movement was essentially led by the black middle class, from which it drew its firmest support, and on whom it conferred its greatest divisible benefits, the racial pride and solidarity the movement generated was an indivisible benefit shared by all blacks.

Largely as a result of this movement, then, the disorder in the Northern black communities, and the white response to it, became politicized. Blacks became more militant in protesting the destruction of their communities through urban renewal and highway construction programs. They began to demand a voice in these decisions. Blacks began to see the institutions of white society as intrusions in their communities; they demanded control over local schools and the police. Poor blacks demanded jobs, or failing that, better and more extensive welfare programs.

Beginning with their successful bid to recapture the Presidency in 1960, the national Democratic party sought to channel this politicized disorder in the cities in directions favorable to its own interests. On the national level, blacks had voted Democratic since 1936. They had, however, achieved little power within the party. The huge migrations of the 1950s and 60s changed this. Blacks gained political impact not just

because their numbers were significant, but because they were concentrated in politically important areas. In 1960, for example, 90 percent of all Northern blacks were located in the ten most populous Northern states--states which controlled a decisive bloc of electoral votes. Not only did blacks constitute a significant portion of the electorate in these states, but the formal absence of franchise restrictions in the North made it easier for them to vote.

The basic elements of the New Deal Democratic coalition were the white urban ethnics of the North and the solidly Democratic South. Gestures toward blacks during the Roosevelt administration were either blocked, like the anti-lynching law in 1935, or diluted, like the token Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1941, by the major members of the coalition. But the growing numbers of blacks in the Northern cities during and following World War II demanded some recognition and thereby began undermining the coalition.

When a relatively strong civil rights plank was written into the party platform at the national convention in 1948, Southern Democrats bolted the party and formed the States' Rights Party. Truman was elected on the narrow margin provided by the black vote in California, Illinois and Ohio. Democrats have recognized the need to court the black vote ever since.

But the courtship of Northern blacks threatened the other wing of the Democratic coalition: the white ethnics. They perceived that any black gains were likely to come at their expense. On the local level, the ethnic leaders were quite content to keep blacks on the outside looking in. But if the Democrats were really serious about the black vote, they would have to deliver something to this constituency.

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So, for the national Democrats, the dilemma was posed: the South was rapidly slipping away from them; the populous Northern industrial states had become crucial for success in the Presidential sweepstakes. Growing militance among blacks made their vote unstable and their demands insistent. The big labor unions and white ethnics eyed the black community defensively and the national Democratic party with suspicion. Urban politicians were inclined to ignore national elections and concentrate on local issues (a fact which hurt Adlai Stevenson badly in the 1952 and 1956 defeats). A way needed to be found to integrate blacks into the coalition without alienating the white ethnics.

The strategy which the Democrats developed beginning in the early 1960s was actually the traditional formula of the old ethnic machine: i.e., the distribution of patronage in return for loyalty. A new twist, however, was that local government, which could not be trusted to distribute benefits to blacks, was completely bypassed as the national administration attempted to set up a direct relationship with the black ghettoes. In addition, federal funds were used to stimulate the organization of black constituencies which could pressure the local government for more benefits.

The local competitive political establishment felt severely threatened by the advent of these federal programs. They not only resented the loss of local control, they feared the increased competition from blacks over scarce resources. The national administration attempted to pacify the white ethnics in part by defining the new programs as a response to pathology in the black community: family deterioration, juvenile delinquency, poor work habits, etc. The emphasis of the poverty

programs on "community development" was meant to reassure whites that new resources were to be created in the ghettoes, rather than targeting their own stakes in jobs, schools, and services for redistribution. Great Society programs were also able to deflect white working class hostility by their "scientific" planning and pretensions. Eliminating poverty was not defined as a political question requiring mass action and debate, but rather one amenable to solution by scientifically trained professional experts (Piven and Cloward, 1971:276-279).

The major immediate effect of the federally-financed assault on local government was a dramatic rise in the welfare rolls. From 1964 through 1969 the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) rolls in the 78 Northern urban counties rose 80 percent. In the five largest metropolitan centers where blacks were concentrated the rolls jumped over 105 percent after 1964, with the leaders, New York and Los Angeles, rising 137 and 145 percent respectively (Piven and Cloward, 1971:335).

There were several reasons for this astounding rise in welfare rolls. First, federally-funded programs in this period provided the necessary information about entitlements to more people than ever before. Legal-service lawyers succeeded in getting many restrictive provisions overturned. Community agencies challenged arbitrary discriminatory and restrictive practices by welfare bureaucracies.

Second, an increase in welfare expenditures was the least painful way out for local politicians caught in the onslaught of black demands. While welfare-giving was not popular in the white community, it nevertheless did not directly challenge their own resources. Thus it was the political line-of-least-resistance.

Welfare rolls were further increased as a response to a serious

crisis of state legitimacy in the cities in the mid 1960s. This crisis was rooted in the growing politicization of the black community in the face of a systemic inability to integrate that community into the dominant economic and social system. The crisis was expressed in a massive wave of civil disorders which rocked the central cities in this period.

The Civil Rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s politicized blacks as a group and created a set of rising expectations in that community. These expectations increasingly foundered, however, on the reality of economic stagnation in the black internal colonies. The development of black pride and community self-consciousness increasingly contradicted the facts of economic exclusion and political impotence. Moreover, the rhetoric of black power undermined the legitimacy of existing institutions and freed people for militant action.

Thus, every major city in the U.S. experienced civil disorder in the mid-1960s. Between 1964 and 1968, 142 people were killed and over 4,700 wounded in civil disturbances. Over 20,000 people were arrested, and the property damage totalled several hundred million dollars (Glaab and Brown, 1976:305). The hearts of many central cities resembled war zones, as indeed they had been. The war, however, had been fought by the black internal colony against the institutions of white power in their communities: local white-owned businesses, absentee land-lords, and the occupying army of the police.

Evidence indicates that these civil disorders were widely supported in the black community.[12] One study of Watts, for instance, suggested that 46% of the adult population in the curfew zone either actively or passively supported the civil disorder which occurred there in 1965. Over half the people interviewed in Los Angeles saw the disturbance as a

purposeful, positive event. Even those who condemned the violence often empathized with the participants and admitted a sense of pride in the attention it had focused on the black community.

Contrary to the beliefs of many whites, the civil disorders were neither caused nor led by "outside agitators" or "local riffraff". Each of the disturbances had begun after the buildup of tension in the black community over their treatment by white institutions. The most flagrant culprit, of course, was the police. Whether or not the particular charges were true, in each case they reflected enough of the daily reality of police/community relations in the black internal colony that when a raw nerve was rubbed once too often, seething tensions exploded. Violence apparently spread spontaneously throughout the black community.

A substantial minority of that community--studies indicated 10 to 20 percent--actively participated in the disturbances. Arrest records and surveys conducted later showed that, though the participants were young (mostly 15 to 34 years old), three-fourths of them were employed at the time of the disturbance, one-half to three-quarters in semi-skilled or skilled occupations. In general, they were not the recent migrants, as 30 to 60 percent of the participants arrested were born outside of the South. And a study of juvenile arrestees in Detroit indicated that they were less disturbed and less delinquent than typical juvenile arrestees.

The year 1968 marked both the highwater mark and the end of mass urban civil disorders. In the month of April alone, following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., there were almost as many disturbances as in the entire year of 1967, with more cities (138) and states (36) involved than in the entire previous year. In April alone

there were more arrests and injuries, and almost as much property damage, as in all of 1967 (Skolnick, 1969:172). Although no single civil disorder reached the scale of the major disorders of 1967, disturbances continued through the summer and into the fall. Since then, however, urban civil disorders have essentially disappeared as a regular feature of "summer in the city".

There are at least three reasons for the demise of mass urban civil disorder. First of all, it became apparent to the black community that this form of political protest carried with it high costs. The vast majority of those killed and wounded were black. Nearly all of the property destroyed was in the black ghetto. Although much of it was white-owned, many blacks lost their homes and the community was deprived of many commercial services.

Secondly, it also became apparent that white leaders would stop at nothing in their efforts to contain the violence. As disturbances spread and escalated, so did the official response. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the response of local and national government to the tremendous wave of disorders that occurred in April, 1968. In that month alone, 20 percent more National Guard troops were utilized than in all of 1967 (for a total of 34,900 troops); more than five times as many federal troops (23,700) were called in than in the previous entire year (Skolnick, 1969:173). Never before had the country witnessed such a massive military mobilization against its own citizens. In addition, militant groups like the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam were suppressed through legal harassment, subversion and sometimes murder.

The third factor in the decline of urban civil disorder was the political response of the capitalist class. On the one hand, federal

poverty programs and local welfare rolls were expanded in an effort to pacify the black community by meeting some of its demands for divisible benefits. On the other hand, and far more importantly, a transition was begun to a new stage of management and control of the black community. This stage can properly be termed internal neocolonialism (Hill, 1977: 15-17).

Internal neocolonialism is similar to the system of indirect rule which was implemented in satellite Third World countries when they won their formal political independence from metropolitan capitalist countries. Real power remained in the hands of the capitalist class in the Center nations, but was exercised in the Peripheral countries through a comprador bourgeois class of native leaders. Likewise, in the period immediately following the urban civil disorders in the 1960s, the U.S. governing class made a real effort to identify and promote a class of black politicians and professionals who could mediate and legitimize relations with the black community. Thus on the national level certain black civil rights leaders were promoted as spokespersons for the entire movement, and were given control over federal programs and contracts as a way of establishing a power base. On the local level, governing coalitions scrambled to recruit and sponsor indigenous black leaders, who were then brought into the coalition as junior partners.[13]

At the same time that local political leaders were attempting to at least symbolically include blacks in the governing coalitions, they were also trying to dismantle some of the machinery which had made this necessary in the first place. Local officials, of course, greatly resented the federally-sponsored assault on local prerogatives which the War on Poverty represented. They attempted to undercut the community

participation provisions wherever possible and constantly lobbied the federal government to weaken them. They also fought to capture control of the massive amounts of federal dollars being pumped into their communities.[14] With the advent of the Nixon administration in 1969, these efforts were largely successful on both counts.

What gains or benefits accrued to the black community as a result of the Great Society programs and the political response to the urban civil disorders? By far the most significant divisible benefit was the enormous expansion in welfare benefits for the black poor which was mentioned earlier. Large numbers of black citizens received tangible, if slight, relief from the oppressive conditions of life in the internal colony. These gains, however, were not without their own costs. Given the fact that welfare benefits are provided through the political system, the recipients of these benefits are highly vulnerable to shifting political winds.

Moreover, as Hamilton (1976:247-248) notes, those who rely on public sector benefits are subject to guidelines and rules which do not apply in the private sector (e.g. public housing rules, welfare eligibility requirements). Low income public sector people thus potentially jeopardize their benefits by becoming politically active. This obviously serves as a brake on their political mobilization which, ironically, makes their public benefits more vulnerable.

Another set of divisible benefits was provided to black professionals and civil rights leaders, who found avenues to upward mobility in the Great Society programs and in the sponsorship of local governing coalitions. As noted in the previous chapter, their economic position began to diverge significantly from that of the black masses. In political terms, these black leaders remained extremely junior partners in

policymaking bodies, though they did acquire constituencies and the ability to bargain with existing power structures.

Once again, however, the public sector constituencies of black leaders faced severe structural problems. They suffered from what Hamilton (1976:245-247) has called "vertical structures of fragmented influence." By this he means that the myriad of agencies and programs, each with its own separate extra-community funding source and agenda, fragmented and diluted black influence. Furthermore, he argues, these agencies emphasized providing services as ends in themselves, rather than as a means to win mass loyalty and support in a fight for institutional power. Often, of course, these public and semi-public service agencies were expressly forbidden from being overtly political.

Thus the masses of black poor achieved neither a change in their fundamental economic position nor a measure of political participation. The "maximum feasible participation" provision of the Economic Opportunity Act actually did little to advance their cause because it was never seriously implemented; rather it was discontinued whenever and wherever it threatened to be successful. The black poor participated only symbolically through the offices of a few selected black leaders. In fact, argues Judd (1979:295-308), poor blacks were probably made politically worse off by this provision because of their symbolic cooptation and the actual cooptation of black leaders. In this regard, observe Piven and Cloward (1971:274-276), the Great Society was a "startling success" in accomplishing the goal of "absorbing and directing many of the agitational elements in the black population."

The programs and politics of the 1960s thus failed to overcome the great historical limitation of black politics: dependency. This

dependency was well illustrated by the fact that the Nixon administration largely succeeded in erasing the gains which had been made in the previous half-decade. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that no lasting change had occurred. As Piven (1970b) notes, blacks did receive some benefits for their efforts, and the fact of their reception, coupled with their admitted meagerness may have both raised blacks' expectations and spurred them on to greater demands. Furthermore, even symbolic participation gave blacks a sense of political efficacy and racial pride. In the late 1960s and early 1970s these factors came together to forge an alternative black nationalist politics which was instrumental in electing the first black mayors in large central cities.

Black Nationalism and the Election of Black Mayors

Black nationalism, i.e., the idea of black self-determination, has a long history in the black community. Marable (1980:60-61) argues that at least 3 major historical forces have served to reinforce and perpetuate this tendency: the social experiences and labor exploitation of blacks within the rural plantation economy of the South; the proletarianization of black labor and the development of a working-class culture in the urban North after the Great Depression; and the omnipresent white racism within American cultural institutions and the state apparatus. While blacks in the U.S. clearly do not constitute a "nation within a nation", says Marable, white racism and the cultural and political desires among blacks for self-determination have historically reinforced the dialectical process of nation-building.[15]

Historically, the nationalist tendency has had wide appeal among the black masses. They have had difficulty acting upon this outlook, however, due to the lack of resources created both by their economic

superexploitation and the structural dependency of black politics discussed earlier. Political leadership has thus generally fallen to a small, relatively powerless middle-class black elite which, moreover, has generally been integrationist in outlook.

In the 1960s, however, a dramatic political change occurred. "Perhaps for the first time in black history," observes Marable (1980:69-71),

> an enthusiastic and profoundly popular nationalist praxis had captured the overwhelming majority of students, the unemployed, workers and the elite . . . . It is difficult to find an appropriate parallel to any previous stage of black American struggle. By 1971, the Old Guard leadership appeared to be thoroughly discredited . . . . Black militant leaders . . . advocated economic social and political ideas decisively to the left of the perspectives of the Old Guard integrationists. In another period, this radicalized layer of the black elite would have acquired a liberal, pro-capitalist world view in an uncritical and natural fashion . . . . But the transformation in black popular thought and culture pushed this group to take positions that were at least social-democratic, and often more radical; and while they often did not openly identify themselves with the nationalist tradition . . . they did support and elaborate the most popular themes of Black Power.

Nelson and Meranto (1977:4) identify some of these popular themes: (1) reconstruction of the black community and its identity, with an emphasis on racial pride and self-esteem; (2) the development of black organizations controlled by blacks, before any coalitions can be formed with whites; (3) black control of, or at least full participation in, the decision-making processes of institutions that shape the lives of black people; and (4) the right to self-defense.

A debate was thus begun in the black community about how best to achieve the objectives of Black Power. Regardless of their differences, however, all black political tendencies agreed on the importance of electoral politics (Marable, 1980:72-75). The unanimity of this support can be attributed to a recognition of two facts: One, that of all the

political levers of power in U.S. society--corporate wealth, small business, organized labor, organized crime, the federal government, and state and local government--blacks were most likely to achieve control of the latter first (Haskins, 1972:xi); and two, that by capturing control of local government, black leaders might be able to generate the resources needed for black community self-development--resources that the impoverished black internal colony would otherwise not be able to provide (Piven and Cloward, 1968:262).

Furthermore, Hamilton (1976:252) argued that electoral politics, while clearly not a panacea for black problems, nevertheless was important because it offered blacks an opportunity to overcome the sporadic, crisis-oriented politics of the past. It would accomplish this, he said, by (1) developing a habit of organization and a consciousness of the ability to act: (2) providing an ongoing mechanism for civic education, i.e., how to articulate demands and hold decision-makers accountable on a range of issues; and (3) making it easier to transfer this organized activity to other spheres of political action.

Potential black mayoral candidates faced a number of serious problems in trying to get elected, however. Not least among these problems was the political apathy and cynicism of the black community, brought on by the dependent experience of black politics. One index of this problem can be seen in the fact that black voting percentages have traditionally been ten to twelve points below those of the white community (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978:151,179). This is not surprising, says Barnett (1976:40-41), given that the limited black politics of the past have produced only limited--and often only symbolic--benefits for the vast majority of blacks.

Moreover, as Poinsett (1970:15) notes, "for the most part, black politicians have been pawns handpicked by white structures. The typical 'Negro leader' has been a loyal but uninsprired party regular . . . . In other words, black politicians have not been truly responsive to the black community."[16] It is ironic indeed, says Barnett, that these leaders then turn around and criticize the black masses for their low levels of participation. In a situation of constant buying off and selling out among politicians, many blacks had rightly come to disbelieve the independence of any candidate.

In order to overcome this formidable barrier, the new black electoral candidates had to be recognizably different from the old-time black leaders; they had to represent a blatant break with the past. And, note Nelson and Meranto (1977:323), the new breed of black urban politician which emerged in the 1960s was indeed different. These men identified openly with the aspirations of the black masses. They projected the image that they were concerned with the advancement of the total black community, and were not simply out for personal reward. Unlike earlier black leaders, they argued, they would not sell out for personal gain. Furthermore, and again unlike earlier black leaders, these new politicians were firmly rooted in the working class. They could thus muster a credibility not previously given to black political figures (Kilson, 1971:339-340).

Carl Stokes, who in 1962 became the first black ever elected to the state legislature in Ohio, and later became the first black mayor of a majority-white city (Cleveland), was the great-grandson of a slave. Carl was born in Cleveland in 1927. His father died when he was two, and his family had to go on welfare. Mrs. Stokes eventually found work cleaning

house for rich white people. The family was able to get into the first federally-funded public housing project when Carl was eleven, and they considered it a step up. Nevertheless, the family remained, in Stokes' words, "very, very poor" (Haskins, 1972:3-9).

Stokes went to a vocational magnet high school that was ninety percent white. He remembers "spending a good deal of time beating up whites in the halls." He eventually dropped out of school and became a street hustler for a year. "The street life taught me much," he has said, "I mastered every aspect of it" (Stokes, 1973:25-28). After a hitch in the army, Stokes worked as a dining-car waiter while getting his undergraduate degree from Minnesota. He returned to his hometown and enrolled in Cleveland Marshall School of Law. To support himself and his wife, he got a job as a probation officer. "That job," he said, "brought me again and again into contact with those who were not making it, people whose spirits had been broken by oppression, filth and squalor" (Stokes, 1973: 39-40). Upon passing the bar exam, he applied for and got a job as an assistant police prosecutor. This job, combined with his previous background, made him in large measure "a by-product of the kinds of problems of a city," said Stokes (Haskins, 1972:9).

Richard Hatcher, who became the first black mayor of a Northern city that was mostly black (Gary, in 1967), was born in Michigan City, Indiana, in 1933. He was one of 13 children, only seven of whom lived past infancy. When his father, who had worked for Pullman making railroad cars, lost his job in the Depression, the family was forced to move to "the Patch", a classic slum with unpaved dirt streets. Richard and his brothers stole coal from railroad cars to keep warm in winter and, unknown to their parents, shoplifted from the local dimestore. "It wasn't

right," Hatcher has said, "but it was hard to be honest when you didn't have anything and were very young and so very poor" (Haskins, 1972:51-59).

When he was still at pre-school age, Hatcher was involved in an accident in which a rock hit him in the left eye. Because the family was so poor, they could not afford immediate medical treatment. The result was that young Richard eventually lost the eye. In high school, he fought to get out of the vocational track and onto the college prep track. He was only moderately successful, and thus had to work extra hard to make it through Indiana University. Shortly after receiving his law degree from Valparaiso (near Gary), Hatcher was appointed part-time deputy prosecutor in Lake County. Despite this position, he nevertheless took on private cases charging police brutality and harassment (Greer, 1979:23-24).

Kenneth Gibson, the first black mayor of a Northeastern city (Newark, 1970), was born in Enterprise, Alabama in 1932. He had one brother. His father worked as a meatcutter for $12/week and his mother was a seamstress. When Kenneth was five years old, he accidently inhaled a cardboard whistle. His parents thought he was going to die because the local black hospitals did not have the equipment to remove it, and the family did not really have the money to go out-of-state. Eventually, however, they scraped together the funds and the whistle was removed at a hospital in Philadelphia.

When Gibson's father began to build a new house for his family, one with an inside toilet--a rarity in those parts--his white boss cut his wages drastically. On top of other harassment, they decided to move North. The Gibsons came to Newark, where Mr. Gibson's mother lived. Ken ran errands after school to help support the family. In junior high,

he learned to play the saxophone and began to support himself by playing in jazz bands evenings and weekends. It took him twelve years to earn a degree from the local Newark College of Engineering due to the necessity of working to support himself and a growing family. After graduation, he obtained a job with the Newark Housing Authority as a structural engineer, a position which gave him a first-hand look at Newark's deteriorating buildings, as well as the corruption in Newark city government (Haskins, 1972:133-145).

All of these men, and others like them, were strongly involved in civil rights organizations and activities in their communities. Stokes had joined the NAACP in college and become involved in many of its local activities. Hatcher was one of the NAACP attorneys in a lawsuit charging segregation in Gary's schools. He also picketed local institutions with segregationist policies. In 1960, Hatcher co-founded Muigwithania, a local black political organization whose African name means "we are together." It was the name of the newspaper published by Jomo Kenyatta when he set out to fight for Kenya's independence from Britain (Haskins, 1972:60). Gibson was active in the Urban League, NAACP, CORE, and both the YMCA and the YWCA. Most significantly, given the earlier discussion of black politics, Gibson served as vice-president of Newark's anti-poverty agency (Haskins, 1972:143; Piven and Cloward, 1971:275).

Furthermore, as they became involved in electoral politics, each of these men established a reputation for performance, scrupulous honesty, and independence. Hatcher, for example, ran for an at-large city council seat in Gary in 1963 as an independent Democrat. Although heavily opposed by the existing Democratic machine, he was elected with the most votes ever by an at-large candidate--largely because of his

visibility in, and support of civil rights issues. Hatcher worked to keep this trust by, among other things, sheperding a strong open occupancy ordinance through the council (Haskins, 1972:62-63). From that time on, Hatcher was the most popular political figure in Gary's black community and was increasingly seen as the militant leader of that community, independent and unafraid to fight the machine (Greer, 1979:25).

Stokes quickly established a reputation as an independent state legislator, voting with the Republicans when he felt it was warranted, supporting the Republican governor on occasion, and generally snubbing Cleveland's Democratic machine (Stokes, 1973:62-73). Gibson had such a reputation for independence and honesty in Newark that when he passed the exam for principal structural engineer in 1966 and insisted that Mayor Addonizio appoint him to the city post, no one raised charges of a political payoff, despite the fact that Gibson had just run against Addonizio for mayor (Haskins, 1972:145).

The old-line political machines were undoubtedly the largest obstacle for potential black mayors. These machines squandered the city's resources on wholesale graft and corruption, and kept blacks isolated and dependent through the black submachine. In Gary, the Democratic machine had exercised absolute control over the city's politics since 1952. In its tenure, corruption became a way of life. Haskins (1972:61) reports that a machine-controlled mayor in Gary "could count on collecting from three to six million dollars in graft during a four year term, much of it from organized crime syndicates." This had led observers to call organized crime "Gary's second largest industry" (after U.S. Steel).

It was also well known that the machine sold city jobs in Gary. Traditionally, jobs like police officer and firefighter were channeled

to the members of city council as patronage. In return for a payment, the council member provided the job, regardless of civil service regulations. Thus, in the early 1960s it cost 1700 dollars to become a firefighter in Gary. And while the formal requirement for a general contractor's license was a 150 dollar fee and the completion of a written exam, in fact contractors only passed the exam if they forked over $1200 ($1500 if they were black). As a member of the council, Hatcher refused to participate in this graft. As mayor he eliminated the practice, thereby earning the undying enmity of the council members. It wasn't until his second term, with the election of a more sympathetic city council, that he was able to get many of his programs passed (Greer, 1979:24-25).

In Cleveland, it was the same story. The white president of the city council once remarked casually to Mayor Stokes: "If I don't make fifty thousand dollars a year, then something must be wrong" (Stokes, 1973:228-229). In Newark, Gibson became aware of the corruption through his position in the Housing Department. He wrote a letter to the state prosecutor which was instrumental in provoking an investigation which led to the indictment of incumbent Mayor Addonizio and nine other Newark officials on sixteen counts of extortion and income tax evasion. The federal government charged that Addonizio had left his congressional seat to become mayor of Newark and make "a million dollars," a charge the mayor vigorously denied (Haskins, 1972:147-153).

Cleveland's business leaders and major newspapers supported Stokes in the 1967 mayoral primary because they saw him as the only alternative to the corrupt, inefficient administration of Mayor Ralph Locher (Cleveland had just recently lost all U.S. urban renewal funds). After Stokes won the three-way Democratic primary, many of these leaders withdrew

their support from Stokes because he was running against Republican Seth Taft, grandson of the president with that surname, who was perceived as a competent, well-connected liberal. Some continued to support Stokes, however, in the hope that he could "keep the lid on" the black community (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:149-150).

In Gary, on the other hand, the business community was adamantly opposed to Hatcher from the beginning. While on the city council he had publicly raised the issue of the possible underassessment of the extensive property of U.S. Steel within the city. By all accounts U.S. Steel's property was in fact grossly underassessed. But the Gary Chamber of Commerce, in which U.S. Steel is very influential, was inspired to oppose Hatcher in both elections (Greer, 1979:20). Gary's only local newspaper, which was closely tied to both U.S. Steel and the local political machine, blacked out all news of Hatcher's 1967 primary campaign (Greer, 1979:41-42).

After Hatcher won the Democratic primary election, the leaders of the local machine made it known that they would support him in the general election only if he let them name the police chief, the controller and other key officers, including the members of the Board of Public Works, which controlled all municipal contracts. Hatcher refused, saying "Look, too many people have worked too hard on this and I'm not going to abdicate my responsibilities or sell them out. I'm going to name my own police chief and controller" (Poinsett, 1970:80-81). With that, the Democratic machine began to actively support the Republican candidate, an event unheard of in Gary. Hatcher understood that the machine disliked his politics even more than his race. "In me they knew they were getting not just a black man," he said, "but one they couldn't

control" (Greer, 1979:46).

In addition to opposition from the machine leadership, potential black mayoral candidates faced the formidable obstacle of the black submachine. The changing demographics of central cities, coupled with declining white ethnic support increase the importance of the black vote, and by extension, that of the black submachine to the larger political machines. Independent black candidates threatened this newfound importance, and the limited benefits it had brought. Thus they were vigorously opposed by black machine politicians.

Nelson and Meranto (1977:35-64) and Kilson (1971:342-343) illustrate this opposition in the case of East St. Louis, traditionally the blackest Northern city. In 1967 a black reform slate of five ran for mayor and the four council positions against four whites and a machine-controlled incumbent black commissioner. The black challengers were overwhelmingly defeated, receiving less than half of the black vote, though that vote was 59 percent of the city total. The problem, say the investigators, was that the machine provided just about the only services for blacks; it was able to credibly present itself as the protector of the black community. Its domination, however, thoroughly stifled independent black political activity.

Likewise, in his first, narrowly unsuccessful run for the state legislature in 1960, Carl Stokes received only half of Cleveland's black vote. Not a single one of the ten black city councillors (out of 33 total councillors) supported him. The black vote had previously been mobilized only on a ward basis, and these incumbent blacks and the white party powers wanted to keep it that way. To be successful, Stokes had to circumvent and neutralize both (Weinberg, 1968:36-38).

In Gary, a Hatcher campaign worker stated that the black precinct committeemen "were our worst enemies." Although they claimed to support the incumbent politicians as a matter of honor, "the real reason was that they owed their lives and their jobs to [Mayor] Katz. And they also wanted extra money. They also knew that once Mr. Hatcher won they would lose their jobs as precinct committeemen. Their refusal to work with us really shook us up because they had quite a bit of control" (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:228-229).[17] One source of this control was the widespread belief among blacks that the machine had accurate knowledge of how each person voted, and would use this information to punish those who accepted favors and then did not vote as they were told (Nelson and Meranto, 1977: 235-236).

In order to overcome the institutionalized opposition of the political machine and its black subcomponent, reform black political candidates had to mobilize the black vote on a mass basis. Initially they did this by building grass-roots organizations that were totally outside the purview of traditional ward and precinct politics. Stokes (1973:44), for example, explained this successful approach this way:

> The party regulars never saw me coming. I had never worked through the ward leaders or precinct committeemen, the heelers. I worked through the civic workers, the dedicated volunteer women and men who believe a community can be helped, but never think, or at least never thought in those days, of politics at all. They didn't think of me as a politican either. Later, when I called on them to help, they thought of my candidacy as different from that of a 'regular' politician.

And, as we have seen, these new black politicians <u>were</u> different from the old-line leadership. Their emphasis on independence and reform set them apart. In his campaign announcement in 1967, for instance, Richard Hatcher stated: "Today, hopefully, a new freedom movement will

be born, a movement which will eventually free this community politically from the shackles of graft, corruption, inefficiency, poverty, racism and stagnation" (Haskins, 1972:64). Kenneth Gibson ran in Newark for more efficient city government that would provide better services to residents, untainted by widespread corruption. One of his first and most prominent supporters was the well-known black militant Imamu Amiri Baraka, who also happened to be a childhood friend.

The formation of grass-roots coalitions by the prospective black mayors made possible the mass mobilization of the black vote, which in turn made opposition from the black submachine difficult and proved to be a key factor in their successful elections. In Gary, a massive voter registration drive before the 1967 primary added over 13,000 black voters to the rolls, an increase of about a third in the size of the eligible black electorate (Greer, 1971:26). Another 5,000 were added before the general election. In his initial run for mayor in 1965, Stokes purposely set an unnecessarily high goal of 35,000 signatures on petitions to nominate him as an independent candidate--over twice the legal minimum. He eventually got 51,000, and in the process mobilized the community. Stokes later polled 96 percent of the black vote in the election.

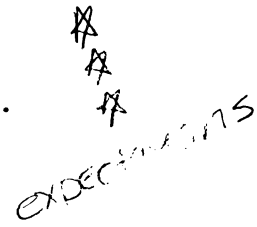
Another factor which was important in these insurgent campaigns was the sharing of information and strategy among the candidates. In 1965, four black businessmen came to Cleveland to learn what they could from the Stokes campaign in order to help Hatcher in 1967. In 1966, Stokes went to Newark to help Gibson in his first, unsuccessful attempt. (One reason Gibson failed that time, say Stokes, is that the local black militants were not sufficiently mobilized behind him.) Richard Austin, a black who was Michigan Secretary of State came to Stokes for advice

just before his narrow loss of Detroit's mayoral race in 1969. Stokes and Hatcher both helped Gibson in his successful 1970 campaign. And while Tom Bradley initially wanted Stokes to come to Los Angeles in 1973, Stokes convinced him that his opponent would successfully use Stokes' presence against him in the white community (Stokes, 1973:270-272; Haskins, 1972:153).

A final factor which was important in the election of the black mayors was the immediate political need of national Democratic party. Stokes ran as a Democrat rather than an Independent in 1967 largely because of pressure from the national Democratic administration, which needed a prominent black politician to firm up black support--especially in light of the election of black Republican Edward Brooke to the U.S. Senate in 1966. Vice-President Hubert Humphrey told Stokes that he'd do anything necessary to help him win. "I'll come to Cleveland and praise you, or I'll come in and denounce you, whatever you think will help" (Stokes, 1973:97). In Gary, the national Democratic party put enormous pressure on the county machine to support Hatcher in 1967 for the same reason (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:290).

The victory of each of the black mayors electrified the black community and filled it with a euphoria and a pride hitherto unknown. But this elation soon began to crash against some very formidable limitations. The first of these was in the historical limitations of black politics which I have discussed. If the election of the black mayors proved that a number of barriers had been overcome, it also showed that some victories were only temporary, and the the barriers were more inflexible than was previously realized. Robert Curvin (1975:99) sums it up this way:

> In each city where Black mayors have been elected, the Black community has sought immediate gains and improvements. High-pitched, emotional campaigns help to general such expectations. Ironically, the effort needed to stir a heavily poor constituency to show up at the polls, later serves to complicate the ability of a Black mayor to run his city . . . . The past limited and token participation of Blacks in the political process contributes to high and unrealistic expectations. As a result of little involvement in government and the mainstream of political life, there is often a rather shallow understanding of the limits of political power and how fragmented bureaucracies can resist control over them.



Thus a group of blacks visited Mayor Hatcher one week after he took office and demanded to know why job opportunities had not been opened to blacks and why slum-clearance projects had not begun (Haskins, 1972:75).

Black mayors have typically responded to these pressures by disbanding their campaign organizations, i.e., de-mobilizing the black population. One Hatcher aide observed immediately after the election that "we don't have time to give the organization right now. We're struggling for our lives down here and if we don't produce, we won't need an organization. It would not be in our best interest to start right now . . . . We're waiting until the next election to get people involved again." (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:363). Stokes was equally quick to disband his organization. "The Stokes machine was a portable model. Unlike other politicians, I never allowed my campaign organizations to live beyond election day. I knew where the people were, and I knew how to bring them together when I needed them" (Stokes, 1973:97).

While disbanding their electoral organizations took some of the immediate political pressure off of the new black mayors, it also deprived them of a proximate political base.[18] As Miliband (1977:154-190) notes, a reformist strategy can only work in a bourgeois democratic state if the population is continuously mobilized for political action. This

is even more true of a black reform attempt, due to the almost total absence of other bargainable resources. The fact that blacks at all levels are so dependent upon the state for income and employment further inhibits political action, as this generally soft money does not provide a stable economic or political base (Hamilton, 1976:242-244).

The new black mayors, then, faced a situation in which the pressure on them to deliver benefits, both divisible and indivisble, to the black community was great. At the same time, the very process which helped them to achieve their office acted as a limitation on what they could deliver. This, however, was not the most serious barrier they faced. The limitations associated with control of the local state, and the changed political economy of the central cities would prove far more formidable.

The Limitations of the Local State

Local government has traditionally been the most accessible form of the state for the middle and working classes. The immediate presence, visibility, and small scale of the local state, coupled with the ideology of democratic participation, mean that organized groups can potentially capture formal control of the local state. There are serious constraints, however, on what they can do with this power.

While monopoloy capital typically does not directly administer the local state, its power on the local level is nevertheless magnified because as Friedland, Piven and Alford (1977) note, the local state is more directly dependent upon the accumulation process and more confined in the territory upon which it depends.[19] This means that local politics are preeminently a politics of economic growth. Cities are forced to compete against one another to attract business investment.[20] The

result is an enormous demand for social capital expenditures by the local state. This is precisely the level of government, however, with the least flexibility in fund-raising capacity (Hill, 1978:218-219). Not only do fiscal problems ensue, but local politicians have limited political terrain in which to maneuver.

Additionally, there is the problem of the dependency of the local state within the federal system. In this system, cities are wholly the creatures of state government. "Dillon's Rule," set forth by an Iowa court in 1968 and upheld nationally ever since, clearly established this fact (Judd, 1979:51). In the course of urban history state legislatures have been more or less active in the affairs of the cities, varying with local tradition, the salience and impact of certain urban issues, and the balance of political power in the state. Today, however, the trend is for the state to take an increasing role in urban affairs. This is due in part to the increasing interdependence of the whole population, the increasing scale of business and political organizations, and the inability of local governments to regulate the spillover effects of their development. The federal government has become involved in cities for basically the same reasons. And although federal aid to the cities has increased rapidly in the last two decades, most cities receive two dollars from the state to every one dollar from the federal government (Judd, 1979:217).

Demographic shifts have also served to alter the power of central city government, and especially black central city administrations. By 1970, over half of the metropolitan population lived in suburbs; these suburbanites represented a plurality of all Americans (Ashton, 1978:74). These suburbanites were also overwhelmingly white. In 1974, less than

5 percent of the suburban population was black (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978:22). On the local level, this means that the black central cities are essentially surrounded by white suburbs. The numerical superiority of the suburban population means that it usually has its way in metropolitan-wide decision making. Worse, the trend to metropolitan government threatens to disenfranchise blacks once more (see Piven and Cloward, 1967).

On the state and national levels, the white legislators who form the majority represent rural and suburban constituencies, and are less and less beholden to central city residents. Racial polarization in all cases exacerbates the situation. Furthermore, the growing role and impact of the federal government in all aspects of social life, coupled with the inability of local jurisdictions to deal with controversial issues, means that it is the national level which is increasingly looked to for progressive social policy. And it is at this level, as we have seen, that blacks have the least political power. Ironically, new barriers to black political self-determination are being erected even as they achieve a measure of control in the central cities.

The Historically Altered Political Economy of Central Cities

The cities where blacks came to power in the late 1960s and early 1970s were significantly different from the same cities where white ethnics achieved power at an earlier time. The political structures of these cities, as well as the economic forces impinging upon them, had changed. As I have already noted, blacks came to the cities in large numbers after the demise of the urban political machine. The reforms of the Progressive era had professionalized government and removed it further from popular control. This meant that blacks were effectively shut out from local government until they had achieved a city-wide, not just a ward or

precinct, majority of the population. It also meant that they were unable to build community institutions and put forth community leaders on the basis of spoils from local government.

Even after achieving electoral control, many of these traditional benefits were unavailable to black politicians. This was due to the fact that civil servants had used the professionalization of city government to enhance and protect their jobs from the vagaries of political life. By the time black mayors were elected, these public service bureaucracies were largely out of their control, firmly entrenched behind elaborate civil service or union regulations (see Piven, 1973).

The relative independence of city workers was a factor in another historical change in the cities blacks inherited: the persistent tendency toward fiscal crisis. A fiscal crisis is defined as a structural gap between revenues and expenditures (O'Connor, 1973:9). The standard explanation for the growth of this gap in the city budget is that revenues in the older cities have been declining while service costs for the (predominantly black) poor have risen tremendously. As Piven (1973:314-316) notes, this explanation is patently false. First of all, city revenues have not declined; they have risen astronomically. They have just not risen as fast as expenditures by the city government. And except for welfare, the expansion of services to the poor constitutes a minor proportion of the increased expenditures.

The big winners in the budget sweepstakes, in fact, appear to be the organized public employees. Their salaries went from just over 90 percent of their private sector counterparts' in 1955 to 105 percent in 1970 (Judd, 1979:207). The figures were higher in the major cities. An even greater increase took place in pensions and benefits, since

politicians could more easily grant concessions to city workers which would be payable under future administrations. Today those future administrations in older central cities are increasingly likely to be black.

Spiralling wage costs are indeed a major factor in the crisis of city budgets, which are highly labor-intensive. But there are deeper, more systemic explanations for the urban fiscal crisis. One primary cause is the transformation of the U.S. economy in the last century which has left central cities with outdated physical plant, industries and labor forces. The switch from industrial manufacturing to high-technology, service-oriented enterprise has forced the older cities to attempt to redesign and rebuild themselves in order to compete with new, growing areas. This is an expensive, and sometimes futile, proposition. But even in the absence of massive redevelopment, the existing physical plant in these cities is bound to cost more and more to maintain as it ages (see Gordon, 1978; Mollenkopf, 1978).

Another systemic drain on the central city's resources has been the process of suburbanization. This has resulted in a loss of middle-class taxpayers and a decline in central-city property values. It also has meant that the central city continues to provide services for the metropolitan-wide population that are supported exclusively by an increasingly isolated and poor central city population (see Hill, 1978).

The concentration of the economically marginal and surplus population in the central cities has created an objective need for higher levels of services. And the political mobilization of the black community during the 1960s, as we have seen, translated these needs into demands (Piven, 1973:317). The city government's need to reestablish legitimacy after

the disorders of the 1960s contributed to this rise in social welfare expenditures. But the strain was clearly too much. Cities simply could not sustain the expense of these programs coupled with the huge costs of urban renewal, escalating wages and benefits for city employees, the decline in property values and loss of tax revenue occasioned by the exodus of middle class taxpayers and commercial enterprises, highway construction and corporate exemptions.

The upshot of all this is that central city governments have become increasingly dependent upon "foreign aid" from the federal and state governments, and borrowing (Tabb, 1971:436). Between 1965 and 1974, intergovernmental transfers to the cities rose 370 percent, more than doubling the increase in municipal expenditures during that period (Judd, 1979:216). While one out of every ten dollars spent by local governments in 1955 came from the federal treasury, by 1977 one dollar out of four came from Washington (Judd, 1979:322). The revenue sharing funds which began to flow from the federal government in 1973 were needed by the cities just to meet day-to-day expenses. While all cities spent 56 percent of the funds on operations and maintenance (as opposed to capital expenditures), cities over 250,000 population spent 79 percent of the funds this way, while the five largest cities spent a whopping 97 percent of their funds just to stay above water (Judd, 1979:340).

Since local governments are prohibited from deficit financing, they must attempt to balance their budgets. Revenue shortfalls at the end of the fiscal year have increasingly been met through borrowing. This has taken a number of forms. Operating expenses have been hidden in capital expenditure bond issues and short-term tax anticipation notes. As issues become due, they are rolled over into further debt. The most extensive

and serious example of this process is New York City which tripled its outstanding debt in the early 1970s (see Zevin, 1976; Tabb, 1978).

The increasing indebtedness of cities means, first of all, that debt service becomes an ever-larger chunk of the budget (one seventh of New York City's budget in 1974). Second, it means that cities are increasingly vulnerable to the large banks and financial institutions which hold that debt. Since 1975 banks have used their power in more and more cities to force a rearrangement of city budget priorities. In alliance with business groups, they have demanded cutbacks in welfare expenditures, the size of public employment, "wasteful" regulatory agencies, and municipal wages and benefits (Mollenkopf, 1976:125-127). The fact that a number of central cities are largely black not only gives this assault racial overtones, it makes these cities more vulnerable to it.

Thus the cities where blacks are coming to power are faced with historically unprecedented crisis and constraints. Under these circumstances the delivery of benefits and services to their own constituencies becomes extremely problematic for black politicians.[21] Their relative success depends upon their ability to manipulate and deflect some of the external pressures, to recognize and defer to those that are unavoidable, and at the same time to maintain legitimacy in the black community. In the sections that follow, I will briefly examine the extent to which black mayors have been able to deliver benefits to the black community.[22]

What Have Black Mayors Accomplished?

Black control of central city governments has indeed brought both divisible and indivisible benefits to the black community, and these are not to be dismissed lightly. First and foremost is an increase in black pride and sense of achievement. Soon after his election Richard Hatcher

commented:

> It is hard to describe the type of pride felt by almost every black person in the city of Gary . . . . They think this is a tremendous thing. We receive hundreds of letters from children--some scrawled on a piece of paper, "We are glad, Mayor Hatcher, that you are our Mayor." There is no measuring the inspirational factor in the fact that people got the job done and they did it themselves. They can go on to more difficult tasks with confidence. (Haskins, 1972:73-74)

Similarly, Carl Stokes (1973:109) noted that in the days immediately following his election the number of phone calls and visits he received was "overwhelming." "Everybody wanted to talk to me, to see me, to touch me. So many people who had spent their lives feeling disenfranchised by the system now felt that I was their mayor."

This new feeling of political efficacy that swept the black community, which was a direct result of the strategy of mass political mobilization, has also clearly been an indivisible benefit with long-range ramifications. Having gained a sense of power through the election of these black mayors, the black community was increasingly likely to experience dissonance with their continuing political dependency, and to challenge it. Two incidents from Hatcher's experience in Gary illustrate this. First, Hatcher's black constituency gained a clear definition of their dependency through the experience of the campaign. Thus, when he won, they jammed the city's main streets for four hours, chanting, "We beat the machine" (Haskins, 1972:66).

Second, with Hatcher in office, this black constituency was more prone to mobilize itself around issues of political concern. For example, when the white-dominated Gary City Council voted unanimously on the first two readings of a bill to restrict the mayor's powers of appointment, the black community turned out en masse to force a reversal on the third and

final reading. The press cried "intimidation," but Hatcher said:

> I visited a number of taverns and other public places that night and it was interesting what that City Council session had done for the black community. Everywhere I went people were introducing me as their hero and saying I had stood up to my opponents. It was a beautiful thing, the sort of thing you dream about--that one day black people are going to be united and say we know who the enemy is. We now have some very enlightened councilmen. They are not going to go down there anymore and just vote black people down the river without even thinking about it twice. They will never be the same again (Haskins, 1972:80-82).

Both divisible and indivisible benefits have flowed from the scrupulous honesty of the reform administrations of black mayors.[23] The conditions that most of these mayors faced upon assuming office were appalling. City resources had been squandered, lost, or used to line the pockets of local racketeers, businessmen and politicians--a direct result of the corruption and inefficiency against which the black mayors had run. In Newark, for instance, Mayor Gibson found that the city bureaucracy was in a state of total anarchy; e.g., city contracts had run out without renewal, and an estimated $10 million in federal aid had been lost because of the incompetence of city administrators. Moreover, Gibson faced a $65 million budget deficit, in part because former Mayor Addonizio (who had just been convicted on federal charges relating to corruption in office) had hidden a $25 million overrun on school expenses in order to avoid asking for a tax increase in an election year. Though hampered by this lack of resources, Gibson managed to bring a previously-unheard-of efficiency to Newark city government.

In Gary, decades of machine rule had meant virtually no regulation in the public interest. That Gary is an ecological wasteland can largely be attributed to this fact. Pollution controls on U.S. Steel, Gary's major employer and major pollutor were so weak as to be non-existent.

In the entire history of the city, Gary's building inspectors had never set foot inside of U.S. Steel's local works. Moreover, these works were grossly underassessed for tax purposes. Because of the tremendous local and national power of U.S. Steel, though, the Hatcher administration has not been able to effectively solve these problems (Greer, 1971:24-25; 1979:182-204).

The Hatcher administration has, however, eliminated most other forms of corruption in city government. Licenses now cost their face value, city jobs are free, contracts are let through a fair competitive bidding process. As a result, Hatcher has not only improved the quality of life for Gary's citizens, but in some cases he has actually been able to lower the cost of doing so. In the past, for example, it was typical in Gary to put only one-third of the contracted road-paving material on the streets. The difference was split between city officials and the contractor. Under Hatcher, all the contracted material gets put on the streets; moreover, the cost of street-paving equipment, without the kickbacks, is down 27 percent. The result is that more Gary streets have been repaved under Hatcher in any given year than in any two years under his predecessors (Greer, 1971:24, 28; 1979:28).

Black mayors have been able to deliver some divisible benefits to their communities as well. Blacks expanded their share of city employment, particularly at the executive and administrative levels, and in other areas where they had rarely been seen before. Black business and professional people were cut in on city contracts, where they had generally been excluded previously. Moreover, because of their reform orientation and their larger political significance, black mayors were able to generate an increased flow of funds into the city. These funds,

in turn, could be used to provide divisible and indivisible benefits to the black community.

In Gary, for instance, Hatcher obtained $12 million in federal and state aid in just his first four months in office--more than in the previous sixty years of the city's history. He used this money to, among other things, build over 2,000 units of low- and middle-income housing--the first new public housing in Gary in 15 years and enough to house 5 percent of the city's population. In addition, over 1,000 hardcore unemployed were enrolled in jobs and job-training programs. Three new parks were built, two of them in the barren inner-city, and activity programs for Gary's youth gangs were begun (Haskins, 1972:76-79; Greer, 1971:28).

In Cleveland, Stokes organized a non-profit fund-raising and development agency called Cleveland Now. Its eighteen-month targets were the creation of 11,000 jobs and job-training opportunities, the construction of 4600 units of new low- and middle-income housing, a network of health and childcare centers, new playgrounds and the development of youth programs. After six months, 3100 new housing units had been constructed, 5900 jobs had been created, four neighborhood centers were opened, and a program to aid small businesses, particularly black small businesses, was begun (Haskins, 1972:34-37).

In Newark, Gibson persuaded six prominent local firms to lend executives to his administration in an effort to straighten out the tangled mess of city finances and introduce more efficiency into the delivery of city services. In addition, with the business community's help, Gibson had extracted a promise from the Ideal Toy Company to build a new plant in Newark. This move meant a potential 8,000 new

jobs would be created (Haskins, 1972:155).

Despite these very real gains, black mayors face some very real, and somewhat unique constraints in institutionalizing and/or expanding benefits to the black community. These constraints are to be found in (1) the formal guidelines inherent in federal and state programs, which restrict the mayor's discretion, (2) the hostility and resistance of holdover city employees, (3) the need to maintain a modicum of white support, and (4), as we have already seen, the political demobilization of the black community and its general lack of organized lobbying forces (Curvin:220-221). The white community, on the other hand typically possess these organizational vehicles in the form of labor unions and professional associations (Piven and Cloward, 1967:250).

With regard to city workers, the black mayors face a paradoxical problem. On the one hand they have to replace too many. On the other, they can't replace enough. When Richard Hatcher took office, for example, so many city hall employees had quit that he even needed to find a new switchboard operator (Haskins, 1972:75).[24] And over twenty major officials resigned or were fired from the Stokes administration in its first two and one-half years, reflecting the conflict over his efforts to tame and control the city bureaucracies (Nelson and Meranto, 1977: 348).

Black mayors face an extremely difficult task in trying to replace managerial personnel with members of the local black community. As a result of longtime exclusion from these jobs, there is usually no pool of qualified local blacks from which to draw. The black schoolteachers, doctors and lawyers appointed by the mayor to these positions wind up having to train themselves while performing an unfamiliar job. But if

the black mayor chooses to look outside the local community for candidates, he faces resentment from his own constituency, which believes the patronage should belong to them. This was the major source of the split between Mayor Gibson and Imamu Baraka in Newark (Greer, 1974: 526).

On the other hand, black mayors face potent resistance from the city employees that they can't replace. "All your fine and noble policy decisions don't mean a damn if the functionaries are against you," observed Carl Stokes (1973:118). And his experience proved it. For instance, when Cleveland received its first heavy snowfall after Stokes' election, city crews worked all night to plow the streets in the black neighborhoods like they had never been plowed before; the streets in the white neighborhoods, however, lay untouched. It would have been a political disaster for Stokes if an alert aide had not caught the problem and remedied it before morning (Stokes, 1973:117-119).

City employees have enormous power to make life uncomfortable for the black mayor. They can resist or subvert directives, enforce the letter but not the spirit of the law, harass the citizens, and leak unfavorable information to the media, or interpret relatively harmless information in a negative light (Greer, 1974:26-27). The employees with the greatest ability to resist, yet those whom the black mayor has the greatest need to control, are the police. Given what was said about the hostile, suspicious and antagonistic relationship between the black community and the police, every black mayor takes office with a mandate to "do something" about the police. The nature of that mandate, the ways black mayors have attempted to implement it, the resistance they have met, and a preliminary assessment of the outcome are the

issues examined in the next section.

The Black Mayors and the Police

In the previous chapter, it was argued that the black community has a paradoxical view of the police. On the one hand, blacks demand more and better police activity in their neighborhoods to control crime about which they charge the police are frequently all too casual. On the other hand, blacks complain about being "overpoliced," i.e., harassed and intimidated by these same police. This contradictory assessment, moreover, cuts across all segments of the black community, as we have seen. While this discrepancy lies partly in the nature of policing itself (see Chapter One), it is more properly seen as a result of the historical role of the police in maintaining the black internal colony. Whether and to what extent a black mayor can alter police behavior in this context is an empirical question; a preliminary analysis of this question follows below.

Given the tremendous and widespread concern in the black community over the police and policing, this issue was bound to be a central one in the election campaigns of black mayoral candidates. All of their platforms, therefore, had strong statements about the need to control and reform the police. Richard Hatcher's four-point program for police reform included promises to (1) end police corruption, (2) professionalize the police, (3) institute legal measures to create a civilian review board, and (4) substantially increase the number of minority-group police officers (Greer, 1978:52). And Carl Stokes noted: "I saw as one of my most important tasks the reform of the police, the return to having our police as our protectors, men who would enforce the law, do their job, be responsive to the needs of the people" (Stokes, 1973:17).

Furthermore, the black mayoral candidates, in addition to their experience of growing up black in the city, had had specific occupational experiences which bolstered their understanding of police relations with the black community. Hatcher, for instance, had been an assistant police prosecutor in Gary. Gibson noted police corruption and payoffs from his post in Newark's Housing Department. Bradley was himself a Los Angeles police officer before running for mayor. Perhaps speaking for all of them, Stokes summed up his eight years of experience with the justice system--as probation officer, defense lawyer and assistant police prosecutor--by stating that he was convincedthat "justice is not blind; neither is it just." He referred specifically to blatant and widespread racism among the police, corrupt judges as well as cops, ignorant attorneys, and a general feeling that black-on-black crime was insignificant (Stokes, 1973:45-46).

Given this orientation, the black mayoral candidates were definitely perceived as a threat by the police. The exact nature of this threat can be seen, I believe, in terms of three dimensions. First of all, like any other "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 1976), the police do not see their clients as a significant reference group with regard to their own conduct. Any organized effort on the part of those clients to dictate that behavior, then,becomes extremely threatening. This is precisely what the police perceived the black mayoral candidates as trying to do. And of course they were right.

Second, the reform black mayors represent a challenge to the material interests of the police. The promised effort of these mayors to reduce corruption in the department threatens the entrepreneurial activity of the police in the black community, and thus a source of

extra income. Furthermore, the commitment of the mayoral candidates to hire large numbers of black police officers threatens to denigrate the occupational standing of the police and undermine a traditional police privilege: that of passing one's job on to one's children. As noted earlier, approximately one-third of all police officers come from police families. And as Greer (1978:53) notes, "given the relatively small number of black policemen historically, there are virtually no black policemen from police families. As with 'labor aristocrats' in some of the building trades, the police department is viewed as virtually hereditary, and an influx of black recruits is perceived as destroying a vested property right."

Third, the proposed efforts of the black mayor to gain control of the department and redirect its priorities, as well as the promised influx of black police officers, directly challenge the conservative ideology of the police. As Skolnick (1969:282) reported from the results of a survey of police in five cities, the police "are coming to see themselves as the political force by which radicalism, student demonstrations, and Black Power can be blocked." The changes proposed by the black mayoral candidates, in effect, bring the enemy within the walls.

Given these perceived threats, it is not surprising that the police actively resisted the elections of the black mayors, and attempted to subvert their policies once they were in office. In 1967, when Richard Hatcher won the Democratic mayoral primary in Gary, the police chief, a lifelong Democrat, began sporting a Republican button. During the primary, Gary police officers had tried to prevent the opening of the polling booths in several black precincts by physically barring the

way. Someone in Hatcher's campaign organization, who was never identified, had anticipated this and hired black criminal elements from Chicago who showed up armed to the teeth and intimated the police into leaving the black polling places (Greer, 1978:49).

In Los Angeles, police and firefighters organized to help Mayor Sam Yorty defeat Tom Bradley in his first run for mayor in 1969, despite the fact that Bradley himself was a former police officer. Bradley charged that the "purely racist" tactics of the police had a "significant impact" on the election outcome (Wall Street Journal, 10/30/69). Reflecting both the threat posed by the mayor and his inability to gain control over them in his first term, four hundred off-duty police officers appeared at the polls in black neighborhoods to challenge voter registrations when Carl Stokes ran for reelection in 1969 (Greer, 1974: 528). Hatcher, on the other hand, was able to gain enough control over the department so that, when he ran for reelection in 1971, "for the first time, the force was neutral on election day" (Greer, 1971:27). Hatcher had his black Chief of Police assign the least trustworthy officers to headquarters for the day, or make sure that they were off duty.

This resistance continued after the black mayors took office. For the first two months of Hatcher's tenure, for instance, there was virtually no police patrolling of the city, due to the fact that fully two-thirds of the department's forty-five patrol cars had become inoperable. The problem was missing parts like batteries and tires which disappeared while the cars were under the exclusive control of the police (Greer, 1979:119). So suspicious of the police was Hatcher that he elected to hire private bodyguards rather than rely on the police, as was

traditional (Greer, 1978:49). In Cleveland, Carl Stokes chose his police bodyguards with extreme care, relying mainly on those with clean, professional reputations (Stokes, 1973:173). And in Newark, Kenneth Gibson relied on his brother, Harold, a Newark police officer, for security (Haskins, 1972:152).

In their efforts to gain control of the police department in order to effectively redirect priorities, black mayors have faced two major constraints, one bureaucratic and the other political. The bureaucratic constraint is best illustrated by the limitations faced by their newly-appointed Chiefs of Police. As Reiss and Bordua (1967:51-54) note, in a situation where the police chief has insecure tenure and is strictly accountable to the mayor, he must attempt to govern the organization tightly, and do so by force of his personality. To administer reforms against the inevitable internal resistance, the chief "must emphasize the principle of command. To make clear that status quo oriented commanders have been superseded he must emphasize his command and his capacity to command." Thus, conclude Reiss and Bordua, "it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the fortunes of the American municipal police depend not only on the use of computer technology, but on the personal charisma of police chiefs."

Unfortunately, with the advent of those computers and modern management techniques, and with the bureaucratization of labor relations through police unions, charismatic authority is increasingly being superseded in the department by rational-legal forms of authority, which makes it harder to implement drastic change (see Levi, 1977). Moreover, as Sayre and Kaufman (1960) observe,

> Securing internal control of the Department is the insurmountable barrier to leadership, initiative, and innovation

> by Police Commissioners. The Commissioner is not lacking in formal power for this purpose . . . . But these formal powers must in reality be exercised in the context of a personnel system which blunts their use, in the face of the close-knit organized police bureaucracies determined to limit the Commissioner's initiative and discretion, and through an organization structure designed to preserve the traditions of the force and its settled patterns of operation.

Illustrative of this, Cleveland's "Little Hoover Commission," a business-sponsored investigative body, reported on the eve of Stokes' election that the management of Cleveland's police department was a shambles. Informal arrangements, various uncharted power centers, and unusual lines of communication, it found, encouraged tendencies to build small empires and to create sinecure positions. The department, it said, could best be characterized as "a loose federation" (Stokes, 1973:169).

Moreoever, the prohibition against lateral entry into the force means that the new Police Chief must choose his subordinates from a pool of officers deeply steeped in department traditions and organizationally tied to various cliques. At a minimum, these officers are unlikely to be innovation-oriented; worse, they can use their powerful positions and bureaucratic insulation to resist and subvert the Chief's directives, and to reduce the impact of changes in policy and procedure. Carl Stokes' entire tenure in office provided a painful and continuous reminder of this reality (Stokes, 1973:175-188).

Stokes' first police chief was a white officer who had been passed over by previous administrations. While he was thus amenable to Stokes' changes, he could not fully implement them because he could not control the ruling clique in the department. Thus when Stokes ordered the transfer of 280 officers in order to put more police on the street,

this clique made the changes as arbitrary and irritating and painful as possible. Stokes' next chief was "the straightest cop in the city," a man who was also not part of the ruling clique and had been buried in the Detective Bureau because of it. Once he became Chief, however, he was coopted by the clique and became useless to Stokes. Exasperated, Stokes finally gave up and appointed a member of the ruling clique as Chief. This man didn't change the way the department worked, but at least he didn't actively fight the administration. Stokes' great hope, to change the Cleveland Police Department,

> became my greatest frustration, my greatest failure . . . . After four years in office, I could tell myself that the department was better equipped, had better cars and a better communications system, and that the men had more opportunities for training and education. But that's about all. The indictment of the department contained in . . . the 1966 Little Hoover study is about as accurate today as it was then. The determination of those men to live by the old ways won out; we were never able to penetrate their inward ways, their cohesive hostility to any change (Stokes, 1973:171, 1973-174).

The political constraint on change within the police department involves the dual necessity of maintaining credibility and support in the white community and among business leaders, and among the police themselves. In every city which has elected a black mayor recently, there remains a substantial minority (or sometimes majority) of white citizens. Their greatest fear, played up to fever pitch by their own politicians, is that black control of the police will mean that black hoodlums, youth gangs, and most especially, black militants (the most dangerous element in the view of whites) will run wild in the city. To pacify them, the black mayor must appoint a Police Chief who has their confidence.

Thus Carl Stokes never was able to appoint a black police chief in Cleveland.[25] Kenneth Gibson's first police chief in Newark was a white

career officer who was heavily opposed in the black community (Haskins, 1972:156-157; Curvin, 1975:209). Richard Hatcher did in fact appoint a black police chief, but as Greer (1971:27) notes,

> the Mayor has not been able to bring the police department, fully under civilian control. As in cities with white mayors, the police remain to a large extent a law unto themselves . . . . The real difficulty is that the chain of command is not able to exercise fully effective control over the rank and file and the lower-echelon officers, who are committed to a right-wing politics and daily practice.

This statement points to the final constraint, the black mayor's need to retain at least a modicum of support from the rank and file police. These officers posses an awesome political power. By permitting and playing up some crimes against whites, they can confirm the worst fears of white ethnics. And by being especially brutal in the black community they can undermine the mayor's credibility with his own constituency. Thus Mayor Bradley went so far as to praise the Los Angeles Police Department's massacre of suspected Symbionese Liberation Army members, despite the fact that the lives of black citizens in the neighborhood were wantonly endangered (Greer, 1974:528).

The constraints just discussed, coupled with their own ideology and campaign promises lead black mayors to attempt to dramatically increase the number of black officers on the force. As we saw in the previous chapter, black police are significantly different from white police in terms of their class background, perception of a police career, experience of discrimination outside of and within the department, and ties and orientation to the black community. While on the face of it these police jobs represent a divisible benefit to certain individual members of the black community, the presence of blacks on the force also has the potential to provide a significant indivisible

benefit to the entire black community: i.e., better crime control and a decline in repressive policing.[26]

As noted in the previous chapter, the entire black community, from middle class to militant, is united in the demand for better crime control in their neighborhoods. Although policing strategies appear to be only shakily related to reductions in crime (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:182), black mayors have nevertheless sought to reorganize the police department in ways that might make it more effective in the war against crime. When Carl Stokes became mayor, for instance, the recordkeeping system of the Cleveland Police Department was in such disarray that it was impossible to know now serious the crime problem really was. Stokes set out to rectify this situation (Stokes, 1973:169).

Additionally, Stokes found upon taking office that only 971 out of the total department force of 2200 were actually out patrolling the streets. Within two weeks he ordered the transfer of 280 officers and put a number of plainclothes officers back in uniform (Haskins, 1972: 30-32). In Gary, Richard Hatcher reorganized the police department and put police officers on city buses to ensure citizen safety. He also presided over a thirteenfold multiplication in gambling raids, which effectively moved a great deal of organized crime outside the city limits. Only at that point did a third of the police force walk off their jobs to protest low wages. It appeared that Mayor Hatcher's policy was beginning to cut into their illegal extra income (Greer, 1974:528; Nelson and Meranto, 1977:349).

But perhaps most significantly, black mayors have moved to alter the repressive way in which the black community has been policed.

Indeed, Greer (1979:111) calls this "the major achievement of Mayor Hatcher's administration." "This advance," he says, "which contradicts the pessimistic view that black urban power is essentially of only symbolic significance, has hardly been noted let alone analyzed." Hatcher sharply reduced the harassment and intimidation by the police of the local black population--especially the youth. He ordered the Gary police to remove the American flag shoulder patches from their uniforms because blacks considered them emblems of racism--an important symbolic act despite the fact he was later forced to back down. Similarly, Carl Stokes succeeded in getting the Cleveland police to doff the white riot helmets that they had worn constantly since the disorder in Hough in 1966 (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:349).

Furthermore, black mayors have attempted to resist the current trend in policing--financed in large part by the Federal government--toward high technology equipment (communications and intelligence systems, battle-tested military hardware) and military organization and techniques (SWAT teams and "riot-control" training) (Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977:76-125). Mindful of whom this equipment and these techniques are likely to be used on, black mayors have attempted to arrest this development. Stokes, for instance, repeatedly vetoed the purchase of dum-dum bullets by the Cleveland police department over the strong objections of his Safety Director (Stokes, 1973:191-192).

Another way that black mayors have reduced police repression in the black community is through their policy of putting more black officers on the force. Because these black officers are more likely to live in the black community, to have friends and/or relatives there, to participate in community activities and to have a different

orientation to police work (see Chapter Two), they bring a less repressive style of policing to that community. This fact, coupled with the policy changes noted above reduces the hostility and tension between the black community and the police. This in turn tends to improve crime control as black citizens cooperate more with the police.

Even when there is a breakdown and the police take repressive action in the black community, the black mayor can often limit the damage and prevent the situation from getting out of hand. A good example of this is the Glenville incident which took place in the first summer of the Stokes' administration. The Cleveland police had received information off the streets of an arms buildup by a group of black militants in the black neighborhoods of Glenville. They handled the situation poorly, ultimately provoking a shooting incident in which three officers were killed. "It seemed as though the top officers of the department wanted some kind of incident to discredit the Mayor," a black sergeant wrote later.

Nevertheless, the police were outraged by the killings. They became even more infuriated when the neighborhood residents greeted Stokes with respect when he toured the neighborhood in an effort to calm things. At that time, many black residents told Stokes that they were fearful of the white police, whom they perceived to be angry and out for revenge. The Mayor thus issued an order pulling all of the white police out of the area. While the black community "seemed relieved" by this action, the white police became even angrier. Outrageous and obscene remarks directed at the Mayor were heard over police radio.

Meanwhile, Stokes sent black community leaders in to police the

neighborhood. The result was that no more shots were fired, and order was restored. When the regular police were sent back in on the second night, the community did not respond to their provocations and no further incidents developed (Stokes, 1973:206-224; Nelson and Meranto, 1977:350-352).

This incident illustrates the way in which a black mayor can protect the black community to a certain extent from police violence. But it also illustrates what business interests see as the primary benefit of black mayors: their ability to "keep the lid on" the black community, i.e., to prevent racial unrest. Black mayors are thus caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, the limitations mentioned earlier--of black politics, of the local state, and of the current political economy of the city--restrict the ability of the black mayor to deliver benefits to his constituency, thus providing the conditions for potential unrest. On the other hand, the participation of black mayors in the local governing coalition is contingent upon their playing a neocolonial role in relation to the black community (Moss, 1977: 139-140). Black mayors are thus forced to take many of the same steps to quell disturbances that white mayors would take, even though they have a better understanding of the underlying causes of these disturbances. And if they fail, the upper levels of the state stand ready to supervene their authority and restore order.

Thus class meets race in the administation of the black mayors. The logic of racial oppression and the black political response to it impells these black mayors to deliver benefits to blacks which are designed to mitigate, if not overcome this oppression. As they do so, the logic of class exploitation asserts itself ever more insistently.

Black mayors, like any other mayors, are constrained to act within the parameters set by the private accumulation process. This means that they may be forced to act against the interests of the majority of blacks.

The police, of course, play a key role in defending and implementing the dynamics of racial oppression and class exploitation. At the same time, as we have seen, there are contradictions within the police organization and among the police which render their exact role in all of this problematic. Whether and to what extent a black mayor is able to substantially change the role and behavior of the police in the black community, and the implications of possible changes, is an empirical question. In what follows I attempt to provide some answers through a case study of the experience of a black mayor in the city of Detroit.

Notes to Chapter Three

[1]The leading proponents of this view include Glazer and Moynihan (1970), Banfield and Wilson (1966), and J.Q. Wilson (1960).

[2]In addition, two other major cities have had black mayors who were not directly elected to the position. In 1967, a Congressionally-mandated reorganization of the local government of Washington, D.C. replaced a three-person governing board with a single appointed official. President Johnson named Walter Washington as the city's first mayor as well as its first black mayor. Washington was reappointed by President Nixon in 1969 and 1973. In Dayton, Ohio, James Howell McGee was elected one of the four city-wide Commissioners in 1969. As a result of a political deadlock he was elected mayor by the other Commissioners in 1970. He was reelected in 1973.

[3]Analysts taking this position include Piven and Cloward (1968), Friesema (1969), Tabb (1971), Greer (1974), and Nelson and Meranto (1977:335-381).

[4]The most important argument in this regard is found in Cloward and Piven (1975). Other important analyses which stress this dependency include Hamilton (1973), Holden (1973), Henderson (1972), Greenberg, et al. (1971) and Bailey (1967).

[5]The classic statement of pluralism is Dahl (1961). For a general critique of pluralism, see Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Mankoff (1970), and Parenti (1978:27-37). A critique of pluralism with specific reference to race is Bellush and David (1971).

[6]During the heyday of Reconstruction, from 1867 to 1877, blacks served in the legislatures of every state in the South. In South Carolina, blacks were a majority in the legislature in every session

but one during this period. Blacks elected twenty of their number to the U.S. House of Representatives and there were two black U.S. Senators (both from Mississippi). In addition to the governorship of Louisiana, blacks were elected as treasurers, secretaries of state, and superintendents of education in various Southern states (Dymally, 1969:26).

[7]Although terrorist intimidation of blacks took many forms (e.g., crossburnings, nightridings, beatings), its quintessential expression was lynching. Between 1880 and 1930, over 3500 blacks were lynched in the South (Grant, 1968:175).

[8]One must be very careful, however, not to overstate the benefits of the political machine to the majority of ethnic immigrants. The machines were most definitely not working-class institutions. They were more like petty bourgeois organizations which were run "like a business." While machine leaders avoided taking public stances which would be likely to alienate workers, they nevertheless opposed unions and participated in red-baiting. More subtly, but more importantly, they provided a political socialization to the immigrants which was based upon a practical politics of individual opportunity and mobility. To the extent that group awareness and group activity was promoted, it was done as an ethnic group, rather than on a class basis. And while the machine did provide divisible benefits to individuals, it also plundered the city treasury and provided inadequate or no services at all to the objectively needy immigrants--clearly an indivisible loss. This assessment of the machine, of course, is opposed to the positively functional view which has prevailed in American sociology and political science. For a discussion of this view, and a more extensive presentation of the radical

Notes to Chapter Three

critique of urban political machines, see Greer (1979:27-32), Fainstein and Fainstein (1974:14-30), Hamilton (1972) and Judd (1979:52-86).

[9]Thus, for example, black Chicago politicians cooperated in recruiting black labor to break strikes and in condemning labor organizing (Katznelson, 1973:97). Gosnell (1935) provides a classic study of these detached, isolated leaders in Chicago. Looking back upon the institutionalization of the black sub-machine in the 1930s, Carl Stokes (1973:16-17) notes the persistence of this type of black leader and its effect on black politics:

> The black politicans of that time [the 1930s]--and this is still true for most--learned only to get themselves insinuated into the white party apparatus. They had political expertise, but they never questioned their minority status, nor did they question being mere beneficiaries of the system rather than entrepreneurs in their own right. . . . None of them had that extra dimension it took to understand a mass politics that ignores ward lines. Even later, when younger men with supposedly new understanding came along, they too saw politics as an arena for personal aggrandizement and ended up in the same kind of subordinate status within the party system that choked off their predecessors.

The research of Harold Baron (1968) dramatically illustrated that thirty to fifty years of machine politics in Chicago had not produced significant inroads for blacks. While blacks made up twenty percent of the Cook County population and 28 percent of Chicago's population at the time of his study, they held only 2.6 percent of the top policy-making positions in major public and private institutions in the Chicago area. Moreover, the posts that blacks did hold tended to be the less important and more marginal ones. "The actual power vested in Negro leaders," concluded Baron, "is about one-third as great as the percentage of posts they hold."

[10]The relative political impotence of the black community is

illustrated, however, by the fact that blacks were unable to generate the clout to demand welfare payments anywhere near proportional to their need. Thus total AFDC rolls rose only 17 percent in the 1950s (Piven and Cloward, 1971:218).

[11]An extensive analysis of these two developments may be found in Piven and Cloward (1971:222-340) and Piven (1970a, 1972, 1973). The present discussion follows their analysis closely.

[12]Evidence cited below on community participation in and support for the civil disorders is from Skolnick (1969:147-148).

[13]As Draper (1977:268) notes in a discussion of cooptation, Marx viewed the capacity of a ruling class to assimilate new elements as an index of its continuing strength. Similarly, Wolfe (1971) sees cooptation as one of the several "reproductive mechanisms" which capitalism requires in order to maintain itself as a system. "There are times," he says, "when sections of the ruling class become sponsors of reform in order to rationalize the system and make it work better." For an analysis and critique of the strategy of internal colonialism and indirect rule, see Allen (1970). Baran and Sweezy (1966:271-277) observe that, in some ways, tokenism has always been a means of controlling the black population in this country.

[14]In Oakland, California, for instance, the local Economic Development Council received in 1968 over five times the one million dollars in federal aid given to the city (Judd, 1979:328).

[15]The idea of blacks in the U.S. as a separate nation was first put forth by Arthur Anderson in 1913. In 1928, the Communist Party USA made the definition of blacks in the South as a Negro Nation a central part

of their political strategy. They based their analysis on Stalin's famous definition of a nation as "a historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" (Peery, 1975:60). This interpretation of black nationalism remained "distinctly peripheral" and was abandoned by the CPUSA in 1948 (Bracey, Meier and Rudwick, 1970:166-391), though some communist splinter groups still adhere to it today (see, e.g., Peery, 1975). While the penetration of industrial capitalism into the rural South and the mass incorporation of blacks into the urban industrial system as wage laborers arrested the evolution of an authentic black nation-state, nonetheless, as Boggs (1970:160) and Marable (1980:60-61) point out, continued racial and class oppression have nurtured and developed black nationalist tendencies which, "in another kind of economic order, would logically produce a kind of 'nation within a nation'" (Marable, 1980:61). These black nationalist tendencies are, moreover, uniquely radical. As Miliband (1977:98-106) notes, nationalism has historically been a bourgeois phenomenon--i.e., a recognition by bourgeois groups of the benefits of state autonomy and power. Because blacks tend to lack these bourgeois elements, their version tends to be more radical.

[16]These were the type of individualist, dependent "Negro" politicians described by Gosnell (1935) in his classic work.

[17]Almost three-fifths of the black precinct committeemen held patronage jobs at city hall. In any given year a full quarter of Gary's black population received some form of direct assistance from these black precinct committeemen (Greer, 1979:37). According to Nelson and Meranto (1977:228), these black submachine politicians made it clear to Hatcher

before the election that "they were not committed to black power but black capitalism and that they intended to sell their services to the highest bidder."

[18]Thus both Hatcher and Stokes suffered waning popularity in the black community in their first few months in office, though they later successfully reversed this trend (Nelson and Meranto, 1977:361).

[19]Because it is the petty bourgeoisie who generally administer the local state, particularly in large cities, the dominance of monopoly is more opaque, and the illusion of pluralism is fostered. Schulze (1958) showed that, in "Cibola," politics was directly controlled by middle-class business and professional men, almost none of whom occupied a position of economic dominance within the community. Clelland and Form (1964) found a similar pattern in "Wheelsburg." More contemporarily, Hayes (1972) and Greer (1979) have shown the hidden power of big business on local politics in Oakland, California and Gary, Indiana, respectively.

[20]This competition is endemic to the local state; competition among U.S. cities reaches back into the early 19th century. At first the competition was over the building of port facilities, then canals, railroads and, later, highways. Always there was the necessity of local investment in infrastructure like water, sewage and lighting systems (Glaab and Brown, 1976:21-44, 99-119, 136-158). Today, airports and industrial parks would have to be added to the list, as well as convention centers, hotels and luxury apartments in the central business district (Judd, 1979:359-387).

[21]In the face of a $35 million deficit after his first year in office, Newark's Kenneth Gibson remarked in a plea for more money from

the state and federal governments:

> The money we need is just to maintain operations, to pay the police, firemen, clerks, and staff. What we are talking about is just enough money to keep us afloat, enough money to let us live another year. We aren't talking about changing things, improving things--just surviving (Haskins, 1972:162).

All of the black mayors face essentially the same problem.

[22]The historical record, though not elaborate, is extensive enough at this point that we can begin to formulate some answers to this question. For an overall assessment of the experience of black mayors, see Greer (1974) and Nelson and Meranto (1977:322-374). For the case of Gary, see Poinsett (1970), Nelson (1971), Greer (1971, 1979), Haskins (1972:49-87), and Nelson and Meranto (1977:166-321). For the case of Cleveland, see Weinberg (1968), Haskins (1972:3-47), and Stokes (1973). For Newark, see Haskins (1972:133-164) and Curvin (1975). For the case of an initially unsuccessful attempt to elect a black mayor in the black majority city of East St. Louis, see Kilson (1971) and Nelson and Meranto (1977:35-66). No comparable accounts exist for the successes in Detroit, Los Angeles, Atlanta and New Orleans. The present work is an attempt to provide an analysis of the Detroit case.

[23]In Cleveland, Carl Stokes told each one of his new political appointees: "You are going to have the opportunity to do wrong, to make money under the table. If you take it, keep that first dollar and frame it, because when you get caught you're going to taste the full measure of the law" (Stokes, 1973:175). In Newark, Kenneth Gibson turned down a rumored $31,000 which was to be his if he made the "right" appointments (Haskins, 1972:156). Hatcher's honesty, says Greer (1971:24)"is beyond question. Although his opponents have publicly accused him of

being a 'Castroite,' they have never accused him of stealing, or permitting his associates to steal."

[24]In addition, a great deal of city equipment had been deliberately damaged by the employees, particularly in the police and sanitation departments. And unlike previous mayors who found $400,000 to $500,000 in the city treasury upon taking office, Hatcher found only $15,000 (Haskins, 1972:75).

[25]The third of his four Safety Directors was black. But retired Air Force Lt. General Benjamin O. Davis "was a disaster. His background and training made him highly sympathetic to the police point of view and disdainful of the black masses." He was a constant thorn in the mayor's side until he resigned (Stokes, 1973:180-204).

[26]Hiring black police may be the only way to provide this indivisible benefit to the black community. As Burton Levy (1965), Director of the Community Relations Division of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission has noted, there are three basic strategies for improving police/black community relations: (1) professionalization of the police through increasing education; (2) establishment of formal community relations programs in the black community; (3) the employment of more black officers. The first strategy, says Levy, is called into question by the evidence that increased education does not necessarily decrease racism--witness the racist behavior of professional educators in ghetto schools. The second strategy is questionable because there are no valid measures of program success, and furthermore, "you can't sell a bad product." That leaves the third strategy of hiring more black officers. At the time that Levy wrote, this strategy had not been tested to any

great extent in any police department. Current evidence indicates that it is by far the most successful strategy for improving the relationship between the police and the black community. There are some significant constraints, however, on the ability of the black mayor to hire and promote black officers. As Greer (1978:54-55) points out, civil service boards which were originally implemented in an attempt to insulate the police from popular control by the working class, are now being used in a similar way to prevent popular control by blacks. In Cleveland, Stokes (1973:173) points out how blacks were effectively excluded because of the ruling clique's ability to accept or reject hiring and promotions. Budget cuts and layoffs by seniority differentially affect the hiring and retention of minority officers as well.

PART II

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF BLACK POLITICS, A BLACK MAYOR AND THE POLICE IN DETROIT

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

This section presents a case study of the police and the black community in Detroit, and the effect upon both of the election of a black mayor. I have chosen the case study approach because it appears to be the best methodology for investigating the issues I have laid out in Part I. Case studies are sometimes criticized on the grounds that they are not generalizable. While not entirely accurate, this objection ironically points to the great strength of case studies: the ability to probe deeply into a singular example of a phenomenon and capture its unique nuances.

This is particularly important in urban research on local issues, since each city has a relatively unique history and a unique configuration of political and economic forces within it. Generalization across cities can sometimes therefore be superficial and misleading. In many ways, there is more to be learned from a comparision and contrast of in-depth diachronic case studies than from a synchronic analysis across many cities.

I have chosen the city of Detroit for my case study for a number of reasons highly germane to my research topic. First of all, Detroit is by far the largest black-majority city in the U.S., and the largest of these

cities to elect a black mayor.

With regard specifically to the police department, there has historically been no lack of tension between it and the black community in Detroit. Detroit experienced the largest and most costly urban civil disorder in U.S. history in July, 1967 in which 43 people (officially) were killed, thousands were injured, and over $100 million in property damage was sustained. The leading grievance of the black community in all studies and polls was found to be police behavior.

Compounding the problem, the police department instituted, in January of 1971, a highly controversial program called STRESS--Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets. It made use of police volunteers to engage in surveillance and decoy operations in "high crime areas"--i.e., the black community. In the two and a half years of its existence, this unit was responsible for the killing of 22 citizens (all but one of them black) and the wounding of 19 others. Assessment of STRESS was overwhelmingly split along racial lines.

STRESS was thus the overriding issue in the 1973 mayoral election campaign between State Senator Coleman Young, a black from the heart of Detroit's ghetto, and the white Police Commissioner, John Nichols. The Police Commissioner defended STRESS and said that the issue was "whether or not we're going to be allowed to police the black community." Young constantly attacked the program and promised, if elected, to end "blackjack rule by terror" on the part of the police. The stage was set, upon his election in November of 1973, for a confrontation with the police department. The extent to which Mayor Young has been able to change the department is the subject of this section.

The data that I have used in my investigation is of four types:

(1) Newspaper reports and commentary, both local and national, but especially focused on Detroit's two mass-circulation dailies, The Detroit Free Press (liberal and Democratic in orientation) and The Detroit News (conservative and Republican in orientation) and Detroit's major black newspaper, the weekly Michigan Chronicle. While political bias is always a danger when using newspaper sources, I feel that it is not a significant problem here due to the wide variation in social and political orientation in the sources. (2) Published and unpublished reports by city agencies, especially the Detroit Police Department, and by various private organizations and community associations. (3) Published academic research on issues relating to the topic of investigation, including historical, documentary and survey research (4) Personal interviews with the police hierarchy and rank and file officers, including the President of the Guardians of Michigan, a militant local black police organization, and the Executive Deputy Chief of the Detroit Police Department, James Bannon. Bannon is a career officer in the department who has risen through the ranks to the Number Two position. Paradoxically, he is also the former commander of the notorious STRESS squad as well as the man selected by Mayor Young to nuture and develop his centrally-important ministration program. Bannon also has a Ph.D. in sociology from Wayne State University. Altogether, five Detroit police officers were interviewed: three whites and two blacks. The officers were not selected on a random basis, but rather on the basis of their availability and their historical experience and knowledge of important historical developments with the department. The majority of these officers were provided anonymity and are not identified here. It was my intention to interview the current Chief of Police, William Hart.

I tried to do so for over a year. With the extensive layoffs in the department, however, he could not find the time.

Turning now to the analysis that follows, in Chapter Four I trace the history of the black community in Detroit, with special attention to the two crucial issues of black politics and policing in the black community. This extended exploration provides both a historical backdrop for the subsequent actions of Mayor Young, and the reactions he has provoked, as well as a baseline by which to evaluate the significance of the changes he has made.

Chapter Five provides a look at the personal biography of Coleman Young and the political context of his election as mayor of Detroit. The chapter closely follows the theoretical and historical discussion in Chapter Three in Part I.

Chapter Six examines Mayor Young's attempt to gain control over the police department in order to re-orient it according to his political agenda. The sources of resistance to the mayor's programs, and his countermoves, are explained in detail.

In Chapter Seven I examine the impact of the internal changes in the Detroit Police Department on its role and behavior in the city as a whole and in the black community in particular. Specifically, I examine the changing police/community relationship in terms of the two dimensions of policing developed in Chapter One: law enforcement and order maintenance. This section draws heavily on the theoretical application of these functions in the black internal colony which was developed in Chapter Two of Part I. Finally, I conclude with an evaluation of the level of success Mayor Young has achieved in attempting to transform the role of the Detroit police in the black community.

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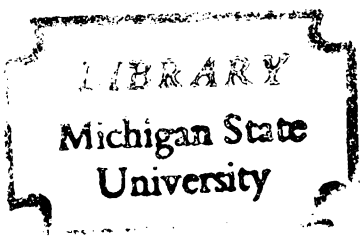

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE BLACK COMMUNITY, THE POLICE AND POLITICS IN DETROIT: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Blacks in Early Detroit

Detroit is a very old city, having been founded by the French nobleman Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac in 1701. Until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the city remained a relatively small frontier trading post. Then, three developments elsewhere on the continent catalyzed a period of rapid economic and population growth in Detroit. These developments were: demonstration of the feasibility of steamboat travel on Lake Erie in 1818; the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, connecting Lake Erie with the Hudson River; and the opening of the Welland Canal in 1833, connecting Lake Erie with Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Detroit, sitting on the straits between Lake Erie and Lake Huron, was in a good position to benefit from all of these developments. Thus the city's population increased from just over 2,000 in 1830 to just over 9,000 in 1840; by 1860 it was over 45,000. Not even among the fifty largest U.S. cities in 1830, by 1860 Detroit was in the top twenty (Conot, 1974:8-24).

The first blacks to come to Detroit probably were brought as slaves. Despite the fact that the ordinance which created the Northwest Territory, of which Detroit and Michigan were a part, declared slavery illegal within its boundaries, a number of wealthy Detroiters continued to own slaves for several more decades. Michigan law,

moreover, forbade the residence of any Negro who did not file a bond of $500 to insure "good behavior" (Ewen, 1978:110). Gradually though, escaped slaves began to filter into Detroit, lured by the security of the Canadian border just across the river. It was the presence of two of these escaped slaves which led to what one prominent local historian called "Detroit's first Negro insurrection."

In 1833 two slavehunters came to town and charged a black married couple with being runaway slaves. Because they could not prove that they were legally free (they had in fact escaped from slavery in Kentucky some years earlier), the sheriff put them in jail while he pondered the situation. During the night, the woman escaped by changing clothes with a friend. The man was rescued the next day as he was being taken to the boat to be returned by a group of armed and angry blacks. In the ensuing melee, the sheriff was seriously wounded. Federal troops had to be called in to quell the disturbance (Katzman, 1973:8-12). A commission of prominent citizens called to investigate the incident concluded the following with regard to Detroit's black population:

> Neither their habits, nor their morals, with a few exceptions, make them a safe or desirable addition to our population. Indeed, but a small number of the colored people seen in our streets can be considered as residents of the city. The greater proportion are vagrant and transient persons, who are continually shifting their quarters from one side of the river to the other as they find employment, or it is to be feared, for the greater convenience of carrying on their depradations against the property of our citizens (quoted in Ewen, 1978: 111-112).

At this time, as the commission noted, blacks filled only menial jobs in the city. They also had no schools, and could not vote. The first black public school in Detroit was opened in 1842. Not only was it an inferior facility, but blacks were restricted to six years of schooling, while whites were given twelve. Detroit schools remained

rigidly segregated, despite state laws to the contrary, until an 1871 state supreme court order forced a grudging integration, after a fashion. An 1855 referendum to enfranchise blacks was defeated by a seven to one margin in the city and almost three to one statewide. An 1867 state constitution which enfranchised blacks was defeated by a three to two margin. Thus blacks in Detroit did not obtain the right to vote until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1870 (Geschwender, 1977:60-61).

Detroit experienced its first relatively large influx of blacks beginning in the 1840s. Many of these were free blacks from the Virginia cities of Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Petersburg. Mechanics and tradesmen, they migrated North to escape the tightening black codes in the South. As time went on, of course, they were joined by increasing numbers of runaway slaves. Detroit was a major stop on the Underground Railroad, as no other large U.S. city was so close to Canada. The black population in the city thus expanded from 193 in 1840 to 1,403 in 1860, or just over three percent of the city's total population. It was, however, confined to one ghetto east of Woodward Avenue (Katzman, 1973:1-30).

In 1863 Detroit, like New York and other major cities, suffered an interracial riot between recent Irish immigrants and blacks. These immigrants resented being conscripted to fight in a Civil War in which they had no apparent stake. Furthermore, they feared competition in the labor market from a further influx of unskilled blacks. These fears and resentments were fanned by the local press controlled by the Democratic party. Thus, when a black man was accused and convicted of raping a white woman these antagonisms burst into flames. A primarily

Irish and German mob gathered to lynch the man, but were driven off by soldiers. The mob vented its wrath on the black ghetto, setting fire to over thirty homes, killing two blacks, injuring many, and leaving over 200 homeless. The alleged rapist was later cleared and pardoned by the Governor, but no one in the mob was ever punished (Katzman, 1973: 44-47).

Detroit continued to develop as a manufacturing center after the Civil War. Foreign immigrants swelled its population to a quarter million in the 1890s, and a half million on the eve of World War I. These white foreigners swamped Detroit's black population, which declined to slightly over one percent of the total. Moreover, because the immigrants were preferred by businesspeople over blacks, the latter were forced out of many traditional skilled, unskilled and professional jobs which they had held. Blacks became overwhelmingly concentrated in service occupations (Geschwender, 1977:62-63).

The Formation of the Black Internal Colony

The advent of World War I changed all this. Immigration restrictions and labor shortages in the face of rapidly expanding production sent labor recruiters to the South to encourage black migration. And migrate they did. In 1916 and 1917 alone, over 30,000 blacks came to Detroit. By 1920, the city's black population had increased 611 percent over the 1910 figure and had jumped to over four percent of the city total. In 1924-1925 another 40,000 blacks migrated to Detroit, doubling the size of the black community and making it over six and a half percent of the total population of Detroit. Quantitatively, the size of this black population increase was unmatched anywhere in the North except in the steel town of Gary, Indiana (Thomas, 1977; Ewen, 1978:110).

This latter fact also hints at a major qualitative change in Detroit's black community in this period, i.e., the rapid entry of blacks into industrial production. Of 67 manufacturing concerns in Detroit, only five employed blacks prior to 1914; after 1915, 56 of th did. In 1910 Detroit trailed Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati the number of blacks employed in the industrial sector. By 1920 Detroit was second to none (Thomas, 1977). And whereas roughly half o all blacks were employed in service industries in Detroit in 1910, by 1926 over three-quarters of all blacks in the city were working in manufacturing occupations (Geschwender, 1977:63; Ewen, 1978:114).

In the burgeoning auto industry, Packard was the first to employ significant numbers of blacks--1100 in 1917. The Dodge brothers followed shortly after this. But nowhere did blacks achieve greater success than at Henry Ford's Rouge Plant. From only 50 in 1916, their number increased to 2,500 in 1920 (out of 57,000 total), 5,000 by 1923, 10,000 in 1926, and 12,000 (out of 100,000 total) at the Rouge by the end of the decade. Dodge, the next largest black employer at this time had 850 black employees (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:5-7).

These numbers gave Henry Ford enormous power in the black community. His black employees, together with their families, represented a quarter of the entire black community in Detroit. Moreover, these blacks had to obtain their jobs through local black ministers, wh acted as labor brokers and had free access to the shop floor to supervise and settle disputes. Ford also helped support a number of black churches with gifts of various types. These black churches, in turn, were the major sources of support for the Detroit NAACP, which had been founded in 1912. Auto executives and their families, however, were als major contributors.

Other industrial magnates obtained black workers through the Detroit Urban League, which had been founded by the Employers Association of Detroit and the Community Chest in 1916. During the 1920s half of the city's black wage earners reportedly obtained work through the League. Aggressively anti-union, the League also supplied black strike-breakers. Both the NAACP and the League were pro-management and pro-Ford up through the 1940s (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:4-21).

The subordination and dependency of these black leadership organizations points to the major dynamic of race relations in Detroit in the 1920s: the institutionalization of the black internal colony. Blacks were imported and incorporated as industrial wage laborers on a massive scale in this period, as we have seen. At the same time, the black reserve army was formed and reinforced spatially through a variety of institutions and agencies. In the industrial sector, black workers were incorporated almost exclusively into a single industry, automobile manufacturing. Within this industry, moreover, they were segregated within particular divisions, and within divisions they were restricted to specific plants.

Thus Chrysler employed blacks only in its Dodge Division; within Dodge, blacks were almost exclusively confined to Dodge Main in Hamtramck. And despite the impressive number of blacks he hired at his Rouge complex, Henry Ford had few black employees at his other Detroit area plants. Outside of Detroit, he refused to hire blacks altogether, except as menials. Finally, with the notable exception of the Rouge, blacks in the auto plants were confined to the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs, primarily in the foundries and the paint shops (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:7).

Spatially, blacks were confined to a ghetto on the near east side of the city called--not without a hint of sarcasm--Paradise Valley. Here they paid exorbitant rents for run-down housing and suffered an environmentally-caused disease rate two to three times that of white city residents (Ewen, 1978:113-115). The rapidly-expanding population of white workers in the city was hardly better off, but, inflamed by racist demogogues and organizations, they came to define blacks as the major threat to their livelihoods, and therefore cooperated with employers in imposing a caste solution on the labor market and in residential housing as well.

The Roots of Interracial Violence

Detroit was an expanding industrial city in 1925. With over 1.2 million people, it had become the fourth largest city in the nation. In terms of industrial activity, it ranked number three. It also had the third largest concentration of blacks in the country. Overall, though, blacks represented only 6.6 percent of the city's population; nearly fifty percent of that population was made up of foreign-born whites (Woodford, 1979:2). Moreover, a sizeable portion of the remainder was composed of poor white migrants from the South, who brought the racial customs and hatred of that region with them. In a situation of competition for jobs, housing, schooling, and other resources, this racism flourished. This competition and the use of blacks to break strikes encouraged the foreign-born workers to pick this racism up as well.

In this atmosphere, the Ku Klux Klan thrived. It has been estimated that in Michigan as a whole in the 1920s, 875,000 belonged to the organization (Rist, 1972:8). In 1924-1925 the Klan launched a drive to dominate Detroit. While they fell short of their goal, their campaign had lasting implications (Widick, 1972:3-22). In 1925, the Klan ran a

write-in candidate, Charles Bowles, for Mayor of Detroit. He actually received the largest vote total in the election but was defeated when 17,000 of his votes were invalidated on technical grounds. John W. Smith, the man who was elected, had campaigned against the Klan, denouncing them for seeking to "establish a dictatorship." But he also said:

> I must say that I deprecate most strongly the moving of Negroes, or other persons into districts in which they know their presence may cause riot or bloodshed. I believe that any colored person who endangers life and property, simply to gratify his personal pride, is an enemy of his race as well as an incitant to riot and murder. These men, who have permitted themselves to be tools of the Ku Klux Klan in its effort to fan the flames of racial hatred into murderous fire, have hurt the cause of their race in a degree that cannot be measured (quoted in Widick, 1971:4).

In July of 1925, over 10,000 people attended a KKK rally in Detroit at which supporters were urged to "keep niggers in their place." They advocated a law which would legally restrict the areas where blacks could live. Until it could be enacted, the people were urged to form "neighborhood improvement associations" to enforce spatial segregation. Taking their cue from this meeting, a group of homeowners from Detroit's East Side formed the Water Works Improvement Association. It seems that a black gynecologist, Dr. Ossian Sweet, had just recently purchased a house in this all-white neighborhood and had announced his intention of moving in in September. The Improvement Association met in early September to develop strategies to oppose Sweet's action.

Aware of the hostile situation, Dr. Sweet notified the police that he intended to move in on September 8th. He arrived that day with a number of friends and relatives, an extra supply of food, ten guns and 400 rounds of ammunition. A crowd of whites immediately surrounded the house and began pelting it with stones. Police were present in the area

to direct traffic, but they did not intervene. On the second night, Dr. Sweet's brother and a friend arrived. As they made their way toward the house, the hostile crowd surged around them. Shots rang out from the house, and a white man on a porch across the street was killed.

The police arrested Dr. Sweet and all the other occupants of the house and charged them with first-degree murder. The NAACP secured the services of famed attorney Clarence Darrow to defend them. A long and bitter trial, in which Darrow attempted to expose the history of institutionalized racism, ended in a hung jury. Sweet's younger brother was tried again and subsequently acquitted by another all-white jury, mainly because of Darrow's brilliant and moving defense (Widick, 1972:3-22; Geschwender, 1977:64-65).

The fact that the police took no action to protect the Sweets is not surprising. It is clear that the department saw as part of its role at this time the management and control of the black community. In 1924-1925, over forty blacks had been killed by the police. Many of the officers expressed sympathy to the Klan point of view. And in 1925, the department sent a representative to recruit whites in the South, despite the fact that there was no shortage of applicants in the city (Widick, 1972:16).

Detroit's black population tripled in the 1920s, and increased another 25 percent in the 1930s, reaching nearly 150,000 by the end of that period. Because of the vigilante actions of the Klan and its more violent wing, the Black Legion, this swelling black population was confined to a relatively small area on the city's near East Side, which came to be known as Black Bottom. Paradise Valley was the business district and cultural center of this ghetto. Here a bohemian subculture flourished that became nationally famous, and whose jazzy nightlife

attracted whites from around the city. The relaxed ambience of the area was reinforced by the few black officers on the city's police force (about forty out of a total of 3,000) who were permanently assigned to the Valley. They partied and mixed with the night crowd, using their police powers only to sanction explicit criminal behavior (Detroit Free Press, 1/7/73).

The Depression hit the black community hard. As the auto industry cut its total employment almost in half, whites began to successfully contest for the less desirable jobs held by blacks. As a result, unemployment in Detroit's black community soared to 80 percent (Rist, 1972:9; Widick, 1972:44). Politically, because of Detroit's Progressive, nonpartisan, at-large electoral system, blacks were effectively excluded from real participation. Furthermore, blacks developed no party machinery of their own because of this. As a result, black electoral support tended to shift from election to election based on the personal appeal of the candidate. Thus while black votes helped elect John W. Smith in 1925, they were unable to prevent the eventual electoral triumph of Charles Bowles, the KKK candidate in 1927. Though blacks did help elect a white liberal, Frank Murphy in 1930 when Bowles was recalled on charges of graft, Mayor Murphy was able to accomplish little because of the financial impact of the Depression on the city's budget (Widick, 1972:37).

Mounting white violence became a source of deep concern for Detroit's blacks in the 1930s. The dreaded Black Legion executed over fifty people in the city, many of them black, between 1931 and 1936 (Geschwender, 1977:64). Police brutality became so blatant and widespread that an extraordinarily diverse group of black leaders from all segments of the community came together to form the Committee to End

Police Brutality. They entreated Mayor Richard Reading, who had garnered an overwhelming majority of the black vote in 1937, to remove the police commissioner from office. When he refused to do so, the blacks charged that this in effect sanctioned the brutality. Within a relatively short period of time, they secured tens of thousands of signatures from both races on petitions demanding the ouster of the commissioner. Mayor Reading's opponent in the 1939 election, Edward Jeffries, claimed that he opposed unnecessary police violence and vowed, if elected, to fire the police commissioner. As a result, Jeffries won the black vote and the election by a large margin, and was easily reelected in 1941 (Meier and Rudwick, 1974:197-206).[1]

Racial Competition and Racial Violence in the 1940s

The national shift to wartime production rapidly increased job opportunities in Detroit beginning in 1940. In the three years following this date, over 50,000 blacks and 500,000 Southern whites flooded into the city seeking employment. The deeply ingrained racial prejudices of these Southerners and their employers' desire to keep the workforce divided in the face of union organizing drives combined to severely exacerbate racial tensions in the city.

Henry Ford, for example, had for a long time cultivated his extensive black workforce as the best insurance against a successful challenge by the fledgling UAW. And indeed in 1941 800 black workers refused to leave the Rouge and defended it from UAW organizers during the final Ford organizing drive. Blacks had also been used, though again unsuccessfully, as strikebreakers at Chrysler in 1939 (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:34-84).

Within the plants, wartime labor shortages forced the upgrading of some black workers. The almost universal response of the white workers was to pull wildcat strikes. To its credit, the UAW leadership generally intervened to halt the strikes and to protect the blacks' jobs, despite the fact that the union had gone along with schemes to exclude blacks from these jobs in the past (Geschwender, 1977:34-38; Meier and Rudwick, 1979:108-174). Largely because of these barriers and the overwhelming hostility of the white workforce, blacks made comparatively less progress during the War. In March, 1943, for example, blacks constituted about ten percent of Detroit's population. Yet they held only 8.4 percent of the industrial jobs in the area. Of 185 major war production plants, 55 had less than one percent black employees; black women were only 3.2 percent of all female war production workers, with most of them filling janitorial positions (Rist, 1972:9).

The tremendous migration to the city, coupled with wartime restrictions on construction, put enormous pressure on Detroit's housing supply in the early 1940s. Nowhere was this more true than in the black community. White real estate interests, in cooperation with some fifty registered "neighborhood improvement associations" kept blacks confined to their sixty-block ghetto. The result was high rents and appalling conditions. The 1941 Detroit Housing Commission Annual Report noted that over half of the dwellings in the Paradise Valley area were substandard. Many had no indoor toilet facilities and no running water. Outdoor toilets were often shacks placed over holes in the sewer mains. The Commission also reported that five-room apartments that in white neighborhoods would rent for 25 dollars a month, would in the black

community be subdivided into five one-room apartments renting for 15 dollars apiece (Rist, 1972:11).

The city of Detroit had built the first public housing in the nation in the 1930s. Except for one project near Paradise Valley, however, it was exclusively for whites.[2] In response to the wartime crunch, the federal government began constructing housing projects for defense workers. Generally this housing was built in white neighborhoods for the benefit of white workers. Detroit was somewhat unique, however, in both the number of black residents employed in defense work, and the sheer size of the local black community, which was approaching ten percent of the city total. Thus, in 1941, the federal government announced that a housing project under construction in a white neighborhood in northeast Detroit would be reserved for blacks.

The white community, inflamed by the Klan, immediately mobilized against the decision. They wrote angry letters; they enlisted the support of the FHA, which told the public housing administration that mortgage money in the area would dry up if blacks were allowed to move in. The nearest black neighborhood, a middle-class area called Conant Gardens, also opposed the plan at first becuase they feared racial violence. When they saw the vehemence of the white racist response, however, they reversed themselves and supported black occupancy. Nevertheless, under all this pressure the federal government gave in and announced in January, 1942 that the completed project, ironically named Sojourner Truth Homes after the militant ex-slave, would be occupied by whites.

Now it was the blacks' turn to protest. They were supported in their complaint by the leadership of the UAW. But it was not until the

issue began appearing in Nazi propaganda that the federal government again reversed itself and announced that blacks could move in at the end of February. Racist whites immediately began a continuous picket of Detroit's city hall. The night before the first blacks were to move in, 150 whites attended a Klan rally near the project, highlighted by the traditional cross-burning. The next day, over a thousand whites, armed with clubs, knives and rifles, attacked the blacks' moving vans and overturned them. Hundreds of black youth came to the aid of the black families. The police intervened and arrested over 200 blacks, but only a handful of whites.

At that point, the head of the Detroit Housing Commission came out in support of the whites. Mayor Jeffries washed his hands of the matter and passed the issue back to the federal government. An interracial citizens' delegation from Detroit secured from Washington a pledge to enforce the right of black workers to live in the project. Two months later, 200 black families moved into Sojourner Truth Homes, guarded by over 1700 state troppers and National Guardsmen (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:176-184; Geschwender, 1977:66).

The Federal Office of Facts and Figures sent a team of investigators to Detroit to determine the causes of the Sojourner Truth riots. Their report, submitted in September, 1942, indicated that the city was a racial timebomb. They noted that a serious lack of adequate housing for both blacks and whites, coupled with increasing competition, was contributing to escalating racial tensions. The Detroit police, moreover, worsened the situation because they "seemed bent on suppressing the Negroes." Local political leadership was ineffective. "It seems fairly obvious," they noted, "that Mayor Jeffries is not able

to handle the matter constructively." The authors of the report concluded that "unless strong and quick intervention by some official, preferably the President, is not taken at once, hell is going to be let loose" (Rist, 1972:12-13).

The Race Riot of 1943

Neither federal nor local officials did anything, however, and racial tensions increased. Black and white students clashed in the schools; interracial fights on the overcrowded trolley lines became more frequent. White sailors stationed in the city were involved in a number of clashes with blacks. More than 500 blacks and whites fought at parks around the city. In early June, 1943, 25,000 Packard workers struck in protest over the upgrading of three black workers. Walter White, the national secretary of the NAACP, told a packed rally in downtown Detroit that same month: "Let us drag out into the open what has been whispered throughout Detroit for months--that a race riot may break out here at any time" (Geschwender, 1977:66-67; Sitkoff, 1969:188).

On June 20, 1943 that prediction came true. On that day, a Sunday, over 100,000 people crowded onto Belle Isle, the city's one-square-mile island park in the middle of the Detroit River; 70 percent of the picnickers were black. The weather was hot and humid, with the temperature going above 90 degrees. All day long, long lines of blacks and whites pushed and jostled each other. Police stationed on the island broke up minor fights throughout the afternoon. In the evening, a huge crush of tired people sought to cross the bridge back to the mainland. Fights erupted over minor traffic accidents, traffic jams, and overloaded public transportation facilities. As sailors from an armory on the other side of the bridge rushed out and joined the

fighting, the violence rapidly escalated. Rumors flew throughout the city and soon a mob of 5,000 whites was gathered at the foot of the bridge, attempting to catch isolated blacks headed for home.

Police closed off the bridge, but the violence spread outward into the city. Crowds of whites attacked any blacks they found outside the ghetto. They stopped, overturned and burned cars driven by blacks. They pulled blacks off of trolleys and beat them. White gangs waited outside of all-night movie theaters and beat blacks as they emerged. The police made no attempt to interfere with the white mobs.

Meanwhile, rumors spread through the black ghetto (later shown to be false) that the white sailors had killed a black woman and her baby. Enraged groups of blacks attacked any whites they found in the Paradise Valley area. They also began to systematically destroy white-owned property and symbols of white authority in their community. The police cordoned off the black ghetto and temporarily prevented angry whites from invading. The next morning, black leaders suspicious of both the ability and the desire of the white officers to hold the white mobs at bay, pleaded with the mayor to request federal troops. He refused, saying the situation was under control. When the violence continued unabated, however, he was forced to ask the Governor to request the troops.

Federal troops began arriving in the city shortly before midnight on Monday. The level of violence diminished rapidly after that, and within 72 hours things were back to "normal." Detroit had just experienced the largest and deadliest race riot in U.S. history to that point. Thirty-five people had been killed (25 of them black), 530 were injured, over 1,300 people had been arrested, and over two million

dollars in property damage had been sustained (Sitkoff, 1969; Rist, 1972:18-25; Geschwender, 1977:66-68).

With 4,000 federal troops enforcing the peace on the streets of Detroit, the search for the causes of the riot began. Southerners tended to see it as an inevitable result of race-mixing in industry and housing, fueled by the wild ravings of militant black leaders. A Gallup poll showed that most Northerners believed that Axis propaganda and foreign agents were responsible for the violence (Sitkoff, 1969: 198-199).

In Detroit itself, R.J. Thomas, President of the United Auto Workers, presented a more clear-headed strategy of "immediate and effective community action" to prevent further violence. His eight-point program included: (1) the empanneling of a special grand jury to investigate the causes of the riot; (2) the development of adequate park and recreation facilities throughout the city; (3) the construction of new housing in the black community; (4) effective curbs on racial intolerance and discrimination in industry; (5) investigation of why more drastic action to subdue the mobs had not been taken sooner; (6) the dispensation of impartial justice to the rioters, regardless of color; (7) restitution of losses to innocent victims of the riots; and (8) the creation by the Mayor of a special bi-racial committee to make further recommendations with regard to reducing racial friction (Lee and Humphrey, 1943:46).

Black leaders immediately endorsed the UAW program. Mayor Jeffries, stung by this criticism from his major political supporters, announced that he would not initiate an investigation of police actions during the riot. He did appoint a bi-racial committee to study the

situation, but it had no power and adjourned after only a few sessions. Two weeks after the riot, Jeffries issued a report in which he warmly praised the police for their actions during the riot and stated that he was "rapidly . . . losing patience with those Negro leaders who insist that their people do not and will not trust policemen and the Police Department. After what happened I am certain that some of these leaders are more vocal in their caustic criticism of the Police Department than they are in educating their own people to their responsibilities as citizens" (Sitkoff, 1969:202; Lee and Humphrey, 1943:55).

Blacks in Detroit had good reason not to trust the Police Department. Black officers made up less than one percent of the force. Many of the white officers were recent migrants from the deep South, with vehemently racist attitudes and overt sympathies with the Ku Klux Klan. Moreover, during the riot Detroit police had been far from neutral. As noted earlier, they watched white mobs beat black citizens without interfering. According to Geschwender (1977:68), the police "were frequently observed turning blacks over to white mobs or participating in the beatings themselves." Walter White, the National Secretary of the NAACP, arrived in Detroit at the height of the violence and said that he was "appalled at the evidence of police bias during the disorders" (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:196).

Thurgood Marshall, another official of the NAACP, stated in an article entitled "The Gestapo in Detroit" that in the city's riot

> The police enforced the law with an unequal hand. They used persuasion rather than firm action with white rioters, while against Negroes they used the ultimate force: nightsticks, revolvers, riot guns, submachine guns, and deerguns. As a result, 25 of the 34 persons killed were Negroes. Of the latter 17 were killed by the police. . . . This record by

> the Detroit police demonstrates once more what all Negroes know only too well: that nearly all police departments limit their conception of checking racial disorders to surrounding, arresting, maltreating, and shooting Negroes. Little attempt is made to check the activities of whites (Marshall, 1943:232-233).

The local branch of the NAACP charged that there was "overwhelming evidence that the riot could have been stopped at its inception Sunday night had the police wanted to stop it." Mutual distrust and animosity between the police and the black community was so high, they warned, "that trouble may break out again as soon as the troops leave" (Widick, 1972:104-107).

The commander of those federal troops in Detroit, himself a former police chief in Denver, was extremely critical of the behavior of Detroit's police force toward blacks:

> They've been very handy with their guns and clubs and have been very harsh and brutal. I asked both State Police Commissioner Olander and Police Commissioner Witherspoon if they didn't think it was time to admonish their men to ease off and make their job better. They have treated the Negroes terrible up here, and I think they have gone altogether too far. That kind of treatment will keep this thing going longer than if they get back to normal. If they want everybody else to get back to normal, the police will have to get back to normal themselves (quoted in Widick, 1972:107).

Police Commissioner Witherspoon, however, would have none of this criticism. One week after the riot he appeared before the Detroit Common Council to report on the department's actions during the disorder. He blamed blacks for starting the riot and Army authorities for prolonging it. The Commissioner said that white mob violence was only "retaliatory action; the police," he said, exemplified "rare courage and efficiency." In fact, Witherspoon argued, the police have been so fair with blacks that "some have accused the Department of having a kid

glove policy toward the Negro." He rejected any policy changes which would make possible the hiring of more black officers (Sitkoff, 1969:202).

Police Commissioner Witherspoon was also one of the three members of a commission appointed by the Governor to investigate the causes of the riot. His fellow commissioners included the director of the state police and the Wayne County Prosecutor. Not surprisingly, their report concluded that "the ordinary law enforcement and judicial agencies of the city and state have thus far adequately and properly dealt with the law violators" (Rist, 1972:23). Further, all police killings of black citizens were deemed "justifiable."

As to the cause of the riot, the commission found that the black community was solely to blame. No whites were accused of contributing to the riot's causes. Nor did the report mention the many incidents of interracial violence which had preceded the riot and the white hate groups which had generated a context of escalating racial tension. Instead, the commission blamed the black community for starting and believing unfounded rumors. Racial tension had been inflamed, the commissioners said, by militant black leaders who "constantly beat the drums of: 'Racial prejudice, inequality, intolerance, discrimination.'" The black press was blamed for giving widespread voice to these sentiments (Sitkoff, 1969:203-204; Rist, 1972:23-24).

The black community, naturally, was incensed over this report. A book published that same year by two local sociologists (Lee and Humphrey, 1943) totally discredited the commission's findings. Even Time magazine branded it a "broad whitewash of the city's bumbling, do-nothing administration and incompetent police force" (quoted in Sitkoff, 1969:204). Thus blacks demanded the immediate firing of the

Police Commissioner. Mayor Jeffries defended him, saying that the police "role in the riot needs no defense . . . it was splendid and at times magnificent" (quoted in Conot, 1974:386). This despite the publicly-expressed (and unrebuked) opinion of a Detroit police lieutenant that "if you lock them [blacks] up, they just eat free. If you shoot them, they don't have to worry any more" (Widick, 1972:90). The major lesson learned from the riot, said the mayor, was that "We'll know what to do next time" (Sitkoff, 1969:205-206).

Black leaders thus resolved to defeat Jeffries in the upcoming mayoral election. But despite a firm coalition with the UAW, they were unsuccessful as Jeffries ran on a "white supremacy" platform and race-baited and red-baited his way to victory. In the face of this overwhelming defeat there were two small consolations for the black community: (1) for the first time, a black council candidate made it past the primary election, though even with extensive white business support he was not elected; and (2) a lasting political coalition was formed with the local UAW, uniting at last the two major outgroups in Detroit society. Though initially unsuccessful (in addition to their defeat in 1943, the coalition could not beat Jeffries in 1945, even with a UAW vice-president as their candidate), the coalition would have an important impact on future Detroit politics (see Meier and Rudwick, 1979:205).

The Postwar Years

In a confidential memorandum to President Roosevelt on the Detroit riot of 1943, U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle suggested that

> careful consideration be given to limiting, and in some instances putting an end to, Negro migrations into communities which cannot absorb them, either on account of their physical limitations or cultural background. This needs immediate and careful consideration. When postwar readjustments begin, and jobs are scarcer, the situation will become far more acute. . . . It would seem pretty clear that no more Negroes should move to Detroit (quoted in Conot, 1974:386).

Regardless of the clarity of the problem to Mr. Biddle, however, such a strategy could not be implemented. Just as the lure of wartime work in Northern cities ended in 1945, the mechanization of agriculture began pushing blacks off the land in the South in huge numbers. Between 1950 and 1960 alone, over 1.5 million blacks left this region for the North (Fusfeld, 1973:19).

Many of these black migrants came to Detroit. Thus the city's black population doubled in the 1940s and increased by another 60 percent in the next decade to total almost half a million by 1960 (Geschwender, 1977:59). Massive black immigration, coupled with a high birthrate increased the crowding in the black ghetto and placed a tremendous strain on housing resources and city services. (The population of Paradise Valley, for instance, increased from 87,000 in 1940 to 140,000 in 1950, with no new housing being constructed--Conot, 1974:402).

At the same time, two other forces were operating to change the demographic makeup of the city. First of all, the suburbanization of the city's white population began in earnest, fueled by massive government housing and transportation subsidies (see Ashton, 1978). In the 1950s alone, over half a million white Detroiters moved to the suburbs (Widick, 1972:140). The city's population peaked in 1953 at 1.9 million and began a slow decline in absolute numbers after that. Confined by racial discrimination to the city proper, their numbers swelled by

immigration, blacks increased their relative share of Detroit's population from 9.1 percent in 1940 to 28.4 percent in 1960.

Second, the location of the black ghetto was moving. On the one hand, this was a result of creeping expansion as the black population swelled in numbers. In addition, the exodus of whites to the suburbs opened up new areas to blacks. On the other hand, the black community was pushed out of its traditional neighborhoods through the process of "urban renewal," which bulldozed black communities in order to make way for high-rent apartment complexes and freeways (Conot, 1974:400-402). (In the early 1960s, for example, Paradise Valley was almost completely destroyed by the construction of the Chrysler Freeway.) These forces combined to shift the direction of black movement to the northwest. The black ghetto came to be centered in the Twelfth Street area, west of Woodward and north of Grand Boulevard. By 1960 one-fourth of the housing inside of the Boulevard stood empty (Conot, 1974:436).[3]

Despite the shifting location of the black ghetto in the years after World War II, residential segregation in Detroit actually increased in this period. Research by Mayer and Hoult (1962) presented in Table 4-1 indicates that, whereas in 1930 fifty-one percent of all blacks in Detroit lived in white or predominantly white areas, by 1960 only fifteen percent of black Detroiters did so. A comparable pattern emerges for the metropolitan area as a whole, as the percentage of blacks in Detroit's suburbs declined from five percent in 1940 to three percent in 1960 (Gordon, 1971:31). According to research done by Karl and Alma Taeuber (1964:32), more than eight out of ten blacks in Detroit would have had to move to white neighborhoods in 1960 in order to achieve balanced racial integration by residence.

Table 4-1 Population Distribution of Blacks and Whites By Census Tract, Det
Detroit SMSA, 1930-1960

	PERCENT						
	1930		1940		1950		
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White
DETROIT AND ENCLAVES							
Negro Ghetto*	—	15.8	—	24.4	—	34.8	—
Predominately Negro	1.1	33.0	2.1	43.2	2.8	38.5	9.1
Predominately White	39.0	49.8	26.7	31.1	28.1	26.1	28.0
White Ghetto	59.9	1.4	71.2	1.3	69.1	.6	62.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	1,534,957	125,665	1,568,582	153,773	1,626,861	304,677	1,242,0
DETROIT AND SUBURBS							
Negro Ghetto	* *	* *	.1	25.5	.2	38.8	.2
Predominately Negro	* *	* *	2.0	43.2	2.1	36.3	4.6
Predominately White	* *	* *	22.7	29.6	21.1	23.8	15.7
White Ghetto	* *	* *	75.2	1.7	76.6	1.1	79.5
Total			100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N			1,897,935	164,082	2,323,152	339,503	2,557,4

*Negro Ghetto: 90 percent and over Negro; Predominately Negro: 50-89.9 percent Negro; Predominately White: 1-49.9 gro; White Ghetto: less than one percent Negro.

**Suburban areas not tracted until 1940.

Source: Mayer and Hoult (1971:7)

This increasing spatial segregation by race can be seen graphically in the maps drawn by Mayer and Hoult, reproduced here as Figures 4-1 through 4-4 (see next page).[4] Figure 4-1 shows that, despite the movement of the black population out of the older city area ringed by Grand Boulevard, it became increasingly compressed in a tight band around the central city. To a certain extent, this reflects the relative decline in the number of blacks in outlying areas. But more importantly, it shows the potent ability of the real estate industry, in cooperation with neighborhood improvement associations, to contain the black ghetto, even in the face of a rapidly rising black populatior and increasing affluence among a small segment of the black community.[5]

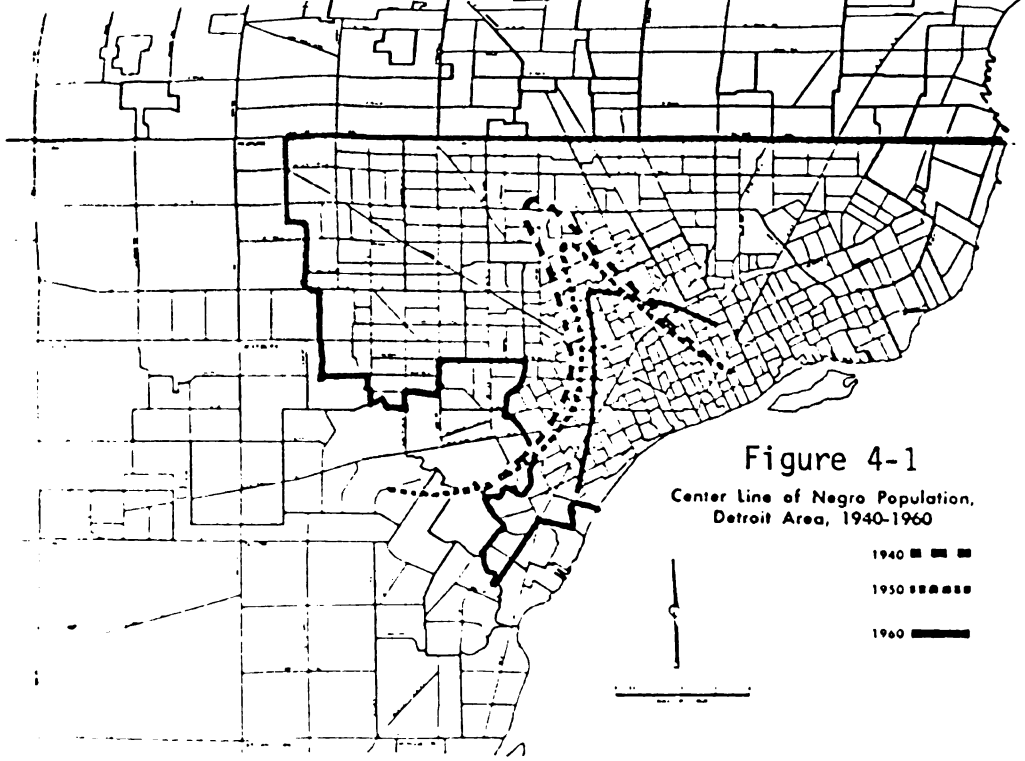

Figure 4-1
Center Line of Negro Population, Detroit Area, 1940-1960

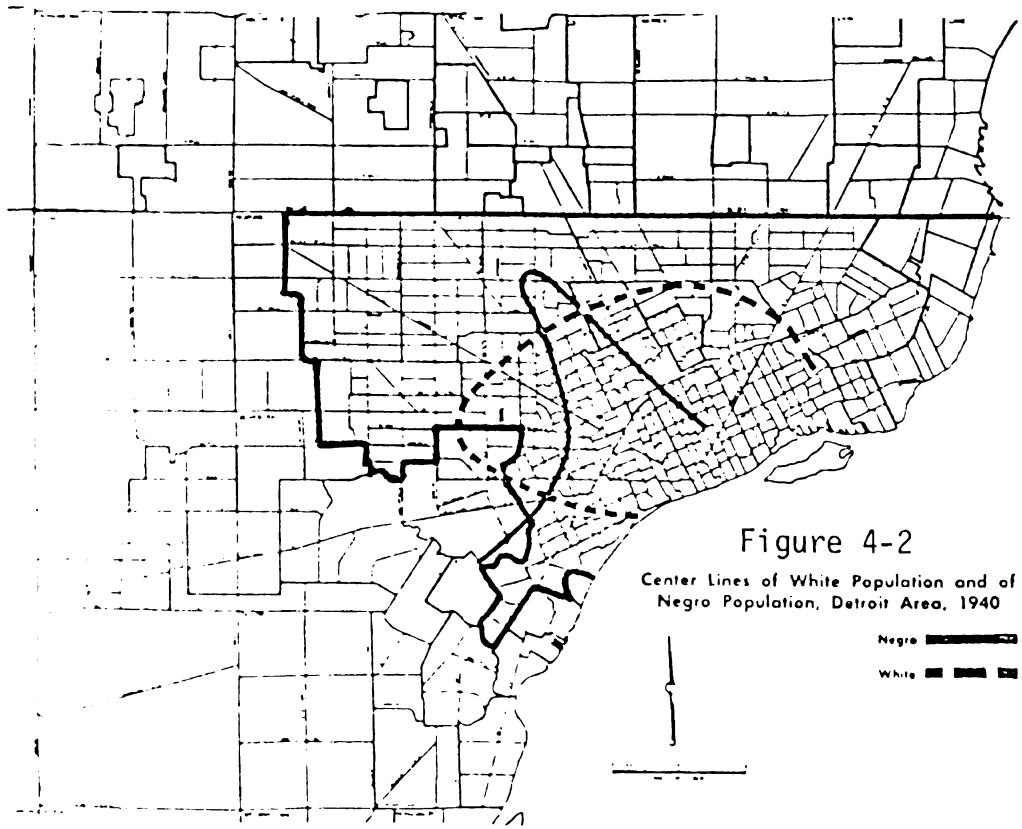

Figure 4-2
Center Lines of White Population and of Negro Population, Detroit Area, 1940

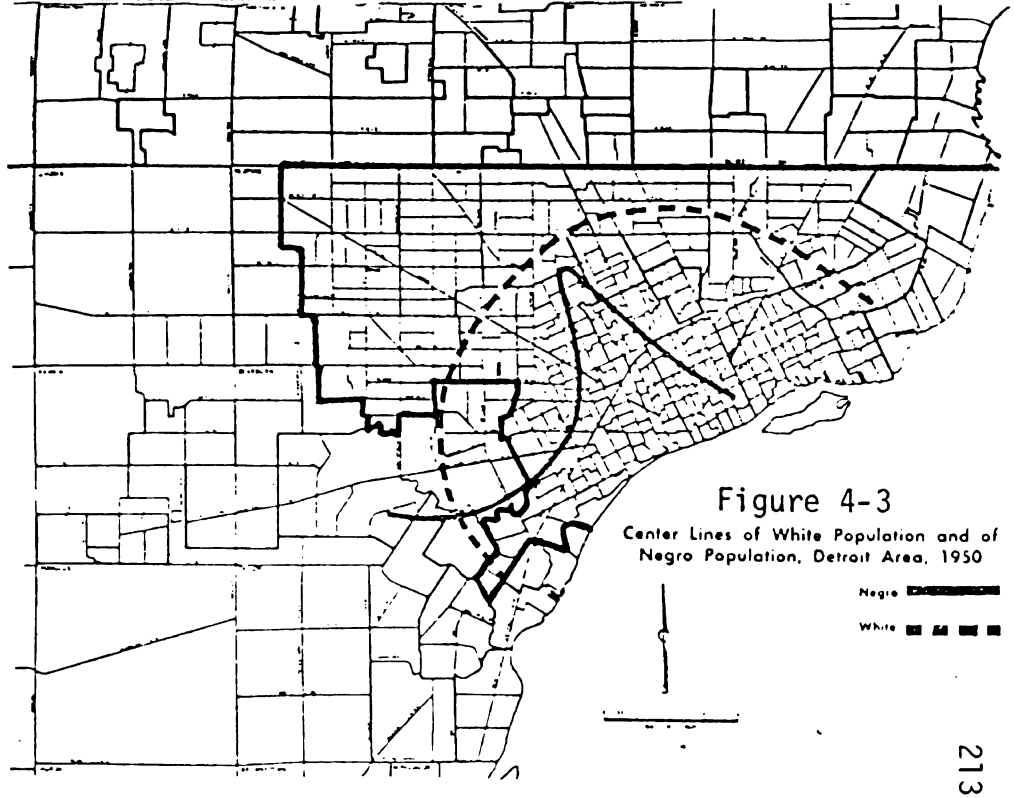

Figure 4-3
Center Lines of White Population and of Negro Population, Detroit Area, 1950

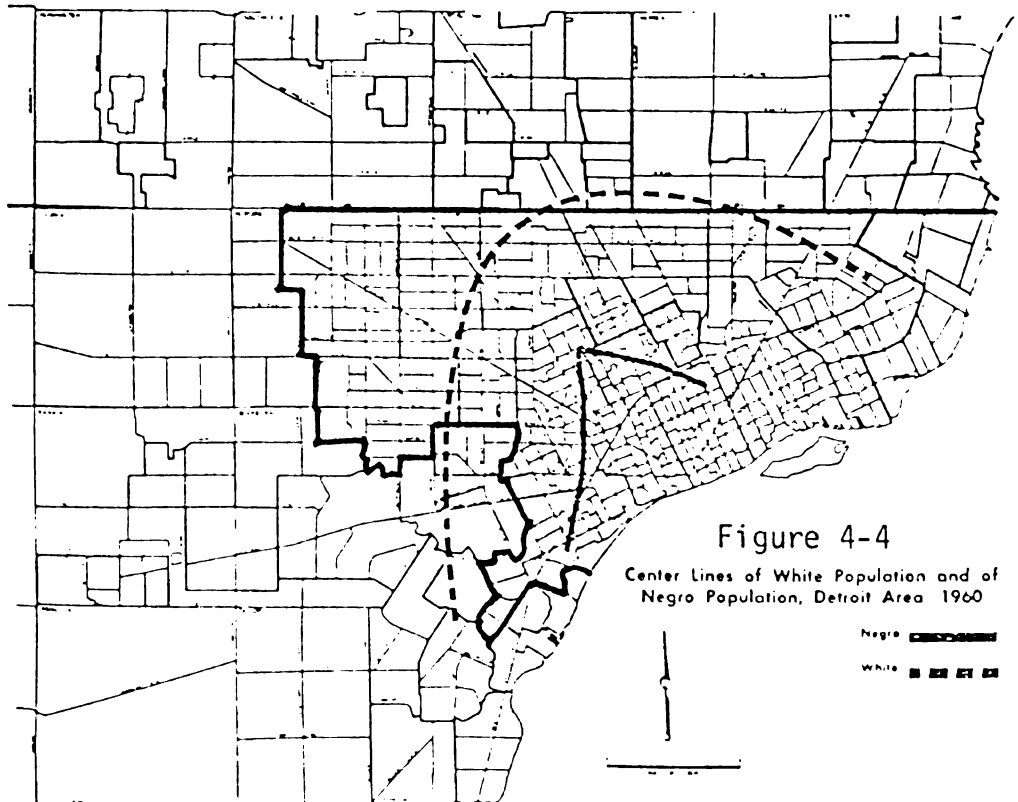

Figure 4-4
Center Lines of White Population and of Negro Population, Detroit Area 1960

Figures 4-2 through 4-4 illustrate the increasing distance between the center line of the black population and the center line of the white population from 1940 to 1960.

One positive side effect of the spatial concentration of the black population and its rapid increase in size was the development of the first taste of independent political power for Detroit's black community. In 1951, Charles Diggs, from a prominent family of funeral directors, was elected to the state Senate from the Black Bottom area on the city's lower east side. In 1954 Diggs was elected as Michigan's first black Congressman, from the Thirteenth District, which covered most of the central core of the city, including Paradise Valley. In 1957 Detroit's black community finally succeeded in placing a representative on the nine-member, at-large Common Council. He was William T. Patrick, a lawyer.

In 1964 a second black U.S. Representative was elected, this time from the First District, which included the Twelfth Street area. He was John Conyers, Jr., who, like his father, was closely affiliated with the UAW. That same year another UAW man, Coleman Young, was elected to Diggs' former state Senate seat. When Patrick resigned from the Council in 1964, he was replaced in a special election by a white who ran a blatantly racist campaign. When the regular election rolled around in 1965, blacks threatened to boycott all white candidates. At the last minute, a coalition was formed with white liberals and Nicholas Hood, pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, the "citadel of the black bourgeoisie in Detroit" was elected (Locke, 1969:112; Geschwender, 1977:71).

Increasing numbers and a modicum of political power did not protect Detroit's black community from the police, however. In an atmosphere of fierce competition for jobs, housing and schools in the postwar period, police harassment and brutality toward blacks continued unabated. In 1948, for example, operating under a "shoot to kill" policy handed down by the Police Commissioner, Detroit police killed four blacks, including a fifteen-year-old student who was fatally shot after being beaten senseless. (Two of the police officers involved were suspended and one was charged with manslaughter. He was later acquitted by a jury.)

This experience with the police, of course, was not shared with the white community. A 1951 survey (Kornhauser, 1957:120-124) showed that twenty-one percent of all blacks, but only four percent of all whites included the police Department as one of the three most important matters that needed attention in the city. And while less than one in ten white people rated police service "not good," over four in ten black respondents said that police service was "not good" or "definitely bad." When respondents were asked to select the "ways in which the Police Department is not as good as it should be," fifty-four percent of all responses had to do with perceived administrative inefficiency, lack of training, and too few officers on the streets. Twenty-nine percent of the responses dealt with police corruption and mistreatment of citizens, and only seven percent cited racial discrimination as a problem. Among black respondents, however, thirty-eight percent, a plurality, mentioned racial discrimination by the police as a problem and twenty-six percent cited police mistreatment of citizens, a frequency twice as large as that found in the general city population.

Racial discrimination was also prevalent within the police department itself. Because the salary and job security offered by the department was generally higher than that of most jobs available to blacks, police work was attractive to them. Blacks typically constituted about twenty to twenty-five percent of all applicants to the force. Nonetheless, the department maintained an implicit quota system in which the number of blacks on the force was not allowed to exceed eight percent. The quota was maintained by giving blacks lower ratings on personal background factors and the oral examination (Conot, 1974: 413). A 1958 study by the Detroit Urban League concluded that "racism and blatant discrimination were being practiced to keep the department almost 'lilywhite'" (Detroit Urban League, 1972:1).

Once on the force, black officers faced further discrimination. For the most part, they were assigned to patrol black areas only. And until World War II they patrolled these areas on foot. After that, special squad cars were set aside for the use of black officers. But, though there might be twenty black officers in a precinct, only one squad car was typically made available to them. The rest of the black officers, regardless of seniority or rank, walked a beat. If some white officers didn't come in to work, they parked the "white" squad cars rather than let blacks use them (Personal interview, 3-13-81). The white officers defeated a limited attempt at squad-car integration in 1959 with a ticket-writing slowdown (Conot, 1974:449, 414).

Despite the fact that the police department had undergone major "reform" after the corruption scandal of 1939, it was still largely ineffective in fighting crime in the black community. Organized gambling and prostitution were winked at by officers who were in on

the take or paid off in various fringe benefits. Real crimes against blacks on the streets were overlooked in the department's fixation on ferreting out non-existent black gangs (Conot, 1974:414-415). Hard economic times caused by the economic recession of the early 1960s and the closing of several auto plants contributed to increased street crime in Detroit's black community.

It was in this context that Mayor Louis Miriani ordered a crackdown on "crime in the streets" in 1960. The continuing national switchover to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report system had generated a large artificial increase in crime rates making street crime into a political issue. Detroit's local newspapers, moreover, sensationalized several incidents in which black offenders had victimized whites. Mayor Miriani responded by unleashing the police in the black community. In pursuit of alleged criminals, the police engaged in a policy of mass arrests, frequent frisks and searches, and the holding of blacks in jail "on suspicion" of criminal behavior. The black community was outraged at the actions of the police and complained loudly. The Mayor disregarded these protests and maintained his assertion of police "impartiality" (Widick, 1972:151; Locke, 1969:56).

Miriani's insensitivity to the black community was a major factor in his electoral defeat in the mayor's race of 1961. Despite the fact that he had been endorsed by both daily newspapers, the auto companies, the UAW, the AFL-CIO Council, the Teamsters, and the Chamber of Commerce, Miriani was defeated by a young political unknown named Jerome Cavanagh. Cavanagh, said the Detroit Free Press, owed his election to "Negroes, blue-collar workers and the unemployed" (Widick, 1972:155).[6]

The Cavanagh Administration

Despite the widespread recessionary unemployment in the city, Cavanagh took office at a fortuitous time. A progressive Democrat, his intelligent and creative views on how to solve the urban crisis quickly found favor with first the Kennedy and later the Johnson administrations in Washington, D.C. During his two terms as mayor, Cavanagh was to bring over $360 million in federal largess to the city of Detroit (Widick, 1972:156).

On the local level Mayor Cavanagh instituted policies of progressive reform. He appointed a distinguished black expert on city finances, Alfred Pelham, as City Controller. Pelham was the first black to hold a major post in Detroit city government. With Pelham's help, Cavanagh got the disorganized city finances in order and successfully argued for a city income tax, while at the same time reducing property tax rates. He improved the delivery of city services, while significantly expanding programs for youth and the poor. In the process of developing participatory neighborhood programs, Cavanagh actually cut welfare overhead costs (Levi, 1977:95; Conot, 1974:446-510).

Since the performance of the Police Department had figured so prominently in his election, the entire city watched closely to see what Cavanagh would do in this area. In the election campaign, Miriani had charged that Cavanagh would appoint a black Police Commissioner. The Mayor didn't do that, but his choice was nearly as shocking and antagonistic to those who would have been offended by a black appointee. Cavanagh's new Police Commissioner was George Edwards, a former UAW organizer who as a member of the Detroit Housing Commission and the

Common Council had unequivocally supported the right of blacks to move into Sojourner Truth Homes in 1942.

Edwards had served as Council President until he lost the 1949 mayoral election to conservative businessman, Albert Cobo, Miriani's predecessor. After that he held a variety of judicial posts until Governor G. Mennen Williams appointed him to the state Supreme Court in 1956. Cavanagh pulled a real political coup in convincing Edwards to leave this august body for the thankless job of Police Commissioner (Conot, 1974:450-451).

The appointment of Edwards won the praise of the black community. And the new Commissioner moved quickly to earn this goodwill. In an effort to bridge what he called the "river of hate" that existed between the police and the black community, Edwards set up precinct-level meetings between officers and residents. He urged the officers not to view all blacks as potential criminal suspects. He warned them that he would not tolerate "alley courts;" to back this policy up, he threatened demotions for senior officers who served on police trial boards but failed to take their role seriously and thoroughly investigate all charges brought against police officers. As a result, thirty out of thirty-two trial board actions in 1962 found the officers charged guilty. The Commissioner also pushed hard to recruit blacks to the force and began to promote veteran black officers, including the first-ever black Inspector (Locke, 1969:57-58).

These policies, of course, did not endear Edwards to the police rank and file. When he was first appointed to the position, a number of officers had suggested that it was he would have to "wise up" and "forget some of his constitutional law enforcement ideas" if he expected

to run the Department. While the Commissioner did not reject his principles, he never was able to fully gain control over the inner workings of the Department bureaucracy. He remained convinced, although he could never prove it, that organized crime and the Klan were both strongly entrenched within the Department. In the midst of this frustration, Edwards left to take a federal judgeship in 1963 (Conot, 1974:466-468; Levi, 1977:98).

Edwards' successor was Ray Girardin, a mild-mannered, pleasant man who had been a long-time crime reporter for the recently-defunct Detroit Times newspaper and who was then a member of Cavanagh's city hall staff. He wound up serving as Police Commissioner longer than all but one other man, and became one of the most popular Commissioners ever with the police rank and file.

A confirmed humanitarian, Girardin was committed to continuing Edwards' efforts to reorient the Department's relationship with the black community. In an attempt to defuse racial tensions, for example, Girardin implemented an intensive, twenty-hour police-community relations course in which over 2,400 officers--over half the force--were eventually enrolled. It was the first such in-service training program in the nation (Locke, 1969:146). Convinced that "too damn much drinking" was the cause of a great deal of bad judgment and use of excessive force by officers, Girardin started a branch of Alcoholics Anonymous in the Department and "sobered up an awful lot of policemen" (Conot, 1974:521; Levi, 1977:99).

The new Police Commissioner put an end to the common (though illegal) police practices of "investigative arrest," whereby an individual was detained without charges for a period of time and then

released, and "tipover raids," where police raided a house or business without a warrant, made no arrests, but destroyed any "illegal implements" they found. Girardin took the complaint bureau that Edwards had established and put it organizationally directly under his own office; physically he moved it to the downtown YMCA so that citizens would not be intimidated by having to come to police headquarters to file complaints against the police. The Commissioner promoted a black officer to sergeant and placed him in charge of the recruiting bureau. He gave clear orders that the hiring of blacks was to be "a matter of priority for the entire recruiting staff." As a result, the number of blacks on the force doubled in eighteen months (Locke, 1969:59-69;146). These 95 blacks, however, constituted only 3.6 percent of the total force (Detroit Urban League, 1972:4).

Despite these changes, Commissioner Girardin, like his predecessor, was never able to gain full control of the Department. "The guys you're dependent on," he once said, "have been there twenty-five years. On top of that, they're bound up in a hundred years of tradition. To attempt to get the department to examine its own problems--how God-awful it was!" (Conot, 1974:521). And so, like Mayor Stokes and his Law Directors in Cleveland, Girardin was forced to tacitly concede control of the day-to-day workings of the Department to the senior officers.

The result was that, although overt acts of police brutality became less frequent, there was no real change in the way the black community was policed.[7] Opinion polls reflected this fact. In early 1965, for example, a poll conducted by the Detroit News (2/4/65) found that fifty-eight percent of the black community did not believe that

law enforcement in their neighborhoods was fair or equitable. A study by the Urban League in 1967 indicated that the problem if anything was worsening: eighty-two percent of the blacks in this survey believed that police brutality existed. This figure was significantly higher than findings from studies done in other cities around this time (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968a:302). Girardin himself commented on the dimensions of the problem:

> No matter how awful the behavior, no one will rat on anyone else. I could stop people from getting shot or beat up, but I soon realized I wasn't going to change anyone's thinking. When you talk to them about civil rights and community relations, they think you're touched. "What else can you do with niggers besides hit them on the side of the head?" (quoted in Conot, 1974:521).

In response to this situation, a group of militant black officers formed the Guardians, Inc. in 1963 (Levi, 1977:99). The organization is a nonprofit voluntary association of minority police personnel. Among the goals of the association, as stated in its constitution, are "to improve the relationship between police departments as institutions and the Black Community, and to work toward a police reform in order to eliminate police corruption, brutality and racial, sexual discrimination" (The Guardians, Inc., n.d.). The association was also formed to deal with discrimination,not only within the Department, but within the police unions as well. (A five-year follow-up study of racism in the department conducted by the Detroit Urban League [1972:1] in 1963 concluded that "not an appreciable degree of change had been made in any department, bureau or precinct.")

Detroit's two police unions, the Detroit Police Officers Association (DPOA) and the Lieutenants and Sergeants Association (LSA) were establishing a nationwide reputation for militancy during this

same period. This was especially true for the former group. The DPOA had been formed and recognized by the Department as an independent police officers association in 1944, after two unsuccessful organizing drives by the Fraternal Order of Police and the State, County and Municipal Workers Association (CIO). The organization initially attracted duespayers through a good life insurance plan and by providing attorneys free to member officers charged with misconduct or other violations by the Department.

In 1956 the DPOA got the city to agree to a dues checkoff system. Ten years later the DPOA and LSA were among the first public sector bargaining groups officially certified under the recently-enacted Michigan Public Employees Relations Act. The legislation, whose chief sponsor was State Senator Coleman Young, provided for the recognition of certified bargaining agents for city, county and school district employees. While it prohibited strikes by public employees, it did provide for binding arbitration of issues over which agreement could not be reached (Levi, 1977:91-130).

Shortly after being certified in 1966, the DPOA began to agitate for higher wages. The Cavanagh administration resisted, pointing to the fact that they had already raised police salaries almost fifty percent. The DPOA responded with a ticket-writing strike. When Mayor Cavanagh ordered Commissioner Girardin to crack down on the resistors and transfer them from squad car duty to foot patrols, the DPOA leadership stated that "if the Mayor wants war, he will get it."

Thus in June of 1967 over one-third of the Detroit police force caught the "blue flu," a sickout which was the first major police strike in the U.S. since the Boston strike of 1919. Superior officers

stayed on the job and were forced to discipline the strikers, thereby driving a wedge between the LSA and the DPOA. The immediate outcome of the strike was that an independent panel was set up to study the wage issue and the DPOA was granted a grievance procedure and the right to have its stewards present at disciplinary hearings. Disciplinary actions against the strikers were pending as midsummer approached (Levi, 1977:100-118; Conot, 1974:520-521).

The 1967 Civil Disorder

The consensus among many white leaders in 1967 was that Detroit was relatively immune from the civil disorders which had wracked Harlem in 1964, Watts in 1965, and Cleveland's Hough in 1966. Bolstered by union wages, Detroit's black working class was the best off in the nation. Mayor Cavanagh was pouring millions of War on Poverty dollars into the black ghetto. And his progressive programs were thought to have eliminated a great deal of racial hostility. Indeed, more than 125,000 Detroiters, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mayor Cavanagh had marched down Woodward Avenue in June, 1963 for jobs, equal opportunity and an end to racism--without a single untoward incident. Richard Marks, the Executive Director of the Detroit Commission on Community Relations (which had been formed immediately after the 1943 riot), seemed to have expressed the city's buoyant optimism well when he observed that "to our eternal credit we have learned from our errors of the past" and thus were unlikely to see further disorders like 1943 (Gordon, 1971:1).

An incident in the summer of 1966 seemed to confirm this optimistic view. On a hot August night the police attempted to disperse a group of black youths from a streetcorner on Kercheval Avenue on Detroit's lower

east side. They got into an altercation and within a half-hour the youths began hurling stones at passing cars with whites in them. A few windows were broken and a few small fires were set. The police were placed on alert and the entire area was cordoned off. Black community leaders circulated throughout the area and urged the people to remain calm. Damped by rain, the disturbance fizzled out by the end of the third night. Not a shot had been fired. The police had turned out in force, but they had not used it. Nor had they done anything to provoke further violence (Locke, 1969:65-66; Conot, 1974:521).

Mayor Cavanagh, Commissioner Girardin and the Detroit police department received national acclaim for their handling of the incident. Detroit was touted as the city that was closest to solving its racial problems. But serious problems simmered just beneath the surface. Black median income in the city was only 64 percent of white median income. More than a third of all black families were officially poor, a figure two and a half times that for the white community. Only seventeen percent of those eligible were actually getting welfare assistance. Black unemployment hovered around seventeen percent--twice that of the white community and the highest in the U.S., according to an Urban League study. For blacks under age 25, the unemployment rate was between thirty and forty percent.

Because of urban renewal and continued racial segregation in housing, blacks were crowded into the central city neighborhoods, where unscrupulous landlords took advantage of them by charging up to twice the going rate for the same facilities in white areas. Education had little payoff for blacks as, not only was the median income of whites with high school diplomas $1,600 higher than for blacks, but in terms

of income it made little difference to black males whether they had eight years of schooling or twelve. Moreover, employers tended to discount diplomas from inner-city schools. A study of one black inner-city high school in 1967 showed that, while fifty percent of the drop-outs were unemployed, ninety percent of those with diplomas had no jobs (Rist, 1972:29-31; Conot, 1974:470; National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968a:90).

In July, 1967 Detroit's simmering black internal colony exploded.[8] It began early on the morning of Sunday, July 23, Police raided a "blind pig" (illegal after-hours drinking spot) on Twelfth Street near Clairmount. Expecting to find about ten to twenty people as they had on previous raids on the same place, they were surprised to discover that eighty-two people were jammed inside celebrating the return of several Vietnam veterans. Sunday morning is typically a quiet time in the city, and the police are generally understaffed. Thus it took them a while to get enough paddy wagons to the scene to cart all eighty-two suspects away. It also meant that the police were unprepared for what happened next.

Because the night had been extremely hot, a fair number of blacks in the neighborhood were out on the streets. By the time all eighty-two prisoners were hauled away at 5:00 a.m., a crowd of over 200 had gathered on the street, taunting and jeering at the police. As the last police car drove away, an empty bottle was hurled through its back window. A litter basket was heaved through the window of a store and the disturbance had begun. As groups of people began making their way down Twelfth Street, smashing windows and looting as they went, the clanging of the stores' burglar alarms awakened many other neighborhood

residents who subsequently joined in the action. The atmosphere at this point was one of a carnival; blacks and whites alike participated in the free "shopping" along Twelfth Street.

Meanwhile, the Police Commissioner and the Mayor had been notified. They decided to use the strategy which had worked so well the previous year in the Kercheval incident, i.e. to cordon off the area, send in community leaders to calm things, then sweep up the persistent troublemakers. For a number of reasons, however, this strategy did not work.

First, the police department did not have the manpower at hand to do the job. When the trouble started early Sunday morning there were only 272 out of 4,356 officers on duty and only 193 of them on street patrol. An immediate show of force was thus impossible. The local black newspaper (Michigan Chronicle 7/29/67) would later charge that the police could have stopped the disturbance anyway, but didn't because they had "written off" the Twelfth Street area.

Second, the black community leaders were unsuccessful in dispersing the crowds. The grinding poverty, unemployment, overcrowding and despair of the Twelfth Street area provided the objective conditions for a mass uprising. The many currents of black nationalism which had recently sprung up in the city provided the subjective awareness and definition of the situation as that of internal colonialism.[9] Civil disorders in other cities became almost a matter of pride. Thus, when Congressman John Conyers, Jr. went into the area--his own congressional district--he was booed and stoned as he urged the crowd to go home. "You try to talk to these people and they'll knock you into the middle of next year," he observed later that day (Detroit Free Press 7/24/67).

Early Sunday afternoon the first major fires were set. Fanned by a steady, ten-mile-an-hour wind, the flames spread rapidly in the dense neighborhood. The Detroit Fire Department had trouble responding, however, because (1) on a per-capita basis it was one of the smallest in the nation, (2) it had no mutual aid agreement with surrounding communities, making it difficult to call in reinforcements, and (3) it was only six percent black. Thus, as firefighters responded to the many alarms with too little too late, they faced the active hostility of the crowds, who tossed stones and bottles at them. Units without police protection were instructed to withdraw, and by 4:30 p.m. the Fire Department had abandoned a 100-square-block area around Twelfth Street.

Realizing the situation was getting out of hand, Mayor Cavanagh called for State Police assistance at 2:05 p.m. and requested the National Guard shortly after 4:00 p.m. He then instituted a 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. curfew in the city. Shortly after the curfew began, Michigan's Governor Romney surveyed the city from a National Guard helicopter. "It looked likd the city had been bombed," he said later, "with entire blocks in flames." Around midnight, he declared a state of public emergency in Detroit.

No one had been killed on the first day of the disorder. But shortly after midnight the disturbance claimed its first victims, all of them white. A 45 year-old man was shot by a white store owner allegedly for looting. A 23 year-old white woman was killed by a suspected sniper's bullet. And the national guard shot a 23 year-old white male on the roof of his apartment building, allegedly for sniping. Friends said he had gone up to protect his building from nearby fires.

As escalating reports of small arms fire and sniping poured in, and the fires raged out of control, the Mayor and the Governor decided to call in federal troops. Although over 1,600 Detroit police officers were on duty, more than half were guarding key installations, processing arrestees, and handling routine business. About half the 800 State Police officers and 750 National Guardsmen in the city were patrolling the streets. The 8,000 National Guardsmen on maneuvers in northern Michigan had been dispatched to the city, but had not yet arrived. Thus around 3:00 a.m. Monday the Mayor and the Governor formally requested that federal troops be sent into the city.

The national administration, however, was reluctant to commit the regular army against U.S. citizens. Already Detroit held a record of sorts by being the only city outside Washington, D.C. in which federal troops had twice been used to quell disturbances (1863 and 1943). A third time would be completely unprecedented. All day Monday federal officials vacillated, uncertain about whether the disorder was really out of control. Looting meanwhile spread to the east side of the city. And with nightfall, reports of sniping escalated rapidly. Finally, at 11:20 p.m. President Johnson signed the executive order authorizing the use of federal troops. Five thousand regular army soldiers had moved into the city by 4:00 a.m. Tuesday. Figure 4-5 shows the extent and intensity of the civil disorder areas.

These federal troops were, however, deployed only on the east side of the city. The west side, including the Twelfth Street area, was left in the hands of the national Guard and the police. This set up an ironic and deadly contrast. Within hours after the disciplined

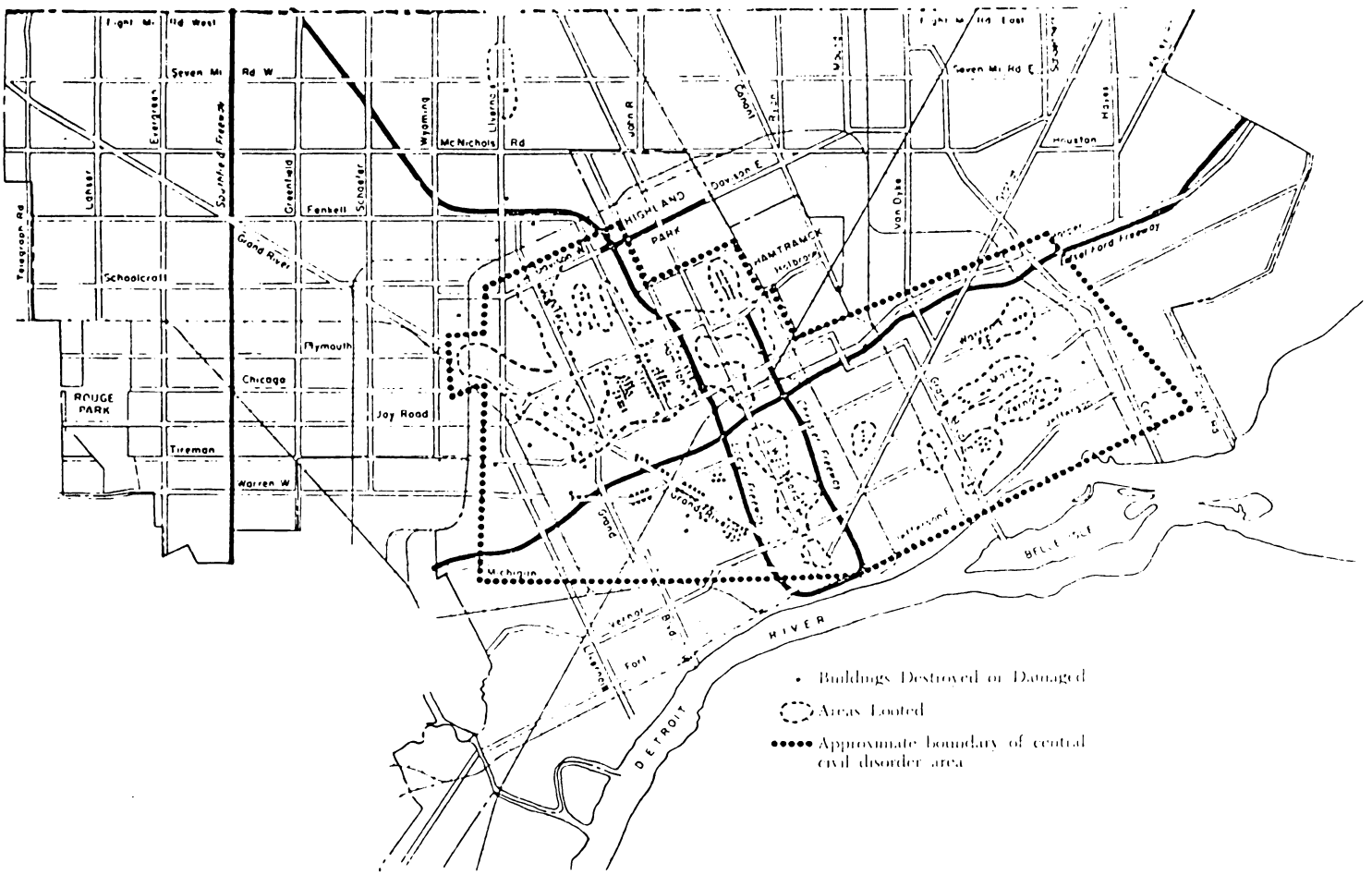

Figure 4-5 Areas of Detroit Affected by the 1967 Civil Disorder
Source: Locke (1969)

army forces took over the east side, reports of sniper fire virtually ceased. General Throckmorton, the commander of the troops, ordered all rifles unloaded. On the west side, though, the federalized National Guardsmen either didn't get the order or ignored it. Panicky, poorly-trained white guardsmen shot out streetlights and then became even more panicked in the dark. Feeling themselves to be in hostile, "enemy" territory, they shot at anything that moved. Often, of course, the "snipers" they were firing at were actually other guardsmen, police officers, or even their own bullets ricocheting and raining down on

them. By way of contrast, General Throckmorton ordered his own troops to be highly visible and to assist the residents in any way possible. Soldiers thus began to try to locate missing persons, to help in collecting personal belongings from burnt-out buildings and in general to make friendly contact with the residents.

The police were a different story. Tired, exasperated, and under enormous tension, they began to release their pent-up hostility toward the black community at will. Citing the alleged sniper danger, police officers had removed their shiny metal badges. They had also taped over their license plates and squad car numbers. Without identification, they were not accountable, and without close supervision they lost all discipline. "Alley courts" in which confessions were beaten out of prisoners were revived and employed with great frequency. Hundreds of alleged snipers were beaten inside the station houses. Mass arrests without good cause became frequent.

Because of this lack of control on the part of the Guard and the police, Tuesday and Wednesday became the worst days of the disorder in terms of killings, despite the fact that the looting and burning had largely subsided by then. Seven people were killed on Tuesday night and early Wednesday morning alone. Among the dead were three young black males who were killed by law enforcement officers at the Algiers Motel, where they had been found with two white women.[10]

During the day on Wednesday the disorder wound down. Wednesday night was not nearly as deadly, as General Throckmorton finally gained control over the National Guard troops and introduced discipline and organization into patrols. Early Thursday morning the State Police were withdrawn. By midday Thursday the civil disorder was, for all

practical purposes, over. It had been the deadliest and most costly disorder in U.S. history. Forty-three people had been killed, thousands injured, and over 50 million dollars in property had been destroyed. Over 7,000 people had been arrested. Of the 43 killed, 33 were black and 10 were white.

Eighteen of the 43 dead were killed by Detroit police officers. Fourteen of them were looters. Though Michigan had outlawed capital punishment, these people in effect had received it for theft. Two of the others killed by the police were innocent victims of the Algiers Motel incident. One other person was a suspected but unproved arsonist, and the final person killed by the police was the one and only sniper killed in the entire disorder. (Altogether only 31 people were actually arrested and charged with sniping during the disorder. None were ever brought to trial.) At least six victims were killed by the National Guard, five of whom were innocent. In the case of five more deaths it was impossible to tell whether police or National Guard were responsible for the killings. Four of these five victims were completely innocent. By contrast, the army troops were responsible for only one death, the accidental shooting of a nineteen year-old boy.

Only one law enforcement officer was killed during the disturbance. Ironically he was killed by a blast from a fellow officer's shotgun during a scuffle with a suspect. Two firefighters were killed; one by a stray bullet (possibly from the National Guard) and one from a downed power line. A civilian was also killed by a downed power line. Two looters were killed by shop owners, and two died when fire swept the building they were looting. Three people were killed by fellow private citizens; one woman was killed by an unknown gunman, as noted earlier.

The final victim was the third person slain at the Algiers Motel, whose killer was never officially determined. All circumstantial evidence, however, pointed to the police or the National Guard.[11]

Community Interpretation of the Civil Disorder

In the aftermath of the civil disorder, two widely varying interpretations began to emerge. The white community at first believed that the disorder had been caused by black hoodlums and criminal elements. As this theory was disproved in the days immediately following the disorder, another emerged to (partially) take its place: the disturbance was caused by poor, uneducated blacks, stirred up by black militant rhetoric (Warren, 1971:120-122).

Surveys of those arrested in the disorder gave superficial credence to this explanation. The surveys indicated that, controlling for age, participants were less well-educated than nonparticipants, had lower-status jobs and less income, and had been more frequently unemployed in the year preceding the disorder. Furthermore, at each educational level participants had lower-status jobs and less income, and at each occupational level they earned less than nonparticipants. Finally, participants were more frequently unemployed than nonparticipants at each educational and occupational level (Geschwender, 1977: 73-74).

More than lack of education, however, these figures indicate the real economic grievance of those who participated in the civil disorder, stemming from the fact that they constituted the black reserve army of labor which generated super-profits for white-controlled businesses. Both participants and nonparticipants in the black community recognized the legitimacy of these grievances and viewed the disorder primarily

as a protest against these discriminatory conditions. Table 4-2 below shows the discrepancy between the black community's and the white community's perception of the causes of the disorder. Responding to an open-ended question, just over one-third of the whites viewed the disorder as a protest of some sort; almost two-thirds of the black community, though, perceived it this way. And while a fifth of the white community continued to believe in the "outside agitator" or "riff-raff" theory, only five percent of the blacks did so. Seventy-one percent of the whites, moreover, believed that the disturbance was planned, while sixty-four percent of the blacks denied that this was true (Aberbach and Walker, 1973:56). Black/white differences emerge even more clearly when respondents were asked to choose among three specific explanations for the disorder. As Table 4-3 indicates, once again nearly two-thirds of the black community viewed the disorder as a protest against mistreatment. Whites, however, gave this explanation least credence, preferring to emphasize causes centered on black lawbreakers or black selfishness.

Warren (1971) presents the results of a series of surveys conducted in 1967 and 1968 in both black and white areas of the city as well as in white suburbs. Respondents in each survey were asked to rank-order a series of identical explanations for the civil disorder. The glaring disparity in black and white perceptions is evident in Table 4-4. While whites were nearly unanimous in seeing black nationalism as a major cause of the disorder, blacks were even more unanimous in perceiving it as one of the least important causes. Even more telling is the fact that, across the board, whites perceived police brutality as the least important cause while blacks in all areas of the

TABLE 4-2 Perceptions of the Cause of the 1967 Civil Disorder in Detroit's White and Black Communities

Cause	White Community	Black Community
Protest against existing conditions (discrimination, injustice, mistreatment)	36.4%	62.1%
Undisciplined self-interest (laziness, desire to get something for nothing)	28.1	22.8
Individuals (agitators, black militants, hoodlums, gangsters, juveniles	20.7	5.0
Temper of the Times (lack of respect for authority, no punishment for crime, violence elsewhere)	13.0	6.4
Other	1.7	3.6
Total	99.9	99.9
(N)	(406)	(219)

"Don't know" and not applicable answers from 30 whites and 27 blacks are not included.

Source: Adapted from Mendelsohn (1969:13)

TABLE 4-3 Black and White Perceptions of the Best Explanation for the 1967 Civil Disorder

Explanation	White Community	Black Community
People were treated badly	27.7%	66.7%
Criminals did it	30.0	9.8
People wanted to take things	34.5	17.1
Don't know; not applicable	7.8	9.3
Total	100.0	99.9
(N)	(307)	(193)

Source: Mendelsohn (1969:14)

Table 4-4 Rank Order of Selected Causes for the 1967 Civil Disorder As Perceived By Detroit Area Blacks and Whites

Negro Respondents in Detroit			White Detroiters		Satellite Suburbs
Riot Area Negroes (August 1967)[a]	Northwest Detroit (December 1967)[b]	Detroit Middle-Income Survey (May 1968)[c]	Northwest Detroit (December 1967)[d]	Detroit Middle-Income Survey (May 1968)[e]	(June 1968)[f]
Police brutality	Poor housing	Police brutality	Black nationalism	Teen-agers	Black nationalism
Poor housing	Lack of jobs	Poor housing	Poverty	Black nationalism	Poverty
Lack of jobs	Poverty	Lack of jobs	Poor housing	Too much welfare	Lack of jobs
Poverty	Police brutality	Poverty	Lack of jobs	Poor housing	Poor housing
Disappointment with white public officials	Disappointment with white public officials	Disappointment with white public officials	Teen-agers	Poverty	Too much welfare
Teen-agers	Teen-agers	Teen-agers	Too much welfare	Lack of jobs	Teen-agers
Black nationalism	Black nationalism	Black nationalism	Disappointment with white public officials	Disappointment with white public officials	Disappointment with white public officials
——*	Too much welfare	Too much welfare	Police brutality	Police brutality	Police brutality

[a]437 respondents
[b]188 respondents
[c]392 respondents
[d]213 respondents
[e]208 respondents
[f]788 respondents
*"Too much welfare" not listed in this survey.

Source: Warren (1971:145)

city and at all income levels unanimously perceived it to be the foremost cause of the disorder.

The quantitative empirical evidence backed up these black attitudes. The year before the civil disorder, Albert Reiss (1968: 11-12) and his associates had found that 1 in 4 blacks in Detroit claimed to have been stopped and questioned by the police without good reason, both on foot and while driving in their cars. One in five blacks said they had been searched unnecessarily, and one in six said that their car was searched by the police for no good reason.

In a study of blacks in the Twelfth Street area conducted in 1968, Harlan Hahn (1969,1971) found "massive distrust of the law and police practices." Eighty-nine percent of the respondents agreed that

"most Detroit police" did not display total honesty in the performance of their duties. Eighty-one percent said that police treatment in their neighborhood was unequal and unfair; less than five percent expressed a belief that the laws were enforced equally. Seventy-six percent of all respondents had "heard stories that some policemen were involved in taking things or burning stores" during the recent civil disorder. Finally, seventy-eight percent stated that, prior to the disturbance, the police were "mainly interested in trying to keep things quiet" rather than in "trying to help the people in this neighborhood."

Realizing the severity of the problem, Mayor Cavanagh moved quickly to attempt to re-orient the police role in the black community and cool police/black community tensions. By early January, 1968 the city had opened three storefront neighborhood communications units. Staffed by police officers, they were open seven days a week. The police were instructed to act as ombudsmen on all city issues, not just those related to crime-fighting and law enforcement.[12] They were to report any difficulties with city agencies directly to the Mayor's office. In addition, Cavanagh began requiring Inspectors to walk a portion of a beat each day and to work an occasional night shift in a cruiser (Gordon, 1971:150-151).

The New Detroit Committee

Mayor Cavanagh was aided in his early attempts to cool tensions in the city by the New Detroit Committee. This committee, which was a coalition of diverse elements unique in the nation, had its roots in a meeting called by Mayor Cavanagh and Governor Romney while the fires of the disorder were still smoldering. Five hundred people had gathered

on Thursday, July 27th in the City-County Building auditorium, including the heads of the auto companies and other major industries and banks in the city, labor leaders, black militants and block club presidents. Together they pledged to rebuild the city (Conot, 1974:541).

Out of that meeting it was decided to form the New Detroit Committee. This organization was to be a "power-based, yet truly representative, action-oriented committee able to call its own shots, identify its priorities and targets and set its own timetables" (New Detroit, Inc., 1968:21-22). Its general charge was to oversee the rebuilding of Detroit--not just the burned-out buildings, but the economic and social fabric as well.

The Committee had 39 original members which read like a "Who's Who" of business and politics in Detroit. It included James M. Roche, chairman of the board of General Motors, the world's largest corporation; Henry Ford II, chairman of the board of Ford Motor Company, the third largest corporation in the world; Lynn A. Townsend, chairman of the board of Chrysler; Walker Cisler, chairman of the board of the Detroit Edison Company; William Day, president of Michigan Bell Telephone Company; Ralph McElvenny, chairman of the board of the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company; Max M. Fisher, leading investor in the Marathon Oil Company and one of Richard Nixon's chief fundraisers; Stanley Winkelman, president of Winkelman's Stores; Walter P. Reuther, president of the UAW; Dr. William R. Keast, president of Wayne State University; Dr. Norman Drachler, Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools. Among the politicians were Detroit Common Council Members Edward Carey and Mel Ravitz. The Committee was organized and chaired by Joseph L. Hudson, Jr., president of the J.L. Hudson Company, the

largest privately-owned department store in the world. The Committee's Executive Director was William T. Patrick, the lawyer who had been Detroit's first black city council member (Conot, 1974:602).

The New Detroit Committee originally included only five blacks, a somewhat odd fact for an organization which professed to be "truly representative" in a city that was forty percent black. Some last-minute scrambling by Joseph Hudson before the Committee's first meeting produced invitations to four black militant neighborhood leaders. What emerged from this small fiasco was the distinct impression that the city's white corporate leaders felt that the civil disorder and the rising tide of black militant rhetoric had discredited Detroit's traditional black leadership, that "events had passed them by." Thus, these corporate leaders were looking to sponsor a new group of black leaders more in touch with the grass roots.[14]

During the first two years of its existence, New Detroit doled out $10 million in programs and projects related to the inner city. These included everything from social science studies to summer reading programs, to family-planning clinics, to the development of black businesses. But one of their highest priorities was the police. The studies of inner-city Detroit sponsored by the Committee only confirmed what other studies had shown before: that complaints about police behavior and policing practices in their neighborhoods was the number one grievance of the black community. It was not a condition that was improving, as William Patrick noted ominously in 1968 when he observed that "citizen grievances against police practices are held more deeply today than in 1967." Nor was this a problem that could be solved with small, incremental changes. "The department," said Stanley

Winkelman, "needs to be taken apart and put together again" (Conot, 1974:602-603).

In cooperation with Mayor Cavanagh, the Committee set out to do just that. They appropriated $300,000 for a management study of the police department with a view toward completely altering its internal organization. They pushed the Common Council to fund not only the continuance, but the large-scale expansion of the neighborhood communication centers, which would work to redefine the police role and hopefully improve their external relations with the black community.

New Detroit, however, did not see results on either count. Using its time-tested powers of delay, inertia and circumvention,[15] the Detroit Police Department resisted the management reorganization study. They were aided in this by the fact that Commissioner Girardin, his previously bad health sapped by the civil disorder, had resigned early in 1968, and Mayor Cavanagh, for obvious reasons, was having a hard time finding a successor. In the meantime, the career officers had relatively free rein in the Department. Furthermore, concerned about the problem of "white flight" from the city following the disorder, and under enormous pressure from conservatives on the Council and in the city at large, Mayor Cavanagh began to waver in his support of major changes in the police. He granted amnesty to the "blue flu" strikers of early 1967 and even went so far as to support the passage of a "stop-and-frisk" ordinance. Under these conditions, the Common Council refused to fund the neighborhood information centers (Widick, 1972:199; Gordon, 1971:112).

Another prong of the strategy for changing the relationship between the black community and the police was to recruit and hire more black officers. Both Cavanagh and New Detroit undoubtedly understood the importance of getting more black officers on the force. If they didn't, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968a:315) spelled out the implication of black officers in its Report, released in March, 1968. In comparing the performance of the regular army troops with that of the National Guard in Detroit's 1967 civil disorder, the Commission found that "the higher percentage of Negroes in the Army forces contributed substantially to their better performance." Finally, the Commission concluded that "there is evidence that Negro officers can also be particularly effective in controlling any disorders that do break out."

In fact, one of Cavanagh's first acts after the civil disorder was to appoint a Special Task Force on Police Recruiting and Hiring. It was charged with discovering why blacks, who applied to the department in numbers commensurate with their proportion of the city population, constituted such a small fraction of the actual force. The Task Force found that, at every step of the application process, including the written exam, the background check, the oral exam, and notification procedures, black applicants were met with both blatant bias and subtle discouragement (Conot, 1974:610).

The Special Task Force (1968) made a series of specific recommendations designed to make the application process more equitable. Congressman John Conyers, though, wanted to go further. "If enough Negroes can't meet the requirements," he said, "then Detroit should do what Philadelphia did--pick up Negroes by the busload and teach them

how to pass the tests" (Gordon, 1971:113). Seven members of the Task Force agreed with this sentiment and demanded the immediate hiring of 1,500 black officers. When they were told that this was a budgetary impossibility they resigned their positions.[16] The remaining members of the Task Force reached an agreement with the Mayor and the Police Department that all future police academy classes would have a fifty-fifty ratio of blacks and whites.

It soon became apparent, however, that the Department was disregarding this policy. The Mayor then ordered police administrators to compensate by hiring four blacks for every white officer. Under pressure, however, he backed down (Conot, 1974:610-611). Conyers blamed New Detroit for not going to bat for the mayor and "putting the heat on." After all, he observed, "that's what all that power is supposed to be for" (Gordon, 1971:113).

The immediate failure of the Cavanagh administration and New Detroit to substantially increase the number of black officers on the force was a blow not only to their own strategy of co-optation and control, but to the aspirations of the black community as well. For as that community had learned in its daily experience of policing in the ghetto, black police tend to have a different style of policing, and closer contacts with the black community. Accumulating scientific evidence, like that cited in Chapter Two, supports this view. In particular, two studies specifically of Detroit police officers show extensive differences between the outlooks of black and white police.

Police Interpretations of the Civil Disorder

In the first study, Mendelsohn (1969) looked at variations in police interpretations of the 1967 civil disorder by rank and race.

He was unable to analyze the opinions of black police officers by rank, however, because there were so few of them. Overall, blacks made up about eight percent of the Detroit police force in 1967, or about 350 out of 4,300 total officers. There were, however, only 22 blacks above the rank of Patrolman: ten Detectives, nine Sergeants, one Lieutenant and two Inspectors. Thus in the data that follow black Detroit police officers are collapsed into a single category.

Table 4-5 on the next page presents the officers' coded responses to an open-ended question about the causes of the disorder. Several interesting findings emerge here. First of all, it is clear that there is substantial disagreement between black police officers and white police officers below the rank of Inspector. While more than half of the black officers saw the 1967 civil disorder as a protest against existing conditions, only about a fifth of white officers agreed. And while protest is by far the number one explanation for black officers, it is second to the last in importance for their white counterparts. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that it was generally a low priority explanation, white officers of all ranks were one and a half to two and a half times more likely than black officers to blame various groups of individuals (mostly "agitators") for the violence.

The highest-ranking white officers, the Inspectors,[17] appear to be in agreement with the black officers in seeing the disorder mainly as a protest. In a further specification of the data, though, Mendelsohn notes that the white Inspectors saw it more as a protest growing out of frustration and rising expectations, whereas the black officers viewed the disorder as a protest against real, objective

TABLE 4-5 Detroit Police Perceptions of the Cause of the 1967 Civil Disorder by Race and Rank

Cause	White					Black
	Inspectors	Lieutenants	Sergeants	Detectives	Patrolmen	All Ranks
Protest against existing conditions (discrimination, injustice, mistreatment)	43.6%	17.5%	20.9%	20.4%	22.1%	54.7%
Undisciplined self-interest (laziness, desire to get something for nothing)	6.4	10.0	32.6	26.5	17.3	11.3
Individuals (agitators, black militants, hoodlums, gangsters, juveniles)	18.1	22.5	14.0	14.3	26.9	9.4
Temper of the times (lack of respect for authority, no punishment for crime, violence elsewhere	27.6	50.0	27.9	34.7	31.7	24.5
Other	4.2	0.0	4.6	4.1	1.9	0.0
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9
(N)	(94)	(40)	(43)	(49)	(104)	(53)

"Don't know" and not applicable answers for 5 inspectors, 9 sergeants, 3 detectives, 15 patrolmen and 5 black officers are not included.

Source: Mendelsohn (1969:9)

grievances like discrimination and mistreatment. The rest of the white police focus on the temper of the times as an explanation for the disorder, with between a quarter and a half of all white officers selecting this alternative. Nearly a quarter of the black officers suggested this explanation as well, but, once again, Mendelsohn's further specification shows that they meant it in a different way. "Temper of the times" to the white officers generally meant no punishment for crime and lack of respect for authority on the part of blacks. Not a single black officer, however, attached this meaning to "temper of the times." Instead, they focused on the fact that violence was occurring elsewhere.

When Table 4-5 is compared with Table 4-2, it is apparent that, except for the white Inspectors, police of both races were less likely to choose the protest explanation than the members of their respective racial communities. In the case of the white officers the discrepancy is particularly large. Conversely, officers of both races, regardless of rank, were far more likely to stress the "temper of the times" as an explanation for the disorder than members of their own racial group. Likewise, except for the white Sergeants and Detectives, officers of both races were two to four times less likely than the community at large to see "undisciplined self-interest" as a causal factor. Finally, a comparison of the two tables yields the unmistakable conclusion that, at least in terms of explanations for the civil disorder, black police officers were much more in tune with the black community than white officers were with the white community.

Table 4-6 on the next page presents police perceptions of one possible outcome of the civil disorder: a change in white sympathy toward black problems. It is clear from the table that all whites

TABLE 4-6 Police and Community Perceptions of White Sympathy to Black Problems since the 1967 Civil Disorder

Perception of White Attitudes Toward Black Problems	Police						Community	
	White					Black		
	Inspectors	Lieutenants	Sergeants	Detectives	Patrolmen	All Ranks	White	Black
More Sympathetic	11.9%	18.2%	5.6%	8.3%	2.3%	33.3%	23.1%	42.5%
Less Sympathetic	71.2	69.7	72.2	75.0	73.2	25.0	57.0	40.9
No Change	13.6	6.1	19.4	13.9	19.8	27.8	13.4	3.6
Don't Know, Not Applicable	3.4	6.1	2.8	2.8	4.6	13.9	6.5	13.0
Total	100.1	100.1	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(59)	(33)	(36)	(36)	(86)	(36)	(307)	(193)

Source: Mendelsohn (1969:30)

perceived other whites to be less sympathetic to black problems as a result of the civil disorder, but that white police officers of all ranks were far more pessimistic than the general white community. Black police officers were also more pessimistic than the black community at large, but in both cases a plurality perceived that whites had actually become more sympathetic to their problems since the disorder. Black police, however, were much more likely than the black community to perceive no change in white attitudes.

Part of the reason for a perceived lack of white sympathy for black problems may be the perception on the part of the white police that, not only are blacks achieving equality, but they are actually becoming privileged. Moreover, according to this view, blacks are not satisfied with these gains and demand still more. Table 4-7 presents Mendelsohn's findings with regard to perceived discrimination against blacks. What is striking is the huge difference between the perceptions of black and white police officers. In the area of housing, 40 to 67 percent of the white officers denied that there is discrimination against blacks; 67 percent of the black officers, on the other hand, claimed that blacks are treated very unfairly in this area. While 80 percent of the black police felt that schools discriminated against blacks, 40 to 67 percent of the white officers actually believed that blacks had things in their favor there.

Sixty to seventy percent of the white police did not believe that blacks faced discrimination in jobs; almost 9 out of 10 black police disagreed. With regard to welfare agencies, no white officer below the rank of Inspector felt that any anti-black treatment existed. Twenty-seven percent of all black officers disagreed. An incredible

TABLE 4-7 Police Perceptions of Discrimination Against Blacks in Selected Areas, by Race and Rank

Here is a list of areas in which some people say Negroes are not treated fairly. Do you think they are treated very unfairly, slightly unfairly, that they are treated the same as whites, or that things are actually in their favor?

Race	White					Black
Rank	Insp. (N=59)	Lt. (N=33)	Sgt. (N=36)	Det. (N=36)	Ptr. (N=86)	All Ranks (N=36)
Area						
Housing						
VU	24%	12%	22%	6%	12%	67%
U	34	39	39	28	29	25
S	30	33	25	56	37	3
F	10	12	14	11	19	3
DK, NA	2	3	0	0	3	3
Schools						
VU	3	0	0	0	0	47
U	7	6	3	3	0	33
S	44	45	31	33	40	14
F	41	48	67	64	59	3
DK, NA	5	0	0	0	1	3
Jobs						
VU	15	3	11	6	5	56
U	25	18	14	22	17	33
S	30	36	44	56	43	8
F	29	42	31	17	31	0
DK, NA	0	0	0	0	3	3
Welfare Agencies						
VU	0	0	0	0	0	8
U	2	0	0	0	0	19
S	25	15	14	11	10	39
F	64	79	83	86	86	28
DK, NA	8	6	3	3	3	6
Stores						
VU	12	3	8	0	1	22
U	5	9	8	8	13	33
S	71	76	72	86	70	36
F	5	9	8	6	13	3
DK, NA	7	3	3	0	3	6
Law Enforcement Agencies						
VU	2	0	6	0	0	56
U	14	15	14	3	7	31
S	68	55	53	72	57	6
F	14	30	28	25	34	3
DK, NA	3	0	0	0	2	6

Source: Mendelsohn (1969:38)

64-86 percent of white police officers actually felt that the welfare system was actually rigged in blacks' favor. More than three-quarters of the white police felt there was no discrimination against blacks in stores; half of the black police felt that there was.

Finally, in no case did more than twenty percent of the white officers believe that law enforcement agencies discriminate against blacks. Eighty-seven percent of the black officers felt otherwise. One-quarter to one-third of the white officers below the rank of Inspector actually believed that law enforcement agencies favor blacks, a sentiment shared by only three percent of the black officers. Furthermore, in response to another question by Mendelsohn, 47 to 80 percent of the white police agreed that "the more blacks get, the more they want and the more they will resort to force to get it." Less than a third of the black police agreed with the statement, and over half disagreed.[18]

These huge discrepancies between black and white police perceptions of black attitudes and experience carry over into their respective understandings of police/black community tensions. Mendelsohn presented the police officers with the results of another survey that showed that blacks in the areas of the disorder felt that police behavior toward them was a major causal factor in the disorder. He then asked the police why they thought blacks felt this way. One-third to one-half of the white officers below the rank of Inspector responded that it was because of the basically anti-social nature of the black community (e.g., no respect for law and order, more blacks are criminals). Interestingly, only 3 to 12 percent of these same officers

thought that whites who harbored hostility for the police did so for the same reason (i.e., the anti-social nature of the white community).

Just over 54 percent of the white Inspectors ostensibly agreed with the 69.4 percent of all black officers who said that it was police behavior or perception of police behavior by blacks that caused them to cite it as a major factor in the etiology of the civil disorder. When the category is broken down further, however, an important difference emerges. Nearly all of the Inspectors felt that the problem of police/black community tension was one of black perceptions--a perception that the police represent the power structure, or a feeling that the police are prejudiced. The vast majority of black officers, on the other hand, saw the problem as one of actual discriminatory behavior by the police in the black community (Mendelsohn, 1969:43-44).

This contrast is further exemplified when looking at police explanations for actual abusive behavior during the disorder. While over 40 percent of the officers of all races and ranks gave the stress and strain of the situation as their primary reason, less than two percent of the Inspectors gave police bias as a primary reason. In contrast, almost twenty percent of the black officers mentioned police prejudice as a primary cause for police brutality (33.3 percent if second mentions are included). Furthermore, 8.5 percent of the white police of all ranks cited community abuse and mistreatment of the police as a primary cause of rough behavior and language by the police, while not a single black officer mentioned this as an explanation (Mendelsohn, 1969:80-81).

With regard to the actual disorder, black and white police officers were about equally likely to have seen or heard of blacks and

whites participating together in the disturbances (60 to 90 percent did, with black officers reporting the higher figure),[19] and equally likely to have seen blacks encouraging others to join in. But an overwhelming number of white officers below the rank of Inspector did not notice any blacks trying to help police and firefighters. Black officers, on the other hand, observed this by a two-to-one margin (Mendelsohn, 1969:45).

The final contrast between black and white police officers provided by Mendelsohn's data is in their respective evaluations of the other law enforcement agencies involved in quelling the disturbance. Black police rated the Army as more effective than the National Guard. White police felt just the opposite. This might have to do with the greater number of blacks among the Army troops, but more likely reflects the fact that the Army troopers exercised vastly superior weapons discipline and immediately initiated friendly contacts with the residents in the black community (Mendelsohn, 1969:81).

Race Relations and the Police

Research by John Teahan (1972) indicates not only the differing orientations of black and white police officers, but the potential implication of these differences on the police force and policing in the black community. Upon entering the Police Academy, Teahan found, both black and white recruits rated "Family security" as their most important occupational goal. But black recruits rated "Equality" as their second most important goal while white recruits rated it eighth, a statistically significant difference. White recruits cited "A sense of accomplishment" as their second most important goal while blacks rated it seventh, another statistically significant difference. A

third significant finding was that white recruits rated "an exciting life" as a far more important goal than did black recruits (1972: 129-130).

Using these initial attitudes as a baseline, Teahan examined changes in the recruits' outlooks at graduation from the Academy and after eighteen months on the force. He found that racial prejudice on the part of both blacks and whites steadily increased. This was reflected in the young officers' perceptions of a steadily worsening relationship between blacks and whites on the police force. White officers increasingly expressed the belief that blacks were getting preferential treatment within the department; black officers felt just the opposite. Support for separate police associations grew, with black officers expressing higher absolute levels of support.

With regard to police practices, Teahan found that black police officers more and more came to agree that some police abuse of citizens occurs, while white officers became more adamant in their disagreement. Likewise, support for some form of community control of the police had steadily increased among black officers, while opposition to it had increased among white officers. Finally, while black and white recruits initially had identical f-scores, blacks became less authoritarian while whites remained the same.

Looking at veteran police officers, Teahan found that blacks viewed race relations on the force significantly more negatively than whites. He also found that the longer white officers were on the force, the less "equality" was a significant value to them. Black officers, however, continued to perceive it as important. This is reflected in the fact that the greater the number of black officers

in a precinct, Teahan discovered, the more all the officers stressed values like "equality," "broadmindedness," and "helpfulness" and the more positive were the attitudes of the officers toward all blacks.

Precincts lacking black officers tended to rate the black community lower and to describe it in more stereotypical terms. They also tended to be more authoritarian and ethnocentric. Mere tokenism, though, would not work to obviate this situation, Teahan noted. His data indicated that when only a few black officers were placed in a predominantly white precinct, they kept to themselves and there was little interracial interaction. Thus, concludes Teahan, it is the presence of a significant number of black officers in a precinct which seems to be the key factor in lessening white officers' stereotypes of blacks and to contribute to less antagonistic relationships with the community.

At the very time when Teahan was discovering that the employment of substantial numbers of black police officers worked to reduce racism in policing, the Detroit Urban League (1972) was finding that, though some progress had been made, the benefits of black officers were largely unrealized in the Detroit Police Department. The League found that, although blacks and whites applied to the force in approximately equal numbers, in 1971 three-quarters of the white applicants were accepted, but only one-quarter of the blacks. The written exam, the research showed, was the major barrier for blacks. The result was that, despite the Mayor's Special Task Force on Recruiting and Hiring and the various agreements made with the Department, black representation on the force increased only slightly--from 8.3 percent in 1968 to 10.5 percent in 1970.

With regard to the number of black officers assigned to the various bureaus and precincts, a factor that Teahan found to be of crucial importance, the Urban League once again found some, but not substantial progress. In 1963, less than a quarter of the Department's bureaus had black officers assigned to them; in 1972, more than three-quarters of the bureaus had blacks in them. There were still ten bureaus with no blacks, however, and thirteen bureaus had only one black officer, a situation the Urban League characterized as "tokenism." In 1963, no police precinct had more than twenty black officers; only five of the thirteen precincts had more than ten, and two had none. In 1972, all precincts had at least ten black officers. However these black officers generally constituted only ten to twenty percent of each precinct's total force. In three predominantly white precincts, blacks were less than ten percent of the force and only in two overwhelmingly black inner-city precincts did black officers make up a substantial minority of the precinct force--27 and 32 percent respectively.

This lack of black officers, and especially black command officers (they were less than five percent of all police supervisory personnel until 1973), resulted in a series of antagonistic incidents between the police and the black community. In May, 1968, the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, who had picked up the reins after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in April of that year,[20] brought his Poor People's Campaign to Detroit. The demonstration downtown was peaceful until a car stalled. At that point the police seemed to panic, and mounted officers charged without warning into the crowd. Nineteen people were injured.

Despite the fact that the entire incident was televised locally, no officers were charged with misconduct until two officials from the U.S. Department of Justice who had witnessed the melee spoke up. "I saw old ladies being pushed and manhandled, grabbed by the collar and pushed out doors. I saw young men being beaten with billyclubs," said one official. "I saw officers ride horses into a crowd which I judged to be under control," added the other. "In addition, I saw officers strike individuals in that crowd for no apparent reason. . . . Police were insensitive" (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975:192; Widick, 1972:200).

In spite of this testimony, only two officers were disciplined for the incident several months later. The black community was predictably outraged. "If the mayor is afraid to take on the DPOA," said state Senator Coleman Young, "then we will do it for him. Otherwise, the city is headed for a bloodbath." As if to confirm the worst fears of the black community, two more confrontations with the police followed in quick succession.

In October, 1968 a group of blacks organized a counter demonstration to protest the local appearance of Presidential candidate George Wallace. When fights broke out with his supporters, the police charged in. Rather than contain the violence, they seemed to select out anti-Wallace demonstrators for abuse. Many complained about being beaten both on the scene and at the police station afterwards (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975:192-193).

In November, a group of white police officers attending a DPOA dance at the Veterans Memorial Building downtown attacked and beat two separate groups of black middle-class teenagers who were leaving a high school affair held in the same building. In their defense, the officers

claimed that their wives had been insulted and harassed by black youths in the building's elevators. An investigation, however, found no evidence that these particular black youth, the sons and daughters of Detroit's black elite, had done any taunting. Moreover, at no time did the white officers identify themselves as police, nor did they file a report about the incident. As a result, nine officers were suspended and two were charged with assault (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975:193-195; Widick, 1972:200).

The DPOA insisted on stirring the pot of racial tension still further. In an April, 1969 editorial in Tuebor, the DPOA newsletter, President Carl Parsell dismissed criticisms of the recent actions of the police. He argued that

> The charges of police brutality are part of a nefarious plot by those who would like our form of government overthrown. The blueprint for anarchy calls for the destruction of the effectiveness of the police. Certainly, it must be obvious that every incident is magnified and exploited with only one purpose. A lot of well-meaning people, without realizing their real role, are doing the job for the anarchists (quoted in Widick, 1972:200-201).

In this context, a major confrontation between the police and the black community, with all its possibilities for violence and disorder, seemed inevitable. Only the time and place were in question.

The deadly confrontation came just a few weeks later at the New Bethel Baptist Church, only a few short blocks from where the 1967 civil disorder had begun. The church had been rented by the Republic of New Africa for a rally. Police were present in the area as the rally began. It has never been made clear what happened, but suddenly shots rang out and one white police officer fell dead and another was seriously wounded. Though there was no evidence that the shots had come from the church, police reinforcements arrived and poured rifle

fire into it. Miraculously, no one else was hurt. The police then arrested all 143 men, women and children inside the church and held them incommunicado for five hours.

As presiding judge of the Recorders Court, George Crockett was called to arraign the prisoners. A radical black lawyer, Crockett had been elected to the bench in 1966. In the past, he had defended unionists and radicals, including members of the Communist Party in the infamous Smith Act trials of 1948-1949. Now he began releasing all of the "suspects" from the New Bethel church. The news media sensationalized his actions, overlooking the fact that, in all but eight cases, the prosecutor had concurred. The DPOA began a campaign for his recall, taking out full page ads in the newspapers and picketing his courtroom (Widick, 1972:201-205).

The black community, however, was solidly behind Crockett, and he was widely credited with having prevented a flareup similar to the 1967 conflagration. The Detroit Commission on Community Relations issued a study of the incident which condemned the killing of the police officer, the response of the police, and the distorted coverage of the local press. The Director of the Commission severely criticized the actions of the DPOA and charged that

> Whether wittingly or not, the Detroit Police Officers' Association approach has pressed our community's political system to the limit, usurping, in a way which no responsible leadership would permit, the logical role of orderly government. The DPOA premises of "support law and order" and "remove Recorder Judge George Crockett" have emerged to symbolize the spectre of the police state and para-military government of a colonial people" (quoted in Widick, 1972: 205).

The Gribbs Administration

This was the context in which the 1969 local elections were held in Detroit. It was apparent that the black community would run its own candidate for mayor in a desperate attempt to do something about the police. After William Patrick, the nearly-unanimous choice declined, Richard Austin, the black Auditor of Wayne County announced that he would run. Mary Beck, a conservative white Councilwoman, announced that she would run on a "law and order" platform. Ed Carey, the moderate president of the Common Council, also declared. Realizing that he would lose black votes to Austin and white votes to the other two candidates a tired and disenchanted Mayor Cavanagh declared in late June that he would not run for reelection. Shortly thereafter Carey had a debilitating heart attack. Wayne County Sheriff Roman Gribbs was persuaded to enter the race, and he, along with Austin won the highest number of votes in the primary (Widick, 1972:206; Conot, 1974:615).

Though the candidates tiptoed around the issues and avoided making inflammatory statements, the central issues in the general election campaign were clearly race and the police. The platforms of the two candidates were remarkably similar, except that Austin advocated a civilian review board for the police, and Gribbs adamantly opposed it. In the end, the voting followed racial lines and Gribbs nosed out Austin by just 6,194 votes out of over 511,000 cast.[21] The next year Austin was elected as Michigan's Secretary of State, the first black to hold a high-ranking administrative position in state government (Widick, 1972:206; Conot, 1974:615).

Given the racial polarization in the city, Gribbs took office with the understanding that he had to do something about the police. He was also pledged to do something about crime, which had increased by over 16 percent since 1967. Hopefully, both problems could be dealt with at the same time by reorganizing the police department and making it both more effective and more professional. Gribbs made a good start when he persuaded Patrick V. Murphy to become his Police Commissioner. A former Chief of Police in Syracuse, New York, Murphy was at the time associated with the Urban Institute, where he was involved in developing innovative police policy. When he arrived, he was greeted with the results of a $67,000 New Detroit survey of the department, which recommended 73 specific changes.

Murphy set about making these changes and some of his own as well. One of the more innovative was the Beat Commander system, which he had developed while at the Urban Institute. He began it as an experiment in the 10th Precinct, which includes the Twelfth Street area. In this system, approximately 24 officers, led by a sergeant, were responsible for police service on a regular beat with a population of 15,000--roughly two squad car territories. The emphasis was on service and cooperation, and mingling with the public while walking regular beats. The preliminary data on the system was positive: more crimes were reported, police response time was lowered, officer sick leave dropped, and the community voiced widespread approval (Fink and Sealy, 1974:151-154; Detroit Free Press, 3/14/71).

The Beat Commander system was scheduled to be expanded to five additional beats in May, 1971. Plans were to then compare these five beats to five beats patrolled in the traditional way as a controlled

experiment. Commissioner Murphy left, however, in October, 1970 to become Police Commissioner in New York City. After looking at candidates for several weeks, Mayor Gribbs promoted John F. Nichols, a career Detroit cop, from Superintendent to Commissioner. Describing himself as a "realist" and a cop whose major concern was crime control, Nichols eliminated the Beat Commander system, saying, "We could find little of value in the neighborhood team concept" (Fink and Sealy, 1974:154).

Commissioner Nichols did, however, preside over a heretofore unprecedented number of changes and innovations in the department. Aided by more than $10 million in federal funds, the Detroit Police Department purchased its first helicopters, installed modern new computers and a better internal communications system. A citywide 911 emergency phone system was implemented. So were a host of changes recommended by New Detroit. In-service training for police officers was implemented, and in particular, management training for supervisory personnel, which had previously been non-existent. Higher education opportunities were increased, and by mid-1972 fully a fifth of the force was enrolled in some kind of college curriculum. The number of officers who were college graduates increased fivefold over 1967. Real community relations programs, which went beyond mere police PR, were started.

With regard to police procedure, Nichols accepted New Detroit's conclusion that the frequent and careless use of long guns by police officers was an "intimidating influence" in the black community. A new procedure was instituted whereby these guns were stored in the squad car out of public view, under an electric locking system. The

police manual was rewritten to more clearly spell out the circumstances in which officers were allowed to shoot their weapons (only to save lives or to stop a fleeing felon). A new internal investigation policy was established to assure officers accused of wrongdoings a speedy review.

Shortly after Nichols became Commissioner, New Detroit hired the nationally-known management consulting firm of Touche-Ross to study the department and recommend changes. As a result, precinct boundaries were redrawn for more effective deployment of officers, the detective division was revamped, assignments were computerized, flexible teams of evidence technicians were created, and a separate court section was established. The overall effect of these and other internal changes was to get more officers out on the streets (Detroit Free Press, 7/28/72, 12/27/73; Detroit Police Department, 1973).

Nichols implemented a number of new crime-control strategies as well. He was instrumental in forming a county-wide police task force, called the "Metro Squad," to deal with narcotics traffic on a regional basis. Within the city, he organized a central narcotics intelligence unit as well as "neighborhood anti-narcotics strike forces," which, the department claimed, "began raiding local narcotics pads on an average of two a night." Finally, Nichols created a program called Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets--shortened to STRESS--to deal with burgeoning street crime. The program involved plainclothes officers acting as decoys to "flush out muggers in high street crime areas." The units, called "zero visibility patrols," would soon become a source of great controversy in the city (Detroit Police Department, 1973).

The initial effect of all these innovations, however, appeared to be a reduction in crime. From its historical peak in 1970, crime in the city declined 3.6 percent in 1971 and another 14.7 percent in 1972. While this decrease was applauded throughout the city, it was especially cheered in the black community, which included the areas with the highest crime rates and, consequently, the greatest number of victims. In a November, 1971 study commissioned by the Detroit News (2/6/72-2/9/72), black Detroiters had indicated in overwhelming numbers that they considered crime to be the city's number one problem. Over sixty percent selected it; only one other choice had as much as a quarter and no other alternative had as much as ten percent of the vote. Stiffer penalties for offenders and more police patrols in their neighborhoods led the list of proposed solutions.

Despite their desire for more police protection, blacks in the survey were highly critical of the performance of the police. On the one hand, blacks did not believe that the police were doing all they could to eliminate crime in the black community. Over half of the respondents in the News survey agreed that "the police could end the drug problem in their neighborhood if they wanted to." Racism, lack of commitment, and corruption were cited as reasons why they didn't. On the other hand, blacks expressed suspicion and anger about their continued mistreatment by the police. Nearly two-thirds agreed that the police enforce the law unfairly among social groups, and there was "a significant feeling that the police make too aggressive use of search and seizure procedures against blacks."

Another study, by New Detroit, Inc. earlier in 1971, had shown that three-quarters of the city's blacks, but only one-third of the

whites, believed that the police treat people unequally. More than half the blacks in that citywide study reported that they had personally experienced what they considered an adverse encounter with the police (Detroit Free Press, 4/8/71). Still another study done in 1971 reported that one-third of all blacks in Detroit believed that abusive behavior and brutality by the police occurred in their neighborhoods, while only ten percent of the whites felt it happened in their communities. And while three-quarters of all whites expressed satisfaction with the police, half the blacks said they were dissatisfied (Aberbach and Walker, 1973:51-52).

Commissioner Nichols realized that, to reduce racism among the officers on the force and to win the trust of the black community, he had to hire more black officers.[22] Thus in January of 1971 he hired Thomas Ferrebee, a black civilian, as police recruiter. At that time blacks constituted just under eleven percent of Detroit's police force. A heavy advertising campaign in October and November of 1971, focused on the slogan "Being a Cop is More Than Just a Gig," saw more blacks than whites apply to the force for the first time in the city's history. In addition, Ferrebee modified the written exam--a major stumbling block for blacks in the past--to more adequately measure an applicant's "ability to do police work" rather than their culturally-based knowledge (Detroit Free Press, 2/15/72).

By the middle of the next year, the percentage of blacks on the force had topped thirteen percent. Both the Detroit Urban League (1972:11-12) and New Detroit commended Ferrebee for his efforts. But, as the black director of New Detroit's public safety and justice program noted, "fourteen percent is still a long way from fifty

percent," the approximate representation of blacks in the city as a whole (Detroit Free Press, 7/28/72).

Racism in the Police Department

A major reason for the incremental increase in the proportion of blacks on the force, despite the greatly increased number of applicants, was the persistence of racism within the department. For instance, in 1973 the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, the Detroit Commission on Community Relations, and the Common Council all found that the police department had improperly dismissed a black cadet from the police academy. It seems the cadet had acquired six demerits (the number informally required for dismissal) in rapid succession by disagreeing with what he called "racist and immoral" comments by instructors and fellow cadets. The comments included: (1) a statement allegedly made by a fellow cadet that if he had seen a four-year-old child running away with a stolen bottle of catsup during the 1967 civil disorder, he would have "shot him in the back;" (2) a statement allegedly made by other cadets that when the department laid siege to a house at 16th and Myrtle occupied by Black Panthers suspected of shooting at the police, "they should have blown up the house and all its occupants;"[23] and (3) a statement allegedly made by a police academy instructor that it would be appropriate for the police to stop and search a young man driving a big car at any time "because he either had done something or would be doing something in the future."

Commissioner Nichols stated in a letter to the Council that the cadet had not been dismissed for disagreeing with racist comments (which two academy instructors had denied had occurred), but "because of his inability to meet the minimal standards established by this

department." A background investigator for the department said that this referred to a bad driving record, some previous arrests, and a poor employment record. The cadet would never have been hired, the investigator said, if he hadn't "overpowered the oral board with statements expressing his sincerity, his keen desire to serve the community." The Commission on Community Relations found these reasons "not valid," and requested his reinstatement, as did the Common Council (Detroit Free Press, 1/12/73, 2/16/73).

If they made it past the academy, black officers faced continued discrimination in promotions. New Detroit charged in 1972 that there was a major lack of black supervisors at the middle-management level in the department. At the same time, the Guardians called attention to a list of 521 officers qualified for promotion to sergeant, only 21 of whom were black (Detroit Free Press, 7/28/72; Michigan Chronicle, 7/8/72). A year later, the Michigan Chronicle noted that the department had recently promoted 51 officers, but only three were black. Although one black Inspector was made commander of a precinct, it meant that there were still only two of the twelve precincts run by blacks (Michigan Chronicle, 6/16/73).

Another continuing problem faced by black officers was the personal racism and hostility of white officers, exacerbated by the seeming unwillingness of the department's command structure to do anything about it. A good illustration of this is the infamous 5th Precinct garage fight. In July, 1972, white officers from the 5th Precinct on Detroit's lower east side arrested two members of a black family on a weapons charge. Apparently these arrestees "talked back" to the officers and were beaten in the station house. Shortly

afterwards, two black officers from another precinct brought in a third family member. Just as they reached the station, however, their car ran out of gas. Leaving the handcuffed prisoner inside the precinct garage, the officers went back outside to push their squad car into the parking lot.

When the black officers reentered the garage, they saw their prisoner being beaten by a number of white officers, including one 6'4" 240-pound officer who allegedly jumped on the prisoner's head. The white officers later claimed that the prisoner had made a move to escape and had kicked an officer in the groin. The white officers grabbed the prisoner and, according to an eyewitness, took turns holding him up and beating him. Aware that they were responsible for the safety of the prisoner, the black officers intervened to stop the beating. At that point the white officers turned on the black officers. A free-for-all ensued and other officers in the station joined in, including one who later admitted that he had entered the brawl with the intention of killing one of the black officers, who, he alleged, had pulled his gun on another white officer.

When it was over, the injured included the two black officers, all three black prisoners and at least six white officers (two of them claimed they had injured their fists outside the station in the line of duty). Incredibly, the only charges brought were against the one white officer who had allegedly jumped on the prisoner's head, and the two black officers. Almost a year later, a departmental trial board investigated the incident and acquitted the two black officers of charges of pulling their guns on the white officers. It found the

one white officer charged guilty of manhandling a prisoner and suspended him without pay for 30 days.

The incident would have ended there, despite the outraged cries of racism from the Concerned Police Officers for Equal Justice, had the Detroit Free Press not produced a white eyewitness to the incident who was willing to testify about what he saw. The witness was Jeffrey Patzer, who in July, 1972 was a 23 year-old officer assigned to the 5th Precinct. Patzer claimed that he witnessed the beatings of the prisoner and the black officers, but did not participate. When he informed precinct supervisors of what was going on out in the garage, he claimed, he was told that "boys will be boys." Later, when he filed a preliminary report defending the black officers, a sergeant allegedly told him that he was "through at Five (i.e., the 5th Precinct.)" Patzer said that, as a result of harassment he was forced to quit the department and leave the state.[24] Both Patzer and the black officers involved had passed lie detector tests.

Although Commissioner Nichols called Patzer a "key witness," he was not sent a subpoena to appear at the trial board hearings until after they were over. Nichols called this "an administrative delay." Furthermore, there was some evidence that the trial board hearings were only scheduled after the Free Press made Patzer's information public. The Commissioner denied this, but he did ultimately order a second hearing to find out if more white officers were involved (Detroit Free Press, 4/9/73, 4/10/73, 5/10/73, 5/11/73).

Black Detroit police officers had to fight racism, not only within the departmental bureaucracy, but within the union as well. In late 1971, Commissioner Nichols initiated a policy whereby police

officers would be given lie detector tests when (1) the officer was accused of a felony, (2) the prosecutor had refused to recommend a warrant for criminal action against the officer, and (3) when the complaintant had already taken a polygraph test and passed. Almost immediately, two accused officers refused to take the tests and were suspended.

In January, 1972, the DPOA voted to double dues in order to "build a war chest" to fight Nichols on this issue. The action was taken by the executive board of the union, which included no blacks. The next week, the Guardians came out in support of Nichols. "If an officer is accused of an offense involving the public trust, he should welcome any manner of assistance to clear himself," they stated. They also criticized the undemocratic way in which the DPOA decision was made. Interestingly, the Lieutenants and Sergeants Association supported Nichols because they thought his proposal "may help to avoid a civilian review board--a board which we are opposed to." Confirming their worst fears, the Michigan Chronicle (1/15/72) headlined an article "Police Department Feud Points Up Need for Civilian Review" (Detroit Free Press, 1/14/72).

Later that year, Nichols announced that, in compliance with Detroit's 1968 residency ordinance, police officers would have until September 15th to prove that they lived in the city, or face suspension. This came after both the Michigan and the U.S. Supreme Courts had refused to hear the DPOA's appeal of the law. Black officers, who were mostly from the city anyway, supported the residency ordinance in order to avoid the taint of a "foreign occupation army." White officers, 80 percent of whom were now being recruited from the suburbs,

were opposed, and they carried the weight in the DPOA (Detroit Free Press, 5/9/73).

Controversy Over STRESS

By far the most controversial activity of Nichols' tenure was his implementation, and dogged defense of the Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets program. When Nichols became Police Commissioner in late 1970, the number one problem on the minds of all citizens, black and white, was crime--more specifically, street crime. The rate of robberies in the city had increased 35 percent over the preceding year, and had more than doubled since 1967--the largest and most rapid increase of any crime category. In an effort to deal with this problem, Nichols, in association with Inspectors James Bannon and Gordon Smith, devised the STRESS program.[25]

STRESS began operations as a secret unit in January, 1971. Its existence was not revealed to the public until April of that year. Although the department refused to disclose any figures, it appeared that about 100 officers, most of them white, operated on two shifts in the unit. STRESS operated in two different ways: surveillance, in which the plainclothes officers attempted to blend into a neighborhood to pick up information and observe criminal acts; and decoy operations (called "stressing" by police officers), in which a police officer tried to appear as a vulnerable and helpless potential victim. When this officer drew an attack, his partners would come to his rescue and arrest the criminal.

At first the decoy operation, one of the first of its kind in the nation, was considered "cute" by many, including the news media. Stories were run on cops in drag as prostitutes, as cab drivers,

winos, and drunken businessmen (see, e.g., Detroit Free Press, 4/18/71). But it soon became apparent that the decoy operations bordered on entrapment,[26] and benign views of the squad were washed away in a flood of bloodshed. In its three years of existence, STRESS was responsible for the fatal shootings of 22 citizens, 13 in its first year of existence alone.

That year, 1971, Detroit had the highest per capita rate of civilian killings of any urban police department in the nation. Police killed Detroiters at the rate of 7.17 per 1,000 officers. The next closest rivals were Houston (5.0/1000), Baltimore (2.93/1000), Chicago (2.54/1000), and, New York (1.84/1000). Cleveland police did not kill a single citizen that year. In Detroit, on the other hand, over a third of the police homicides were committed by STRESS officers, who made up less than two percent of the total force. Ninety-one percent of the STRESS killings, in turn, were traceable to the decoy operation, despite the assertion by police officials that decoy work constituted only twenty percent of total STRESS activity.

The reaction of Commissioner Nichols to the release of these figures, and the questions they provoked, in many ways typified his response all through the STRESS controversy. "The police," he said, "are the front-line resistance to permissiveness in today's society, so this kind of violence is directed aginst police and violence begets proper and appropriate action. When police are faced with dangerous action they have to take dangerous action" (Detroit Free Press, 3/25/72). The sad truth is, however, that many of the victims of STRESS had no idea they were dealing with the police. Moreover, the "violence" and "dangerous action" purportedly directed at the police

by these victims was largely a matter of perception on the part of STRESS officers, who in nearly every case exaggerated the danger and threat beyond reasonable proportions.[27]

An analysis of the twenty-two STRESS-related homicides by From the Ground Up (1973:13) revealed a common pattern: (1) the victims were often drunk and always outnumbered; (2) police officers claimed that the victims had threatened them with deadly weapons, usually knives; (3) the police were seldom able to produce such weapons as evidence; and (4) witnesses and survivors of STRESS shootings were often intimidated and threatened. The original STRESS officers were not tested or screened in any way. Officer Raymond Peterson is a prime example of both the danger and the shortsightedness of this failure. In the course of the STRESS program, Peterson was involved in ten of the fatal shootings, firing the fatal shot in six. He was also involved in five of the fourteen near-fatal shootings. Yet, at the time Peterson was assigned to STRESS there had already been 21 citizen injury contacts lodged against him.

Furthermore, STRESS officers were not given any special training. In fact, one entire rookie class was assigned to STRESS immediately upon graduation from the police academy! (Michigan Chronicle, 1/15/72). Finally, there was little direct supervision of the decoy operation, at least in its first year and a half of existence. And because STRESS decoys were allowed to carry as many weapons as they desired, the opportunity for "planting" weapons on victims was always there.

The result was a reign of official terror unlike anything the city had seen. This terror was, moreover, visited selectively on the black

community. Ninety-six percent of all those arrested by STRESS squads were black. From early May through September of 1971, eleven people were fatally shot by STRESS officers, and all but one of these victims was black. Concern mounted in the black community as the death toll rose, but when two black teenagers were fatally shot by Officer Richard Worobec (the same one wounded at the New Bethel Church in 1969), that concern turned to outrage. A group of black citizens formed the State of Emergency Committee and mobilized at least 5,000 people to demonstrate and demand an end to STRESS.

This demonstration inspired the Detroit Commission on Community Relations to look into STRESS. In an October report to the Common Council, the Commission recommended that STRESS operations be suspended until greater controls and more non-lethal techniques could be implemented. The report was ignored. The next two months claimed two more STRESS victims.

In December, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, which had also been investigating STRESS since the September demonstration of community concern, issued its report. The report contained four specific recommendations: (1) better screening of STRESS officers, including psychological testing and examination of citizen complaint records; (2) the racial integration of STRESS teams; (3) better supervisory control and record-keeping of STRESS teams; and (4) the abolition of the decoy technique, which had been responsible for 11 of the 13 fatalities up to that time. These recommendations were also ignored until a shocking tragedy three months later forced the mayor and the police commissioner into action.

What subsequently came to be known as the Rochester Street Massacre of March 9, 1972 was unique among STRESS killings. First, it did not involve the decoy operation. Second, it involved black officers shooting at other blacks. And finally, the victims of the STRESS attack were not alleged criminals, hoodlums, or teenagers, but other law enforcement officers. The incident began when three black plainclothes STRESS officers observed a black man, later identified as Wayne County Sheriff Deputy James Jenkins, enter an apartment on Rochester Street with what appeared to be a gun. He was joining his friends, two other deputies and a civilian, for a card game.

The STRESS officers, bolstered by reinforcements called to the scene, burst into the apartment with guns blazing. Deputy Henry Henderson was shot six times and killed with his back to the wall and his hands in the air, one of them clutching his ID badge. Deputy Jenkins was seriously wounded. According to court testimony, the other two deputies were saved from execution by the arrival of Officer Richard Herold. Herold's presence was intriguing because he was reputed to be heavily involved in the drug trade, and indeed was later suspended from the force when indicted for heroin trafficking.

Some argued that the shootout was really the result of a "war for turf" in the local drug trade between competing law enforcement agencies. The truth will probably never be known. What was known was this: The Detroit Police had fired 44 shots--41 of them by STRESS officers. The shot fatal to Henderson had been fired by a white police officer, whom the prosecutor ruled had committed "justifiable homicide" while "acting in the line of duty." After

vacillating for almost two weeks, the prosecutor's office finally charged three officers with assault with intent to murder Jenkins. The officers were treated with kid gloves throughout the trial process, and eventually acquitted.

Detroit's black community was unanimously appalled. If the police could kill another law enforcement officer and get away with it, how could any black citizen be safe? Opposition mobilized immediately from all corners of the black community. The president of the Guardians, the black police group, stated the day after the massacre: "We demand the elimination of STRESS as of today. We are also telling all black officers assigned to that unit that they should ask for an immediate transfer out." Another member of the group pointed out that if the Rochester Street cardplayers had been civilians, they almost certainly would all be dead at this point. And, conveniently, the police would have announced that they had found drugs in the apartment (Detroit Free Press, 3/10/72; Michigan Chronicle, 3/18/72).

On March 14th the Detroit NAACP came out in favor of disbanding STRESS (Detroit Free Press, 3/15/72). The next week the Michigan Chronicle (3/25/72) editorialized against STRESS. Citizens collected, in just over two weeks, 113,000 signatures on petitions calling for the abolition of STRESS. A group of 150 blacks at the University of Detroit announced the formation of Black Students Against STRESS, and claimed that blacks on other area campuses were doing likewise (Michigan Chronicle, 3/18/72). On March 26th, over 2,000 people--blacks and whites, unions and community groups--rallied at University of Detroit stadium to call for an end to STRESS (Detroit Free Press, 3/27/72).

New Detroit, Inc. President Lawrence Doss called for a moratorium on STRESS activities to allow community anger to cool. The moratorium should last, he suggested, until the police department was able to (1) give all STRESS officers psychological tests; (2) give all STRESS officers special training and equipment designed to apprehend, not kill, fleeing suspects; (3) place a supervisory sergeant directly in charge of each STRESS team (Detroit Free Press, 3/29/72).

In the face of this overwhelming onslaught, Mayor Gribbs and Commissioner Nichols were forced to make concessions. The changes they implemented were partially, though not completely, along the lines suggested by New Detroit. Trying not to give too much ground, they announced that STRESS would not be abolished, it would simply be "tightened up." This included a reduction in, but not elimination of, decoy patrols. Supervisory sergeants were assigned to each patrol. Psychological tests were ordered for all STRESS officers, though Nichols admitted later that he put no stock whatsoever in them and ordered them only as a concession to public pressure. Review of officers' civilian complaint histories and more rigid specification of firearms use were not implemented (Detroit Free Press, 3/17/72), 4/17/72; From the Ground Up, 1973:29).

As 1972 drew to a close, two more blacks had been killed by STRESS squads. It was in December, however, that once again a dramatic series of events involving STRESS officers rubbed the nerves of the black community raw. On December 4th, four STRESS officers were wounded in a shootout while on a narcotics detail. Warrants were put out for the arrest of three young black men: John Boyd,

Mark Bethune, and Hayward Brown. Contrary to their portrayal as dangerous criminals, these three young men were actually self-appointed crime fighters. Believing the police to be totally ineffective in fighting drug-traffic in the black community, the trio had formed a self-styled vigilante group to, in their own words, "rip off the big dealers" and put a halt to heroin traffic in the city. Bethune, for instance, had forced his own brother to close down his dope pad or be killed.

The three young vigilantes had been observed at a dope pad which the police had under surveillance. Their plan was to kidnap the wife and girl friend of the resident dealer and hold them for ransom. The money thus raised would be used to infiltrate the inner circle of Detroit's top heroin wholesalers. When the dealer showed up unexpectedly, Bethune, Boyd and Brown decided to go after him instead. They followed his Cadillac for only a short way before the STRESS officers stopped them. The police later claimed that the trio was stopped because they were seen leaving a known dope house. (Which, of course, raises the unanswered question, Why didn't the police stop the Cadillac?)

According to Brown, the plainclothes police officers never identified themselves, but just began shooting. It may also be true that Brown, Boyd and Bethune were willing to shoot it out because they were aware that they were wanted on other charges. Regardless, four officers were wounded, and the trio escaped. Three weeks later, Officers Robert Bradford and Robert Dooley accidentally confronted Brown, Boyd and Bethune. Once again there was a shootout, and once again the trio escaped. But this time, Officer Bradford was killed

and Officer Dooley permanently paralyzed by a bullet in his spine.

Commissioner Nichols immediately went on local television. Characterizing Brown, Boyd and Bethune as "mad dog killers," he announced an intensive manhunt by the police aimed at flushing them out. In the next several weeks, the black community was turned upside down in a reign of terror as the police apparently sought revenge as well as the three suspects. White plainclothes officers broke into literally hundreds of black homes without search warrants. Often they did not even identify themselves as police. According to the Guardians, word was put out to the precincts to shoot the suspects on sight, a charge confirmed by the Michigan Chronicle (1/13/73).[28]

While the three suspects were not discovered in this search, the black community was effectively terrorized. Black leaders warned that the community was "uptight" over the police behavior, and that tensions were rising to the point where a 1967-type civil disorder was possible. They pressed for hearings by the Common Council; a coalition of 38 black groups as diverse as the Black Panther Party and the Booker T. Washington Business Association (and including state Senator Coleman Young) asked for a Congressional investigation into police behavior. A court suit documented 56 cases of illegal search and seizure by the police and brought an injunction against arbitrary, mass searches (Michigan Chronicle, 1/13/73; Detroit Free Press, 1/25/73).[29]

So terrorized were blacks by police behavior that the man outside whose house Officer Bradford had been killed went underground, then turned himself in to a black police officer. Fearing what would happen to the man in a police station over the weekend (where he

would be held until courts were in session on Monday), the black officer kept the suspect at his own house. On Monday, the two, accompanied by two other police officers (one black and one white) went to Judge Samuel Gardner's office and the judge, who is also black, accompanied them to the arraignment. The police department responded by seeking warrants against the officers, charging them with harboring a fugitive (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/73; Michigan Chronicle, 1/13/73).

Police behavior in these incidents revived calls for the abolition of STRESS, and united the black community behind the demand as never before. A study by Market Opinion Research (1973), commissioned by New Detroit, showed that while 78 percent of whites in the city approved of the STRESS program in March 1973, only 26 percent of the blacks approved of it, and fully two-thirds disapproved. This represented a dramatic decline in black support for STRESS since November, 1971, when 54 percent had approved of it and only 28 percent had expressed disapproval (Detroit News, 2/8/72). The reason for the overwhelming black opposition in 1973 is self-evident; the reason for earlier black support of STRESS is rooted in that community's concern about crime.

The same Market Opinion Research survey showed that crime was still the number one problem on both whites' and blacks' minds. Nine out of ten blacks, as contrasted with eight out of ten whites, felt that blacks were concerned about crime in their neighborhoods. This concern for crime manifested itself in an interesting way during the intensive manhunt. Police confirmed that many of the over 350 tips that they received regarding the whereabouts of Brown, Boyd and

Bethune actually pinpointed neighborhood dope houses, which the police then unwittingly raided (Detroit Free Press, 1/3/73).

The police department's indifference to black community sentiment against STRESS was perhaps best typified by the reaction of Division Commander James Bannon, head of STRESS since its inception, to the Market Opinion Research findings. "The study says that STRESS has 'polarized' the community," he said. "I'll tell you something. New Detroit and Market Opinion Research have polarized the community. If I thought for a minute that this study represented the attitudes of 50 percent of the citizens of this city, I'd tell the Commissioner we should abolish STRESS." But he refused to make such a recommendation, calling the officials of the two organizations involved in the study "a bunch of goddamned intellectual eunuchs" (Detroit Free Press, 6/1/73.

As for the three suspects in the police manhunt, Mark Bethune and John Boyd escaped from the city but were shot to death by Atlanta police at the end of February. Hayward Brown was captured by Detroit police on January 12th, after he allegedly firebombed a Planned Parenthood clinic. Brown was hit with more than ten separate charges by Prosecutor William Cahalan. On May 10, 1973, he was acquitted by a jury on four counts of assault with intent to murder relating to the December 4th shooting incident in which four police officers were injured.

On June 6th, Brown was acquitted by another jury of charges that he murdered Office Bradford the previous December 27th. Turning a defense into an offense, Brown's lawyer Kenneth Cockrel (who had also won acquittal for the young black charged with killing the policeman

in the New Bethel incident, as well as for a survivor of an earlier STRESS killing who was charged with armed robbery) called STRESS the "murder squad" and related the history of policing in the black ghetto. But he presented no evidence or witnesses in Brown's defense, saying the prosecution had failed to make a case. The jury agreed.

In early July, Brown was acquitted by yet another jury of two more charges of assault with intent to murder.[30] The county Prosecutor, William Cahalan, immediately called it a "miscarriage of justice." The jury, he charged, had been swayed by racial arguments (it consisted of ten blacks, one Puerto Rican and one Japanese) and by a black judge's charge to the jury that "sounded like a defense argument." Cahalan suggested that perhaps the jury selection procedure, the method of assigning cases to judges, and the rules of evidence should be altered. Ken Cockrel, once again Brown's lawyer, responded:

> Cahalan is a classic example of those who applaud the system when it produces what they want but go crazy when their own ox gets gored. Persons who never had a word of criticism when all-white juries were sending black people, Puerto Ricans and white working-class people to Jackson [State Prison] are suddenly now becoming concerned and are threatening the abolition of the jury system. . . . Cahalan doesn't give a damn about law, doesn't give a damn about order. . . . There has never been a conviction of a white officer for a homicide against a black man [in Detroit]. . . . As long as members of the department are permitted to function in ways that manifest total disregard for the rights of citizens, all police officers are in danger. We respect those law enforcement officers who manifest the requisite standards. The police must not countenance mad-dog killers among their ranks (Detroit Free Press, 7/8/73).

Cockrel's deft reference to Commissioner Nichols' earlier characterization of Brown and his compatriots took on especially poignant meaning with regard to another infamous murder trial that year. Officer Raymond Peterson, known as "Mr. STRESS" because of his

involvement in fourteen STRESS shootings, ten of them fatal, was charged with second degree murder. While off-duty, Peterson had been involved in a traffic accident on a Detroit freeway. He claimed that the black man whose car had hit his then came at him with a knife, Peterson fired into the man's chest, killing him. Subsequent investigation, however, based on cat hairs and pocket fibers found on the knife, showed that the knife really belonged to Peterson. Nevertheless, he was acquitted of murder by an all-white jury. Prosecutor Cahalan had no comment.

Discussion

The foregoing history of the black community in Detroit clearly illustrates the applicability of the analysis of internal colonialism and the relationship of the police to it which was developed in Part I of this work. Specifically, there are four themes from the earlier section which run through the history of blacks in the city and help explain it. These themes are: (1) the role of black labor, especially its superexploitation through the mechanism of the black reserve army; (2) the formation of the internal colony through spatial segregation of blacks; (3) the political dependence and marginality of the black community; and (4) the role of the police in maintaining the internal colony, and the experience and outlook of black police officers. I will briefly discuss each of these in turn.

Blacks in Detroit have always functioned as a surplus labor force or reserve army. In the early 19th century, many were forced to live across the border in Canada, to be called on when needed, but sent back during economic downturns. Later in the century, the white Southern and European immigrants, in cooperation with Detroit employers,

were able to force blacks out of the trades and crafts and into service work, which was literally the only occupation open to blacks until the second decade of the 20th century.

Blacks made inroads into industry in Detroit after World War I and during the 1920s. But they were incorporated in a dependent fashion, through the mediation of labor brokers. The most powerful example of this is Henry Ford's use of black ministers as labor agents for his Rouge Plant. Right from the beginning, segregation of blacks by plant and by job within plant was exercised, a key feature of superexploitation. Blacks were also used as strikebreakers throughout the 1920s, 30s and 40s, an illustration of their own dependence as well as their employers' desire to divide the labor force.

During the Depression in the 1930s, the dependence and vulnerability of blacks was once again indicated when they were the first forced out of jobs, as whites from higher-level jobs "invaded" black lower-level occupations. The racial violence of the World War II era was largely the product of fierce competition over scarce resources. The fact that blacks paid the highest price--both officially and unofficially--in each case illustrates their relative powerlessness. Half a century of experience as an industrial reserve army, with its accompanying economic dislocation and deprivation, combined with rising expectations in the 1960s to produce a civil disorder of major proportions in Detroit's black community. Those most actively involved in the violence and looting were, as noted, members of the black reserve army.

On the other hand, blacks in Detroit have a tradition of militant struggle, which has slowly but surely begun paying dividends for them.

Despite their use as strikebreakers, blacks became heavily involved in unionism in Detroit. As their numbers have expanded in the plants, so too has their power within the union. Both, however, have only been accomplished through struggle, from efforts to combat separate seniority lists, wildcat strikes over black promotions, and exclusion from apprenticeship programs in the plants to demands for representation on union boards and democracy within unions.[31] The struggle continues, as industrial plants increasingly move out of the city to the suburbs and beyond--places where blacks for economic, cultural and political reasons find it hard to live.[32]

Spatial control of blacks is also a theme which runs through Detroit's history. From the very beginning, blacks were confined to a specific area east of Woodward. This area later became known as Paradise Valley, a major center of black culture for the entire country in the 1920s and 1930s. Though whites frequented the area's nightlife, blacks were not allowed to live outside of the Valley and its surrounding Black Bottom slum, or did so only at great risk and as a result of militant struggle, as the Ossian Sweet case and the Sojourner Truth controversy illustrate. White violence, both formally, through groups like the Klan and the Black Legion, and informally helped to shape and maintain the black internal colony in Detroit.

One aspect of internal colonialism is dependent politics. For blacks, this was assured by Detroit's Progressive system of local government. All elections are non-partisan and at-large. Without ward organizations, blacks in Detroit were not able to develop on-going political organizations which could deliver benefits to partisans. This also meant that, despite the fact that their votes might be crucial

to a political candidate's election, once in office blacks had little control over them. Mayor Smith, who defeated the Klan candidate in 1925 with black support and then turned around and supported housing segregation, is a good example. So is Mayor Jeffries, whom blacks supported strongly in 1939 and 1941, but who turned on the black community after the 1943 race riot. Yet the black community, even allied with the UAW, could not defeat him.

Finally, the Progressive, at-large system of representation has meant that blacks have had to wait a long time to achieve electoral representation. In 1943, a black Council candidate failed to win, even with white business support. It wasn't until 1957, when blacks were over a quarter of the city's population, that they finally placed a black on the nine-member Common Council.

The white business community's sponsorship of a black Council candidate following the riots in 1943 has a parallel in the period following the 1967 civil disorder. At that time the New Detroit Committee attempted to identify and recruit a black leadership cadre who could be counted on to both speak for the black community and keep it quiet. While not immediately successful, this strategy of internal neocolonialism seems to have worked in the long run, at least to the point of preventing further disorder.

At the heart of every disorder in Detroit have been the black community's grievances over the police. That the Detroit police have carried out their order maintenance function in the black community in a callous and often brutal manner seems beyond question. Earlier anecdotal and recent social scientific evidence verify this. Day-to-day mistreatment of blacks by the police has been compounded by police

behavior in the disorders themselves. In the 1925 Sweet case, the police refused to intervene to protect the blacks in their own home. In 1942 at Sojourner Truth the police selectively arrested black people, not white demonstrators. In the 1863 and 1943 riots, the Detroit police were seen actively joining in against blacks. A majority of the 43 people killed in the 1967 civil disorder (well over half of them shot by law enforcement officials) died needlessly, according to an investigative report.

The persistence of police mistreatment of blacks, which is a way of intimidating and maintaining the black internal colony, is not simply a matter of the attitudes of individual officers, though that is clearly a factor. Evidence that police brutality toward blacks is tolerated, if not condoned by the department brass can be seen in its policy of actively recruiting Southern whites in the 1920s and beyond, and the failure of the departmental leadership to challenge police discrimination. Even when Commissioners like Edwards and Girardin did challenge police behavior in the black community, the police themselves were able to muster considerable resources with which to resist.

Law enforcement in the black community has likewise been inadequate. Black Detroiters again and again in recent years have identified crime as the major problem in their neighborhoods. Yet they also have felt that the police department has done little about it. Or when the police have acted, it has been in a hostile, repressive way, as witnessed by Mayor Miriani's "crackdown" and John Nichols' STRESS program.

Despite economic and social differentiation, Detroit's black community has historically been united around the issue of the police,

as various studies and polls have shown. Blacks have also been united in their desire to see more blacks on the police force. Research shows that black police in general, and Detroit's black police in particular, are significantly different from white police. They are more in tune with the black community than white officers; in fact, black police are more in touch with their community than white officers are with theirs. Furthermore, black officers, unlike whites, actually appear to become more community-oriented the longer they are on the force. These differences have enormous implications for the nature of policing in the black community. But due to the resistance of the police department and the police unions, substantial progress in hiring and promoting blacks had not occurred prior to 1974.

The continuing problem of the police and policing in the black community was bound to make it a salient political issue. And indeed it had been in the mayoral elections of 1939, 1943, 1949, 1961 and 1969. But except for 1969, when a black candidate was defeated, black hopes in the other elections rested on white candidates with other ties. And in each case, blacks were disappointed, either by the failure of their candidate to win or by the failure of the elected candidate to successfully implement reforms in the police department.

As the election of 1973 approached, it became apparent that the black community was now sizeable enough to potentially elect its own candidate. The historical consensus in the black community over the issue of the police was highlighted by the bitter controversy over the STRESS program, and especially the shooting deaths connected with it and the recently-terminated intensive manhunt which had turned the black community upside down. It was inevitable that policing in the

black community would become a major campaign issue, but no one at the outset would have predicted just how stark and polarized the choices would be.

Notes to Chapter Four

[1]Immediately prior to the election in 1939, Mayor Reading, the county prosecutor and 137 police officers were convicted on various charges of bribery and corruption--a factor which no doubt contributed to Jeffries' election (Widick, 1972:153).

[2]The Detroit Housing Commission was heavily implicated in the racial segregation of public housing and the maintenance of racial apartheid in the city's neighborhoods. The mintes of one wartime Commission meeting stated that

> The Detroit Housing Commission will in no way change the racial characteristics of any neighborhood in Detroit through occupancy standards of housing projects under the jurisdiction. The importance of housing war workers is recognized by the Detroit Housing Commission, and every effort will be made to accomplish this task. It is the opinion of the Commission that any attempt to change the racial pattern of any area of Detroit will result in violent opposition to the Housing Program. This could very easily reach a point where war production efforts of this entire community could be endangered. The Commission therefore reaffirms its policy of respecting neighborhood racial characteristics and will not sanction any deviations from this position that could lead to internal conflict during this war period (quoted in Widick, 1972:90-91).

[3]Grand Boulevard is a horseshoe-shaped avenue that encircles the older section of the city. It was built in 1891 by Detroit's Progressive mayor, Hazen S. Pingree, in an area that was then the exurbs of the city.

[4]Mayer and Hoult (1962:4) explain how the curves were drawn:

> The technique for finding the location of each center line was as follows: (a) all of the metropolitan area tracted by 1940 was divided into five roughly equal pie-shaped sectors, the specific boundaries of which were determined by major traffic arteries that, in turn, generally divide groupings of consecutively-numbered census tracts; (b) the center of population for each racial group (white and non-white, with 98% of the latter being Negro and therefore termed 'Negro' for convenience sake) in each sector in the three census years was calculated by standard methods, and

(c) for each racial group in each census year, a curve was drawn from sector to sector connecting the sector centers of population. Note: Greater detail in the location of the center lines could be shown by dividing the city into smaller and more numerous sectors, but the general location of the center lines would not be altered by such a procedure.

[5]In May, 1948 the U.S. Supreme Court had overruled both the Michigan Supreme Court and the Wayne County Circuit Court and found that racially restrictive covenants could not be legally enforced. Informal social control, however, continued to maintain strict racial segregation (Geschwender, 1977:68-69). A discussion of exclusionary practices in Detroit's suburbs and a scathing indictment of the real estate industry may be found in Widick (1972:141-148). Rist (1972:27) discusses the rise of the black middle class in Detroit and its inability to escape the black ghetto.

[6]Police brutality was not the only complaint of Detroit's black community. Thirty-four percent of black families, compared to ten percent of white families, were officially poor. Eighty-three percent of black families had incomes lower than the median income for whites. About four out of every ten blacks were unemployed (Conot, 1974:448).

[7]This did not mean, of course, that police brutality disappeared altogether. In July, 1963, for instance, a white police officer shot a suspected black prostitute twice in the back and once in the chest, killing her. The alleged knife she pulled was never found. Over 700 people rallied at police headquarters to protest this act, but the officer involved was never charged (Hersey, 1968:108). In June, 1967 another alleged black prostitute was killed. The black community suspected a member of the vice squad. The police denied it, but

presented no other credible explanation (Geschwender, 1977:72).

[8]The following account of the 1967 civil disorder is based on National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968a:84-108); Rist (1972:35-41); and Conot (1974:523-543).

[9]In the early 1960s, the Reverend Albert Cleage, Jr. had renamed his church at the foot of Twelfth Street The Shrine of the Black Madonna and had begun to advocate Black Power politics. In 1964 he ran for governor of Michigan on the Freedom Now ticket. Local chapters of SNCC and the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) advocated armed violence and self-defense. Earlier in 1967, Detroiters Milton and Richard Henry had founded the Republic of New Africa, which demanded five states in the South for an independent black nation. Less than a month before the civil disorder, at a convention held at Rev. Cleage's church, Rap Brown had stated: "Let white America know that the name of the game is tit-for-tat, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life. . . . Motown, if you don't come around we are going to burn you down!"

[10]For a complete account of the events which transpired at the Algiers Motel that night, see Hersey (1968).

[11]This information is from an article entitled "The 43 Who Died," written over a period of five weeks by a team of three investigative reporters (Detroit Free Press, 9/3/67). Their conclusion, even after giving law enforcement authorities the benefit of every doubt, was that "a majority of the riot victims need not have died. Their deaths could have been--and should have been--prevented."

Notes to Chapter Four

[12]This was clearly an attempt by the Mayor to shift the emphasis of the police role from law enforcement to order maintenance. It was a shift entirely at the ideological level, however, as Bercal's (1970-71) 1968 study showed that only 16 percent of the calls for police assistance in Detroit were crime-related.

[13]In August, 1968 the New Detroit Committee became New Detroit, Inc. For a definitive analysis of the first five years of the organization, see Graves (1975).

[14]The ultimate goal of these corporate leaders, of course, was to prevent another civil disorder and to protect their investments in the city. They were interested in black militancy only insofar as they could coopt it. This strategy of internal neocolonialism was discussed earlier in Chapters Two and Three.

[15]The considerable power of the police bureaucracy to delay, divert and circumvent undesirable directives was discussed in Chapter Three.

[16]One of those who did not resign was State Senator Coleman Young.

[17]The category "Inspectors" in Mendelsohn's research also includes departmental administrators above that rank. To insure their anonymity, however, they are included in the Inspector category.

[18]In a survey conducted in 1968, Harlan Hahn (1969:200) found that, compared to a sample of blacks in other Northern cities, the residents of Detroit's Twelfth Street area expressed a greater ideological commitment to violence, more willingness to participate in civil disorders, greater militancy, and higher expectations of basic social

changes. Thirty percent of the Detroit sample indicated that they saw violence as the best or fastest way for blacks to gain their rights, a figure twice as high as that for any other city.

[19]Harlan Hahn's 1968 survey of the Twelfth Street area found that eighty percent of the blacks--and most of the whites--felt that blacks and whites in the disorder were "fighting on the same side" rather than "against each other" (Hahn, 1969:207).

[20]Detroit was one of the few major cities which experienced no violence after King's assassination.

[21]Though Austin was endorsed by the UAW, the leadership was not able to deliver the votes of the white rank and file, perhaps the crucial factor in his defeat. Blacks did elect three candidates to the Common Council, however, their greatest representation to date (Geschwender, 1977:76; Widick, 1972:208).

[22]In the Detroit News survey, sixty percent of the blacks indicated that they trusted black police officers, but only 42 percent said that they trusted white police (Detroit News, 2/8/72).

[23]In the fall of 1970, a white Detroit policeman was killed in the vicinity of the Black Panther Party headquarters at 16th and Myrtle on the city's near west side. The police immediately laid siege to the house with armored vehicles and large numbers of men. The potential for a violent and bloody confrontation existed until a black reporter for the Michigan Chronicle negotiated the peaceful surrender of the Panthers. They were later acquitted of the murder of the officer, as the bullet that killed him could only have come from their headquarters by turning a corner or passing through a large building--

a fact the police must have been aware of at the time (Widick, 1972: 213-214; Ewen, 1978:213).

[24]At the police hearings it came out that Patzer was a former member of SDS, and he was ostracized by other white officers in the department because of his allegedly far-out views on law and order (Detroit Free Press, 5/19/73).

[25]The following account of STRESS, where not otherwise indicated, relies on the excellent pamphlet by From the Ground Up (1973), and Georgakas and Surkin (1975:202-208).

[26]There was, perhaps, no way this could be avoided. Skolnick (1966:102), for instance,notes that "whatever the 'legal technicalities' associated with the decoy method, the police recognize the element of bad faith and trickery involved in such deceptive interactions."

[27]This is a manifestation of the "working personality" based on hostility and fear which, as noted earlier, is often developed by white officers forced to patrol in "foreign" black neighborhoods.

[28]On January 1, 1973 the body of David Anderson, a black student, was discovered. He had been shot to death by an unknown assailant. Anderson reportedly had expressed a fear of being killed by the police because he looked so much like John Boyd (Michigan Chronicle, 1/13/73).

[29]The injunction came too late for Durwood Foshee, a black homeowner. Awakened during the night, he saw white men with guns on his front porch. Believing they were robbers, he fired his shotgun out

the front door. The plainclothes STRESS officers returned the fire, killing Foshee.

[30]Altogether, Brown was acquitted in a total of five jury trials.

[31]On the militant struggles of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which began and was headquartered in Detroit, see Georgakas and Surkin (1975) and Geschwender (1977).

[32]For a greater specification of the phenomenon of black "reverse commuting" in the Detroit metropolitan area, see Hill (1977).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ELECTION OF COLEMAN YOUNG AS DETROIT'S FIRST BLACK MAYOR

Introduction

In November, 1973 Coleman Alexander Young was elected Mayor of Detroit. He was the first black person to hold this position. His election had national as well as local ramifications, as he was now not only mayor of one of the nation's major cities, but its largest black-majority city as well. Young's personal involvement in national politics heightened the significance of his election. Who is this man and how did he succeed in getting elected? These questions will form the substance of this chapter, as we explore Young's personal and political background, the political climate in Detroit in 1973, the dynamics of the election campaigns and the issues raised, and the immediate aftermath and implications of Young's election.

Young's Personal and Political Background

Coleman Young's personal and political biography parallels and illustrates many of the features of the black historical experience in Detroit discussed in the previous chapter.[1] He was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama in 1921. His family became part of the first great migrant wave to Detroit when they moved there in 1926. The immediate cause of their migration was the ransacking of a black neighborhood by the Klan in nearby Huntsville, where Young's father was learning to be a tailor. Their experience in Detroit soon showed them that there was no escaping racism.

Shortly after arriving in Detroit, the Young family converted to Catholicism. At the end of grammar school, Coleman applied for a scholarship to a Catholic high school. When one of the teachers found out he was black, she tore up the application in Young's presence. "Who knows what moves a man?" Young said, many years later. "Just a buildup of things like that" (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76). At the end of high school, another similar incident contributed to the buildup. Young had received a tuition scholarship to the prestigious University of Michigan. He had to turn it down, however, when the Eastern High School Alumni Association, in contrast to the policy they followed with poor white students, declined to assist him with other college costs.

His aspirations for higher education shot down, Young decided to try and become a skilled tradesman. He entered the electrician's apprentice school at the Ford Rouge plant, about the only place where blacks could even get into such a program. Upon completion of the program, however, Young lost the only available electrician's job to a white man who scored much lower on the tests. His apprentice training wasted, Coleman was forced to go to work on the assembly line. Here he became involved in union organizing activities, which were extremely dangerous in the late 1930s due to the presence of Harry Bennett's goon squads. Ultimately, a company goon provoked and then attacked Young. Coleman responded by hitting the goon with a length of steel pipe. For this he was fired from the Rouge plant.

Young then went to work at the post office, another of the few relatively good jobs open to blacks. He continued to work on a voluntary basis with the Ford Organizing Committee of the UAW-CIO. In

addition, Young tried to organize the postal workers. These activities not only got him fired from the post office, they got him blacklisted in the local labor market as a "red sympathizer" (Michigan Chronicle, 10/13/73).

Around this same time, Young was becoming involved in local black politics. He became allied with the Rev. Charles Hill, an independent black minister who formed the National Negro Congress in 1941, of which Coleman Young became executive secretary. Among other things, the Congress challenged race bias in wartime production. They also fought for the right of blacks to live in the Sojourner Truth housing project. Looking back on this experience years later, Young proudly noted that "we led the first civil rights movement in Detroit. And we won the battle" (Michigan Chronicle, 10/13/73).

But the Rev. Hill and his various organizations were seen as too radical and independent by some segments of the community. Rev. Hill ran for Common Council several times, all unsuccessful. "Whites always fought me because they knew I couldn't be controlled," he said later (Detroit Free Press, 1/6/74). His campaign manager and closest assistant in each case was his protege, Coleman Young. In the Fall of 1942, Rev. Hill challenged for the presidency of the local NAACP chapter, the nation's largest. Strongly supported by black left trade unionists, he was vigorously opposed by Detroit's black elite and defeated overwhelmingly (Meier and Rudwick, 1979:103-117).

Unable to get a job because of his perceived radical politics, Young joined the army. He became a navigator in the Air Force, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. While stationed at Freeman Field, Indiana, Young became involved in a demonstration against the

racial segregation of officer's clubs. He was arrested along with 100 other black airmen, including Thurgood Marshall, now a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and Percy Sutton, currently borough president of Manhattan. The men spent three days in jail and, among other things, were threatened with a firing squad before the army gave in and opened up the clubs. As a result of his civil rights activities, Young failed to get a promotion during his four years in the service.

After the war, Young returned to his union activities. In 1947 he was named secretary-treasurer of the Wayne County C.I.O., the highest union position achieved by a black in Detroit. The organization fired him, however, when he supported Henry Wallace for President in 1948. In 1951, Young founded the National Negro Labor Council, and became its director. The Council agitated for the hiring and upgrading of black workers. Among others, it successfully prevailed upon Sears-Roebuck and the San Francisco Transit System to hire blacks.

In 1952, the infamous House Un-American Activities Committee came to Detroit to investigate alleged Communist involvement in the trade unions. Because of his past and present labor activities, Coleman Young was called before the Committee. The Committee found him to be a formidable foe. "We decided to take them on," Young reminisced years later. "We were the first in the country to stand up to them" (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76).

Young coached the other black unionists on how to harass the Committee. When it was his turn to testify, Young took the Fifth Amendment and refused to name names, saying he had no desire to be a "stool pigeon." He then proceeded to chide the Committee members on their Southern pronounciation of the word Negro, and gave them lessons

on how to say it properly. He also spoke out vigorously against Jim Crow practices in industry and elsewhere, and generally turned the hearing to his own use. Young's performance was vilified by both the Committee and the city's white press, but it made him a hero in the black community. A phonograph record of his testimony was cut and enjoyed wide distribution among blacks in the city (Widick, 1972:129; Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76). The U.S. Subversive Activities Control Board, though, listed the Negro Labor Council as a communist-front organization and in 1956 it was forced to disband.

Young worked at a variety of jobs in the 1950s and early 1960s, including driving a taxi, managing a dry-cleaning plant and selling insurance. He also continued to become more involved in electoral politics. In 1961 he won a seat at the Michigan Constitutional Convention. In 1962 Young ran unsuccessfully for the State House of Representatives, but he became the Wayne County campaign manager for the successful Democratic candidate for Governor.

In 1964, Coleman Young was successful in winning a State Senate seat, with union support. He rapidly became a leader in that body, fighting for civil rights and union causes. He co-authored Michigan's open-housing law, and sponsored the acts which recognized public employee unions and decentralized the Detroit public school system. Young achieved national political prominence when he was elected as the first black Democratic national committeeman in 1968. That same year he became majority leader in the State Senate.

While achieving greater prominence and power on the state and national levels, Coleman Young continued to be involved in the local politics of Detroit. He was appointed to a number of boards,

committees and commissions in the city, two of which stand out as particularly important. On the one hand, Young's service on Mayor Cavanagh's Special Task Force on Recruiting and Hiring gave him an inside look at the discriminatory practices of the police department, a major thorn in the side of the black community. (He subsequently sponsored legislation designed to change Detroit police hiring practices.) On the other hand, in recognition of his growing power and authority in the black community, Young was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan Fund, Inc., the major corporate policy planning group in Detroit. Coming shortly after the 1967 civil disorder, Young's appointment would appear to be a recognition on the part of corporate leadership of the need to sponsor junior black partners.

In 1969, Coleman Young decided to run for mayor of Detroit. A Wayne County Circuit Court ruled, however, that in order to do so he would have to resign his State Senate seat. Unwilling to risk his current powerful position on an admittedly big gamble in Detroit, and having insufficient time to appeal the court's decision, Young passed up the 1969 race to wait for 1973.

In 1973, Young filed early for mayor, knowing the Wayne County Circuit Court was likely to once again rule him ineligible. When it did so, he appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court, winning a favorable ruling in early May. Young was also aided in his plans by Richard Austin's announcement in mid-March that he would not be a candidate for mayor that year. Although opinion polls showed he was an early runaway favorite, Austin's current position as Secretary of State gave him statewide clout. Furthermore, the AFL-CIO had urged him to keep

the job in order to protect the substantial number of Democratic patronage jobs associated with it (Detroit Free Press, 3/17/73, 5/9/73).

The Cavanagh Legacy: Reform and Crisis

The overall political context of the 1973 mayoral election was set by the legacy of the Cavanagh administration. Despite the fact that it had been gone for almost four years, the successes and failures of this administration had had a lasting impact on Detroit's political climate. Cavanagh was a reform mayor, and as such he usurped much of the political platform that has been the basis for black mayor candidacies in other cities (see Chapter Three).

Mayor Cavanagh, like most reform candidates, had run against the existing political machine. Because he did not owe his victory to that machine, Cavanagh was free to make appointments of his own choosing. Thus his political appointees tended to reflect the contemporary ethnic mix of the city, at least by educational level. Although blacks were underrepresented proportional to their numbers in the general population, Cavanagh appointed more of them than ever before, including Alfred Pelham as City Controller, the second most important position in city government.

Mayor Cavanagh fought against corruption and inefficiency in city government. He tried to develop mechanisms for citizen participation. He put the city on a sound financial footing by pushing for a city income tax on both residents and nonresidents who worked in the city. As a result, for the first time since the Depression the city's bonds were given a prime rating (Conot, 1974:450-452).

Cavanagh's initial successes made him a nationally popular figure. He became the first mayor to simultaneously hold the presidency of the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The Kennedy Administration adopted him as one of their two or three favorite mayors. The national media glowingly praised Cavanagh and his growing notoriety increasingly drew him out of the city for awards, speaking engagements and conferences.

Even as his star was rising, however, Cavanagh's position was being undermined by several structural dynamics. On the local level, a recalcitrant city council increasingly opposed his policies. The entrenched civil service bureaucracies also began to assert themselves and their independence. Most notable and dangerous of these was the police, as noted in the previous chapter. In addition, government subsidized suburbanization was draining the city's tax base and the mechanization of the auto industry was creating a huge surplus of low-skilled unemployed (primarily black) workers in Detroit (Conot, 1974:452-456).

After being handily reelected in 1965, Cavanagh decided to run for Michigan's vacant U.S. Senate seat in 1966. He put forth a platform based on an end to the Vietnam war (highly unusual for a national political figure at that time) and the massive channelling of resources toward the reform and redevelopment of the cities. Cavanagh's opponent in the Democratic primary was popular ex-governor G. Mennen Williams, who received full endorsement from labor. The campaign split the Democratic party in the state and especially in the city and left a leadership void. When Williams, who won the primary, lost the general

election to the Republican candidate, many Democratic pols blamed Cavanagh and began to move away from him (Widick, 1972:163; Gordon, 1971:25).

By 1969, Cavanagh was no longer the optimistic ebullient reformer on a crusade to remake the city. The 1967 civil disorder and its aftermath had devastated both the city and the Mayor. The Kennedy New Frontier was a distant memory, and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs were being dismantled by a conservative Richard Nixon. The war in Southeast Asia was being escalated, and the suburban exodus from the city was increasing at a rapid pace. Under increasing attack from local conservatives, the mayor moved to the right (see Chapter Four). Finally, the breakdown of Cavanagh's marriage had been trumpeted in the local newspapers, as well as the fact that he had gained twenty pounds and was losing his hair (Conot, 1974:542). Personally and politically exhausted, Cavanagh chose not to run in 1969.

As Nelson and Meranto (1977:328) have noted, it has typically been weakness and fragmentation in the white political organizations which have given black mayoral candidates a shot at being elected. This political disorganization certainly existed in Detroit in 1969. Richard Austin capitalized on this disarray and nearly won the election. His defeat was largely due to the fact that the voting was along strict racial lines in a city where blacks were a slight minority of registered voters.[2] The local Democratic machine was able to get itself together only enough to pressure Roman Gribbs, the Wayne County Sheriff, into running. In a city where crime was perceived as a serious and growing problem, his position alone was reassuring to

whites. The fact that he was a Polish Catholic, like the largest ethnic group in the city, also made him attractive.

The Gribbs administration was essentially a caretaker administration. To his credit, Gribbs recognized that his margin of victory had been razor-thin, and he owed it to the black community to take their needs into consideration. He appointed the city's first black deputy mayor (although the man was very conservative) and claimed to enforce equal opportunity provisions in city departments and contracts. He established seven Neighborhood City Halls and presided over the city's first drop in crime in a decade. Gribbs did not, and perhaps could not, however, bridge the gap with the black community. This failure was most serious in the area of the police. Blacks did not perceive that the police were seriously dealing with crime in their neighborhoods, and the notorious mayhem created by Commissioner Nichols' STRESS squads, as noted in the previous chapter, had thoroughly alienated the black community. Perhaps sensing this high level of disenchantment, and the growing political strength of the black community, Gribbs announced that he would not run for a second term.

Conditions for Black Political Mobilization

The black community in Detroit was a community in transition in the late 1960s and early 1970s. On the one hand, blacks expressed progressively less trust in established institutions and more anger about racial discrimination. Despite over ten years of what whites perceived as racial progress, blacks tended to indicate that nothing had really changed (Aberbach and Walker, 1973:220; Detroit Free Press, 10/11/75). On the other hand, blacks expressed a declining support

for integration (though two-thirds still favored it) and an increased sense of political efficacy. And while moderate black civil rights organizations retained the support of the black community, black militant groups were also gaining in popular support (Aberbach and Walker, 1973:64,39-41).

As the election of 1973 approached, it appeared that Detroit's black community possessed a greater potential for political mobilization than the city's white community. A 1971 survey had shown blacks as more highly organized than whites, more intensely partisan, more convinced that leaders were fighting for their rights and interests, and more concerned about public affairs. With regard to block clubs, which are the crucial political organizations in a city which lacks precinct and ward politics, blacks indicated a participation rate three and a half times greater than that of whites (Aberbach and Walker, 1973:30-41).[3] But black voters remained a slight minority of the city's voting-age population (45%) and, as the Detroit Free Press (2/25/73) concluded in an article about the upcoming 1973 election, "The practical effect of the current population breakdown is clear: A black candidate will need white votes in November."

The Primary Election

As the primary election campaign unfolded, five major candidates emerged. First to announce was Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Edward Bell, a black Republican who resigned from the bench a year early in order to run for mayor. Although Detroit's municipal elections are nominally non-partisan, the city's voters are overwhelmingly Democratic by registration and this was seen as a major drawback to Bell's candidacy.

The leading contender for the mayoralty was Mel Ravitz, a pipe-smoking white professor of sociology who had served four terms on the Common Council and was currently its President. Ravitz had good name recognition and a solid reputation as a liberal. A second major white candidate was John Mogk, a law professor at Wayne State University. Mogk began the campaign as a political unknown whose only previous political involvement was the organization of a community redevelopment group in the far east side neighborhood where he lived. Through an extensive walking tour of the city Mogk captured the imagination of some liberal whites and the endorsement of the liberal Detroit Free Press (9/9/73).

The final major white candidate was Police Commissioner John Nichols. His name had been bandied about as a mayoral candidate during the STRESS manhunt controversy. Asked in January, 1973 if he was interested in running for mayor, Nichols had replied: "I'm a policeman, not a politician" (Michigan Chronicle, 1/13/73). But as the Chronicle correctly speculated, the intense controversy and racial polarization over STRESS was likely to make the upcoming election a contest between those who favored and those who opposed recent police activities. And who better to support police actions than the Police Commissioner himself?[4]

Nevertheless, at the beginning of April, in spite of the fact that Nichols campaign stickers had begun showing up in various places at police headquarters, Nichols denied that he was a candidate and said anyone spreading rumors to the effect that he was a candidate was so wrong "that he ought to be turned over to our narcotics squad" (Detroit Free Press, 4/1/73). By the end of April Nichols had become

convinced, however, and announced that he would run. Because of the high visibility of the STRESS program, and the overwhelming support for it in the white community, Nichols was immediately considered to be a front-runner along with Mel Ravitz.

The final major candidate was, of course, State Senator Coleman Young. As noted earlier, he entered the mayor's race in May after winning a favorable Supreme Court ruling. This late start was perceived to have hurt him in the area of fund-raising, organization and publicity. Because of his long involvement in union organizing and black politics in Detroit, though, Young was considered a force to be reckoned with. The crucial issue would be whether he could win the endorsements of the major unions.

Michigan District Council 77 of AFSCME, with over 13,500 members the city's largest union, had already endorsed Mel Ravitz in March (Detroit Free Press, 3/15/73). Heading into their endorsement convention, UAW leaders speculated about backing Ravitz, who appeared to have the best shot at stopping Nichols. Aware of Ravitz' popularity with the union leadership, but also aware of Young's previous union involvement and the fact that the UAW had supported Richard Austin in 1967, the Young forces were hoping for at least dual endorsements of him and Ravitz.

If the vote had been taken only among delegates from city locals, Young may have captured the endorsement outright. But the vote was taken on a county-wide basis, and Young lost out to Ravitz by 64 out of the 393 votes cast. The next day, the AFL-CIO COPE committee voted to endorse Ravitz, and the Detroit Firefighters Association soon followed suit. These were staggering blows to the Young campaign.

Deprived of official union support, and competing with another black candidate for the black vote, polls in mid-August showed Young running fourth behind Ravitz, Nichols and Bell. Ed Bell called upon him to withdraw from the campaign and unite the black vote (Detroit Free Press, 7/14/73; Michigan Chronicle, 8/18/73).

Coleman Young was down, but not out. He refused Bell's invitation and redoubled his efforts. His support in the black community was confirmed when he won the endorsements of both predominantly black Congressional District organizations (the First and the Thirteenth) and the strong support of Congressman John Conyers. Young was also named on the Rev. Cleage's Black Slate of nine candidates for various offices. In addition, Young made good use of his ties to the city's establishment, both black and white. His campaign manager was venerable black attorney Robert Millender, who had also managed Austin's 1959 campaign. And on Young's campaign steering committee were former mayor Jerome Cavanagh and New Detroit, Inc. President Lawrence Doss.

Furthermore, Young retained strong support within the UAW. Over 100 angry delegates had stormed out of the endorsement meeting and vowed to support Young. On the same day that the union leadership staged a campaign rally for Ravitz, a group of 25 black local union leaders held a press conference saying that the black rank and file would ignore the UAW leadership's endorsement of Ravitz and vote for Young (Detroit Free Press, 9/7/73). A sample survey conducted by the Free Press in late August showed that Young had gained and was running neck-and-neck with Ravitz, slightly behind Nichols. More than

half the voters, however, were still undecided (Detroit Free Press, 8/23/73).

The Free Press survey also confirmed the finding of many earlier studies that the number one problem in the minds of Detroiters was crime. As Police Commissioner, Nichols, of course, was in a natural position to exploit this issue. In the black community, however, there was enormous dissatisfaction with the law enforcement activities of the Detroit police, especially their behavior during the STRESS program and the recent intensive manhunt. No other candidate took such a forceful position on the police as Coleman Young. In his first campaign speech, Young had said:

> Detroit today is a racially polarized city, and now is the time we need to have a black mayor. One of the problems is that the police run the city. . . . STRESS is responsible for the explosive polarization that now exists; STRESS is an execution squad rather than a law enforcement squad. As mayor, I will get rid of STRESS. . . . The whole attitude of the whole Detroit Police Department, historically, has been one of intimidation and that citizens can be kept in line with clubs and guns rather than respect. The present department under Nichols is following the old blackjack rule by terror. If elected, I would fire Nichols (Detroit Free Press, 5/11/73).

The white police, of course, did not take kindly to this characterization and these charges. For only the second time in the city's history, police officers were active in campaigning for a political candidate (the first time was for Gribbs in 1969)[5] and their union made an endorsement (Nichols). Writing in the DPOA newsletter, two STRESS officers departed from their regular report on STRESS activities to attack Young:

> Coleman Young is the biggest joke running for mayor. Four years of Coleman Young and the animals would eat the buildings down to their foundations. Young is cut from the same mold as Bozo (Detroit Recorders Court Judge James)

> DelRio and Kenny Cockrel. Young would hire 1,000 clowns off the street with no regard to their past police record and no training to serve as police officers.

They went on to say that Young had "made a deal" with Cockrel to appoint him Police Commissioner, a statement that Young denied (Detroit Free Press, 9/7/73).

Cockrel himself did not support any of the candidates. But he vigorously attacked John Nichols and the police department. Cockrel said that he experienced as a child the spectacle of cops calling black kids over to their cars and then rolling the car windows up on the kids' necks and asking, "You're a nigger, aren't you?" "John Nichols was in the department all that time," Cockrel said. "John Nichols is an outspoken part of that. He didn't just spring from Zeus' aegis." Nichols responded by saying that if he got in trouble he'd want Cockrel as his attorney (Detroit Free Press, 8/29/73). Rank and file police officers responded in a more serious vein, offering Cockrel and his client Hayward Brown "one-way tickets to Atlanta" (where Brown's friends John Boyd and Mark Bethune had been shot to death) (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975:208).

One other important feature of black politics in Detroit was brought out in the 1973 primary election: the existence of the black sub-machine. Because of the importance of labor within the larger political scene, and because of the large numbers of blacks within the unions, black sub-machine politicians were largely unionists. Within the union structure, they were generally subordinate to white leaders. Riley Smith, chairman of the Michigan Black Assembly urged the National Black Assembly[6] which met at Wayne State University in March, 1973 to "take over communities now controlled by labor and decide how

those communities will be run. . . . I blame labor for many of our problems" (Detroit Free Press, 3/5/73).

Indeed the highest-level blacks within the UAW supported the leadership's endorsement of Ravitz over Young and urged other black unionists to go along (Detroit Free Press, 9/7/73). But the black sub-machine was perhaps best illustrated and described by the experience of Edward Bell in the campaign. As a black Republican, Bell was outside the traditionally Democratic black sub-machine. After Bell and Young had spoken to a private meeting of black leaders in late July, Tom Turner, black president of the predominantly white Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO Council, released a letter to the press in which he charged that Bell had attacked black trade unionists as "plantation niggers." Turner also said that Bell's candidacy was "seriously deficient" because he was a Republican. Bell's reply is worth quoting at length:

> For two hundred years, so-called Black leaders, packaged in the form of Tom Turners, have frustrated the efforts of the Black community to organize and assert itself politically. From their hand-picked positions they have been mere puppets serving their masters faithfully and obediently to the detriment of the black community in many instances. These TOM Turners always somehow manage to label as "racist and-or revolutionary" any positive effort by the Black community to politically determine its own destiny. Your letter to me is dramatic evidence of the disservice that is performed by your kind.

In addition, Bell criticized Turner for saying that he would have supported George Wallace for President if he had gotten the Democratic nomination. "Do you actually believe the only good people on earth are Democrats?" Bell asked, ticking off a list of racist Southern Democrats (Michigan Chronicle, 8/4/73).

Though not supported by the union leadership--black or white--Coleman Young used the support of the black rank and file to edge out Mel Ravitz for a spot on the November ballot. The final tally showed John Nichols the big winner with 33.8 percent of the vote. Young was next with 22.1 percent and Ravitz followed with 18.4 percent. John Mogk, aided by the Free Press endorsement, had captured 12.4 percent of the vote. Edward Bell brought up the rear with 9.0 percent.

An analysis of the voting pattern by the Urban Alliance showed that voting had largely been along racial lines and that, in effect, both Nichols and Young had won in separate three-man races. In the white neighborhoods, Nichols beat Ravitz and Mogk, and in the city's black neighborhoods Young had beaten Ravitz and Bell. The analysis also showed that neither Nichols nor Young had run well enough in the integrated neighborhoods to win on the strength of the white or black vote along. Thus a biracial strategy was necessary to win in November (Detroit Free Press, 9/23/73; Michigan Chronicle, 9/22/73).

The General Election

Young's strategy for winning white support in the general election centered upon a plan for the city's economic development, and the fact that his broad experience gave him the expertise to implement it. "I will lead a business resurgence that will produce jobs by the thousands, revitalize our downtown, and our entire city," Young said in his campaign literature. "I will move Detroit forward on a program that includes new port facilities, a stadium, rapid transit, recreational facilities, and housing" (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975:222). Before the prestigious Economic Club of Detroit, Young

challenged manufacturers, retailers and bankers to invest in the city rather than the suburbs (Detroit Free Press, 10/30/73). 316

At his first joint campaign appearance with Nichols, Young contrasted his experience and expertise with that of his opponent. "We need a mayor with a record of achievement across a spectrum. We don't need any one-shot, narrow type of specialty for mayor." Young emphasized his broad experience in the labor movement, in civil rights, in business, and in the state legislature. Realizing the importance of federal and state funds in resolving the city's fiscal crisis, Young argued: "You need someone who knows where Lansing [the state capital] is and knows how to get things done in Lansing. You need somebody who knows where Washington is and how to get things done in Washington. It's too late to learn where Lansing is, it's too late to learn where Washington is, it's too late to learn what's going on in the city outside of the police department. I already know." (Detroit Free Press, 10/3/73).

Nichols, by way of contrast, played upon post-Watergate suspicions by emphasizing that he was not a professional politician like his opponent, but rather a practical man who had honestly and efficiently administered a department which comprised 25 percent of the city's employees and 20 percent of its budget. But Nichols' main issue was, predictably enough, crime and the police. He pointed to the fact that crime in the city had declined during his tenure at the top of the department. This, he said, was the most important issue in the city; everything else was pie-in-the-sky utopianism unless crime could be controlled. And he, Nichols, was more qualified to do it than Young. "It's different to be sitting in Lansing writing laws

and being a policeman out on the street trying to enforce them" (Detroit Free Press, 10/30/73).

The two most important crime-related issues were STRESS and the hiring of more black police. Nichols was unflinchingly committed to the STRESS program. "I backed STRESS as police commissioner and I'll back the concept as mayor. Extraordinary methods have to be used to fight extraordinary crime." Young, on the other hand, stuck by his earlier characterization of STRESS as an "execution squad," and pledged to get rid of it and all other forms of "blackjack rule by terror" on the part of the police. But he sought to reassure his white audience that "I'm not soft on crime. I plan to run the muggers off the streets of this town. I'm going to take more police officers out of police headquarters and put more of them in uniform." To his black audience Young emphasized that "law and order can be achieved only by a police department that respects the people for whom it works."

To this end, Young promised to hire 1,000 new police officers, to make the department reflective of the city's racial composition, and to remold it into a "people's police department" tied into the local community through officers walking regular beats. Nichols charged that the latter scheme was inefficient, costly, and another example of Young's "pie-in-the-sky" plans. With regard to the hiring of black officers, Nichols said, "I am willing to submit my record. . . . The number of black officers has almost doubled since 1970. The number of black command officers has almost doubled." Young replied that "it's not good enough to double the number of blacks in the department when they still represent less than 15 percent

of a department in a city that is 50 percent black" (Detroit Free Press, 10/3/73, 10/30/73; Michigan Chronicle, 10/13/73).

Coleman Young's strategy paid off as he captured extensive support from business groups and the lion's share of the political "big money." Young even received the backing of one business group that was involved in fighting the city's Commission on Community Relations requirement that city contractors hire more blacks. "While Nichols has the ability," they said, "Young can make the city go. He has a better handle on needs and wants and ways to handle things" (Detroit Free Press, 10/30/73). The Urban Alliance, a non-profit, inter-faith, non-partisan voter information organization endorsed Young "because he is best equipped by experience, understanding of the issues and thorough knowledge of Detroit" (Michigan Chronicle, 10/20/73).

Mel Ravitz also threw his support to Young, pointed to his experience and leadership ability, and emphasized to reluctant whites that "ability to do the job is what counts, nothing else" (Michigan Chronicle, 10/27/73). And with Ravitz out of the running, Young received the endorsement of the UAW and the AFL-CIO this time around. The Detroit Free Press and the Michigan Chronicle also endorsed him (Detroit Free Press, 10/1/73; Michigan Chronicle, 11/3/73).

Nichols was not out of it by a long shot. He received endorsements from the Detroit News, the Detroit Firefighters Association, and, of course, the powerful police unions. Nichols was also solidly supported by white homeowner groups in the city, some of whom--probably without Nichols' knowledge or approval--passed out literature alleging that Young was a Communist (Detroit Free Press, 10/1/73, 11/4/73). Nichols was hurt, however, by his failure to resign as

Police Commissioner after the primary election. He claimed that he would use vacation days and lunch hours to campaign and not do so on city time. It was not politically viable, however, to have a political candidate in an election where the activities of the police were the major issue also controlling those police on a day-to-day basis. Mayor Gribbs first suggested "as a friend" that Nichols consider resigning. When he refused, Gribbs reluctantly fired him (Detroit Free Press, 9/19-21/73).

The power of the police to influence the election was well-recognized. Even before the primary, the city clerk worried publicly about their possible impact (Detroit Free Press, 7/25/73). During the general election, several incidents involving the police were reported. Off-duty white officers showed up at black precincts, ostensibly to campaign for Nichols, but may have intimidated some black voters. And in the most blatant incident, the police in the First Precinct failed to deliver the keys to the voting machines in nine black voting precincts. The officers claimed the keys were not in their usual boxes, but the city elections director said procedures hadn't been changed "for years and years." Other keys were provided and the polls were soon opened. The elections director said that the mixup had no influence on the election, but Free Press reporters noted some blacks who had left during the delay without voting (Detroit Free Press, 11/7/73).

The New Black Mayor Takes Office

The election was close, but Coleman Young squeaked by to become Detroit's first black mayor. He immediately began to try to reduce racial polarization in the city. The night of his victory Young told

his supporters "I didn't win, we won. All of Detroit won. Our work has only begun because Detroit has just begun. I am going to insist on equality for everyone--that is what this election is all about" (Detroit Free Press, 11/8/73). In his inaugural address Young returned to this theme. "What is good for the black people of this city is good for the white people of this city," he declared.[7] "The city has too long been polarized. . . . We can no longer afford the luxury of hatred and racial division. . . . As of this moment, Detroit is coming together. As of this moment, we are going to turn this city around. . . . I shall nurture and develop this sense of unity and determination" (Detroit Free Press, 1/3/74). One believer was Henry Ford II, who at a $10 a plate inaugural luncheon[8] told the city's major business and labor leaders: "We here in this room represent the beginning of a new coalition of business and labor, brought together by our mutual desire to pledge our support to the newly-inaugurated mayor. . . . I know Mayor Young faces his new job in a spirit of realistic optimism, and I suggest that we all follow his example" (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/74).

One aspect of this realistic spirit was Young's announced intention to split his top appointments half-and-half on the basis of race. "Just because the previous administration was unfair," he said, "doesn't mean I will be."[9] Young promised that among his 85 appointments there would be "a lot more women and a lot more Latinos." The latter, he said, "have largely been completely ignored" (Detroit Free Press, 12/4/73). And in a complete break with precedent, Young did not immediately accept the resignations of all

of Gribbs' appointees. He asked many of them to stay on a while, and invited them to submit resumes to his appointments task force (Detroit Free Press, 1/3/74).

Reflecting the major concern of his black constituency, Young dealt with the crime problem in his inaugural address in no uncertain terms. "I issue a warning now to all dope pushers, rip-off artists and muggers, it's time to leave Detroit--hit the road!. . . . I don't give a damn if they're black or white, if they wear Super-Fly suits or blue uniforms with silver badges. Hit the road!" This latter remark was to be expected from a man who had run a campaign in which he was extremely critical of the police. In his speech Young amplified this criticism and gave a sense of what he thought the department should be. "The police must have the respect and cooperation of the citizens," he said, "but they must earn that respect. . . . Police officers must learn to respect the law if they expect people to respect them." Finally, Young said, "we must build a new people-oriented police department," and he promised to reorganize it so that "it can best carry out its function of protecting the people" (Detroit Free Press, 1/3/74).

The police themselves were generally disheartened with these kinds of comments and with the election of a man many perceived to be an enemy. "Things are kind of gloomy around here this morning," said a veteran STRESS officer the day after Young's election. Several veteran white officers kidded a black rookie by saluting him stiffly and addressing him as "Inspector." "The real change," though, noted one veteran officer, "Is through the charter" (Detroit Free Press, 11/8/73).

Young was fortunate to be elected at the same time that Detroit voters were approving substantial changes in the city's charter. The new charter, to take effect July 1, 1974, greatly increased the power of the mayor. Young would be able to fill by appointment fifty percent more policymaking positions than any previous mayor of the city. The power of the new City Council was greatly reduced, as legislative initiative on most issues was vested in the mayor. Another important provision of the new charter was its specification that city contracts be let to the "lowest responsible bidder," a concept which left clear room to mandate affirmative action and to favor minority contractors under certain circumstances.[10]

But perhaps the most significant change brought by the new charter was in the organization of the police department. The post of Police Commissioner was abolished. Police policy would be determined by a five-person civilian Board of Police Commissioners who would be appointed by the mayor and approved by the City Council. The mayor would also appoint a Chief of Police, who would be responsible for the administrative operation of the department. The Chief would report to both the mayor and the Police Commissioners, and would be allowed to choose his or her own deputies. From the point of view of the police, dreaded civilian rule had come at last (Detroit Free Press, 10/28/73).

Discussion

Like other successful black mayoral candidates--and perhaps to an even greater extent--Coleman Young had strong roots in the working class. As noted, he had a highly visible history of labor and civil rights organizing in the city. And in the state legislature he had

a reputation as a savvy, independent politician who vigorously fought for the interests of Detroit in general and black Detroiters in particular.[11]

Because of the Progressive reform of Detroit's city government in 1918, many of the forms of political corruption which confronted black mayoral candidates in other major cities were not a problem for Coleman Young. Yet a political machine--and a black submachine--clearly existed in Detroit. Its major components were white political entrepreneurs, the major newspapers, and union leaders, especially from the UAW. The black sub-machine also had a large union component, as well as a number of black ministers and professionals. Young was initially opposed by the machine, which feared his race, his working-class background, his political astuteness and independence, or all three of these.

But when the choice was between Young and the police commissioner, the machine mostly swung in behind Coleman. Given the high level of tension between the police and the black community immediately prior to the election, the black sub-machine was also compelled to support Young. Young also picked up substantial support from the business community. Here the strategy of neocolonialism cannot be discounted. Business leaders were quite aware of two things; (1) the extent of their capital investment in the city, and (2) the imminency of a black majority population in the city. The cultivation of reasonable, "responsible" black leadership they could work with was a high priority.[12]

Because of his ultimate backing by unionists and white liberals as well as blacks, a post-election analysis by the Urban Alliance

showed that, given projected population shifts, Young could potentially weld his electoral alliance into a powerful political machine. By extending the coalition into the heavily black suburbs of Hamtramck, Highland Park, Ecorse and River Rouge, Coleman Young could, the analysis showed, come to control more than twenty seats in the state legislature and 16 of 27 Wayne County Commissioners. This would give the mayor Richard Daley-style political clout, something Young has admitted being desirous of (Detroit Free Press, 1/2/74).

Regardless of the fact, though, that Coleman Young had been elected by a biracial coalition, in the first flush of victory it was the black community that claimed him. After waiting so long for a taste of real political power in the city, Detroit's blacks submerged class under race; Coleman was their mayor. This is well-illustrated in the huge and unprecedented popular participation (largely black) in his inaugural activities.

As Young took office, he was not faced with the task of weeding out extensive corruption and inefficiency in city government to the extent that his counterparts in other cities were. As noted earlier, this task of structural reform was initiated, and implemented to a large extent, by Mayor Cavanagh's regime. The Gribbs administration (under political pressure) extended these reforms somewhat. And the new city charter gave Young not only greater administrative control, but a legally-mandated opportunity to shake things up.[13]

Nonetheless, controlling and re-orienting the city bureaucracy did prove to be a formidable challenge. An article assessing Young's first two years in office noted that "Young is beginning to manage, instead of being managed by, the city's bureaucracy." The article

quoted a long-time friend and confidant of the mayor: "I think when Coleman first got here [City Hall], it was like trying to catch a greasy pig--the minute you catch it, it's gone." Helped by the new city charter, concludes the writer, Young "appears to have figured out at least how to hold onto a hind leg" (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76).

The police, of course, played a central role in the election campaign. It was putting an end to their "blackjack rule by terror" that Young made a central plank in his platform. And the fact that he was running against the police chief who was directly responsible for some of the most inflammatory activities of the police (e.g., STRESS, the intensive manhunt), brought the issue into stark relief. Miliband (1969:68-69) observes that political disagreements among candidates running for office are seldom fundamental. This is ordinarily quite true. But in Detroit in 1973, at least with regard to the police, residents of both races were presented with two fundamentally different views of the police and the way police work should be carried out: by a "people-oriented" department characterized by community service, or by a detached, "professional" department. Each of these views placed different emphasis on the importance and the speed with which the department's personnel should reflect the racial and sexual composition of the community as a whole. For the black community, though, however plausible the second alternative may have been in theory, and however honest they felt Nichols to be, his election could only result in the continuance of their intolerable abuse by the police (see, in this regard, Michigan Chronicle, 11/3/73).

Given the enmity the police expressed for Young and his concept of policing, and given their active attempts to defeat him, it is not

surprising that Young was highly suspicious of the police after taking office. His personal security was extremely tight, to the point where he said it cramped him. He was--and is--driven to work by a different route each day, and he walks alternate, random paths to his eleventh floor office in City Hall. Young's greatest fear, he says, is that some resentful white policeman might try to assassinate him (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76). This was the context, then, in which Coleman Young set out to remake the Detroit police department. His successes and failures will be examined in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter Five

[1]Unless otherwise noted, the following biographical material is from Ploski and Marr (1976:341-342).

[2]Carl Stokes (1973:272-273) claims that Austin lost because he failed to mobilize the black vote. Some 57,000 registered black voters had stayed home in 1969. If Austin had gotten just fifteen percent of this group to the polls, he would have won.

[3]Block clubs in Detroit were first organized by the Health Department in the mid-1950s as a way of efficiently disseminating information on rodent control. The Detroit Housing Commission took over the job in the early 1960s and organized over 1,000 block clubs and 150 community councils. The Commission provided model club constitutions, leadership guides and organizing. In 1973, it was estimated that there were over 3,000 block clubs among the city's 13,000 blocks (Detroit Free Press, 8/14/73).

[4]Ironically, the Chronicle also speculated (incorrectly, as it turned out) that Nichols' opponent might be Ken Cockrel, the radical black lawyer who had repeatedly done battle with the police department (and won nearly every time). A year earlier, the Chronicle had tabbed Cockrel "a man destined to become, more than he is now, a leader in this city" (Michigan Chronicle, 1/15/72). At the height of the STRESS manhunt controversy the paper editorialized:

> It is a fact of life in this big city that right now, particularly in the black community, the paramount issue is "the police." And while others resort to news conference protests, the feeling among young blacks--the age group most susceptible to manhunt harassment--is that only Ken Cockrel "acts" while the others "rap" (Michigan Chronicle, 1/13/73).

Notes to Chapter Five

[5]In the 1969 election, all three police organizations had endorsed Roman Gribbs over Richard Austin, largely because Austin favored a civilian review board for the police. The DPOA, against the protests of black officers, endorsed Gribbs and a slate of eight whites for Common Council. State Senator Coleman Young denounced the police activities as "a call to arms against a black takeover of the city" (Wall Street Journal, 10/30/69).

[6]The National Black Assembly was an outgrowth of the historic National Black Political Convention held in Gary in March, 1972. (For more on the Convention and its significance, see Marable, 1980). Coleman Young was invited to the Convention, but walked out because of its alleged separatist tone (Detroit Free Press, 3/17/73).

[7]To symbolically emphasize this point, Young was sworn in by both a black judge and a white judge.

[8]Altogether, about 24,000 people attended three days of inaugural festivities in Young's honor, an unprecedented outpouring of popular support.

[9]Although Mayor Gribbs boasted that during his tenure more than forty percent of Detroit's city employees worked under black department heads he had appointed, the vast majority of these employees were concentrated in two departments: the sanitation department and the bus system. These two departments were the only ones headed by black Gribbs appointees. Only at the very end of his tenure did Gribbs finally appoint a woman and a Latino to city positions (Detroit Free Press, 12/4/73).

Notes to Chapter Five

[10]Other changes under the new charter included: the appointment by the mayor of a city ombudsman for a ten-year, non-renewable term (This official would have subpoena power and could levy fines against recalcitrant city officials); the requirement of signatures on nominating petitions rather than a $100 filing fee in order to run for public office; the delegation of investigative power to the new departments of Consumer Affairs, Environmental Protection, and Human Rights, to aid in the enforcement of city laws in their areas; and the explicit prohibition of bias in city government on the basis of sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, handicaps, or sexual orientation (Detroit Free Press, 10/28/73). The previous Fall, Detroit voters had rejected a ward system of election for the City Council (which had been abolished in 1918 following a corruption scandal) in favor of the current at-large system by a two-to-one margin (Detroit Free Press, 6/21/73).

[11]In fact, Young's working-class orientation was so well-established that he was not accepted into Detroit's black elite in the 1960s. He is, of course, highly accepted today (Detroit Free Press, 5/19/74).

[12]And if it wasn't with all of these leaders, it was through no fault of Henry Ford II, who ceaselessly hammered away at his theme that "when there's a hole in the boat, people at either end are just as much in danger as those sitting right in the middle. . . . The very practical and selfish interests of the so-called establishment in the well-being of the central city are generally compatible with the interests of the people in the suburbs" (Detroit Free Press, 1/17/75,

1/17/75). For more on the articulation of corporate planning with black politics in Detroit, see Hill (1978b).

[13]The new city charter was not written in a political vacuum, of course. Blacks served on the charter revision commission, and a black man even chaired it for a period. The drafters of this new document had to have been perfectly aware that Detroit would eventually have a black mayor. And they also must have been aware to a certain extent of the experience of black mayors in other cities with their recalcitrant, yet insulated civil service bureaucracies and hostile city councils. Thus the implications of making the mayor a far more powerful figure could not have escaped them.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERNAL RELATIONS: THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OVER THE POLICE

Introduction

In his electoral campaign, Coleman Young had put forth an agenda for fundamental change in the Detroit Police Department. This agenda included three major points: (1) a significant new attack on crime which included putting 1,000 more officers on the streets; (2) the implementation of an affirmative action program designed to achieve a 50-50 racial balance at all levels of the department by 1977; and (3) a reorientation of the department into a "people's police department," more responsive to the community. As Mayor Young moved to implement this agenda he ran into strong, though not entirely unexpected, resistance from the police.

As the experience of black mayors in other cities clearly indicates (see Chapter Three), every part of Young's agenda was bound to be perceived by the white police as a threat. The plan to take officers out of desk jobs and return them to patrol was a threat to their control over their own labor process. The recruitment and promotion of significant numbers of blacks threatened the vested interest of the police in their jobs; materially, in terms of increased competition, and socially, in terms of a perceived loss of status. Finally, the call to form a "people's police department" challenged the traditional police ideology of professional detachment and the position of the police as "street-level bureaucrats" who did not view

their "clients"--the community--as a significant reference group. In a number of cases, this proposed reorientation of the department also threatened the illegal or quasi-legal entrepreneurial activity of police officers, which was based on maintaining a detachment from the community.

All three aspects of Coleman Young's agenda were designed primarily to change the way the black community was policed. But in order to make this momentous change, the police department itself had to be changed. The attempt to accomplish this involved Mayor Young in a power struggle which became the focus of much of his first term. This chapter documents and discusses that struggle. I begin by examining the mayor's top-level appointments, the reorganization strategy they implemented, and the resistance they encountered. I then turn to Young's affirmative action policy and the conflict surrounding its implementation, conflict that has continued throughout the entire six-year period of this study. Finally, I look at the issue of racism within the Detroit Police Department.

Selection of a Police Commissioner

Shortly after he was elected, Coleman Young announced that he had met with existing Police Commissioner Philip Tannian, and that he had "agreed with ninety percent" of Tannian's ideas about running the department. Thus, said Young, he would have no problem retaining Tannian as his police commissioner (Detroit Free Press, 12/4/73). Besides this expressed agreement over basic policies, Young had two other, equally important though unannounced reasons for retaining Tannian: he was white and he was a civilian.

Like other newly-elected black mayors, Coleman Young was faced with the need to retain the support of substantial numbers of white city residents. A black-run police department was one of their worst nightmares. Moreover, in Young's case, he had been supported in his campaign by a group of liberal white businessmen who had no desire to see accelerated white flight from the city. It was to appease these constituencies, no doubt, that Young sought a white person for the top police post.

Young still had to be responsive to his black constituency, however. There was widespread suspicion and hostility toward the police in the black community, and candidate Young had campaigned hard on this issue. Black Detroiters were expecting to see changes in the police. Moreover, Young knew that to fully implement his police-reform plan he needed to get control over the department. And he was undoubtedly aware, from his own experience and that of other mayors (including ex-Detroit Mayor Cavanagh, one of Young's advisors), that the police department is one of the most in-bred, clique-ridden, change-resistant of all bureaucracies. A civilian with no ties to persons or groups within the department had the best chance of shaking things up.

Tannian had one more thing to recommend him: prior experience in trying to change the department. Philip Tannian had been Police Commissioner since September 25, 1973, when then-Mayor Gribbs had appointed him to replace John Nichols, who was fired because he was running for mayor. Tannian had little prior law enforcement experience. A lawyer by training, he had worked for a brief period of time as an FBI agent. Disenchanted with that agency, Tannian quit

and went to work for the Wayne County Prosecutor's office. Here he became friends with County Sheriff Roman Gribbs. When Gribbs became mayor in 1969, he made Tannian his top administrative aide (Detroit Free Press, 5/28/75).

Tannian's appointment as police commissioner by Mayor Gribbs generated a great deal of hostility and resistance within the department, some of it provoked by Tannian's personality and actions, but much of it due to factors outside of his control. His reappointment by Mayor Young extended and deepened these hostilities. First of all, from the point of view of the police, Tannian was an outsider--he was not a cop and he had no police experience. Second, he replaced John Nichols, a popular commissioner who had risen through the ranks. Third, Tannian took the job many in the department thought should go to another career cop who had come up through the ranks--specifically, Superintendent Anthony Bertoni or Division Commander James Bannon.

Given these strikes against him, there was perhaps no way that Commissioner Tannian could be popular with the department command. But these factors combined with his personality to make matters worse. A loner by nature, Tannian took no one in the department into his confidence. He tried to run the entire department singlehandedly, and treated his underlings in an abrasive manner. As noted in Chapter Three, Reiss and Bordua (1967:51-54) have pointed out that, in a situation of insecure tenure (like that of Tannian), a police chief must govern the department by force of personality, by personal charisma. Philip Tannian was not equipped to do this, but perhaps no one in his situation would be.

Reorganization and Resistance

Ultimately, the most important reason Tannian provoked the hostility of the old guard within the police department was the fact that he served as the point man for sweeping changes in the department. First, there was a major command shakeup shortly after he arrived. Scrupulously honest himself, Tannian had reason to believe that some top command officers were less than honest. He did not publicly confront them, but forced them to retire, no questions asked. Other leaders who initially resisted Tannian too strongly were also forced into retirement. But the cliques these men headed stayed behind, and they developed a deep hatred for the commissioner (Detroit Free Press, 5/27/75).

Second, and more importantly, Tannian began carrying out a massive internal reorganization of the department. This reorganization was the end result of a three-year study of the Detroit Police Department by the Touche-Ross management consulting firm, and funded by New Detroit, Inc. The study was begun shortly after Roman Gribbs became mayor in 1970, and had been overseen by his main administrative aide, Philip Tannian. Tannian was thus not only thoroughly familiar with the study, but as Police Commissioner he was in a position to implement its recommendations.

Some of Touche-Ross' recommended changes were actually begun by John Nichols in February, 1973. Tannian, however, greatly increased the scope and pace of their implementation when he took over in September. Just two months later, Coleman Young was elected mayor, and the reorganization plan took on new significance. Young supported it as a way of (1) meeting his goal of putting 1,000 more officers on

the streets, and (2) gaining control of the department in order to reorient it. "The saying over at 1300 Beaubien [Police Headquarters] for years has been 'Mayors come and go but the department goes on,'" said Young. "They've got the built-in, self-perpetuating bureaucracy over there and there's only so far that any mayor can get in to change that damn thing within his term of office. Well, I'm going to try to get a bit further in than any previous mayors have" (Detroit Free Press, 9/22/74).

Mayor Young's version of reorganization included, in addition to the complete organizational realignment recommended by Touche-Ross, the reassignment of more than 1,000 officers from specialized sections to patrol duty in the precincts; the elimination of some elite units, like the departmental band, and the drastic curtailment of others, like the Mounted Bureau; greater supervision in the precincts through the assignment of a division commander and three inspectors to run each precinct, rather than a single inspector; the establishment of 55 storefront ministations around the city, to be staffed by police officers, civilians, cadets, trainees and reservists; an increase in police visibility, including the marking of all police vehicles except undercover cars, and putting all except undercover officers in some kind of uniform (e.g., blazers for detectives); and affirmative action to weed out corruption and brutality among police officers (Detroit Free Press, 4/12/74).[1]

The DPOA leadership immediately expressed their dissatisfaction with the plan, and suggested that they might invoke the "maintenance of conditions" clause in their contract in order to force the mayor to negotiate the changes with them. Young responded that the changes

were "not a negotiable item," and in words that seemed strange coming from a former union organizer, but perfectly understandable from a black mayor trying to get control over a hostile white police department, Young explained: "There are differences between the prerogatives of management and the prerogatives of labor. [These changes] are a prerogative of management. The question has to do with who controls the police department" (Detroit Free Press, 4/12/74).

In the weeks that followed it was Police Commissioner Tannian who took the heat. "For the good of the department and the city, Tannian has got to go," said the President of the DPOA. "He is in way over his head. He is totally inept. The guy has really affected morale in the Police Department." The head of the Lieutenants and Sergeants Association told Young that the facts about just how demoralized the department was "are being hidden from you either because of malice or stupidity on behalf of your appointee" (Detroit Free Press, 4/8/74). Later, as July 1, the date when the new city charter would take effect, approached, Young informally announced that Tannian would be appointed to the new post of Police Chief. "In my opinion, Tannian is doing a good job," said Young. "I see no reason to change horses as long as the situation exists."

Many in the police rank and file were not pleased to hear this. "There's going to be a lot of internal strife," predicted one officer. "Tannian has constructed a big facade of a tough, forceful commissioner," said a sergeant. "What he has really done is very little, but it has successfully destroyed the initiative of the guy on the street. Cops out there just don't care any more." "He appears to be more interested in polarizing the men," said a lieutenant.

Mayor Young counterattacked by saying he was not surprised to find resistance to Tannian from the DPOA because "the DPOA has been throwing rocks at us since we took office. The DPOA for too long has been under the impression that it's running the city. It has been calling the shots for too long. It has assumed power in city government that it has no right to, and it has failed to live up to its responsibilities to represent all members of the department." If they had, said Young, black officers would have felt no need to form their own organization (Detroit Free Press, 6/12/74).

In the midst of a "spontaneous" ticket-writing slowdown a few weeks later, the head of the DPOA responded to Young: "I still think there's hope for the mayor. His only mistake was his choice of Tannian for police chief. We need someone to lead the men who recognizes the problems they face on the street. . . . We've been at war of sorts with Tannian for a long period of time. The mayor now seems to declare war on the DPOA and we'll be at war with him" (Detroit Free Press, 7/16/74).

Another source of anxiety and resentment on the part of the police was provided by the new civilian Board of Police Commissioners. Under the new charter, Mayor Young was empowered to name the five commissioners and designate one of them as chair. Sensitive once again to the symbolic implications of his action, Young appointed a black majority, but made a white person chair. His black appointments included a Wayne State university law professor and community activist, a female community organizer, and the pastor of the mayor's church, a civil rights activist. The whites included a respected local attorney, and Douglas Fraser, the chair, who was at that time

vice-president of the UAW's Chrysler Department and a powerful figure in Michigan Democratic politics.

The DPOA immediately attacked these appointments, saying that they did not represent the community as a whole. But Young gave no ground. "We had an election and I won," he declared. "I'm certainly not going to have a Ku Klux Klan member on the commission. . . . The commissioners, as my appointees, are an extension of the general policy which I formulate" (Detroit Free Press, 7/23/74). This, of course, is exactly what a number of police officers feared the most. Not only was the department now under civilian rule, but those civilians in charge supported the dreaded reorganization.

As part of his continuing effort to gain control over the department, as well as to demonstrate his commitment to affirmative action, Young had Tannian institute some personnel changes at the top levels of the police department. First, Tannian named Walter Douglas, a black New Detroit, Inc. vice-president as his special executive assistant, making him effectively the number two man in the department, as well as the first high-ranking black administrator in the department's history[2] (Detroit Free Press, 6/14/74).

Second, several months later Tannian announced the appointment of five Deputy Chiefs, a new position under the charter. The new appointees were all career officers, and included three blacks and two whites (symbolic balance, again). The white Deputy Chiefs were Edward Walsh and Theodore Sienski, two quiet and unassuming men. The black Deputy Chiefs included William Hart, virtually unknown outside of the department but highly respected within it; George Bennett, whose outstanding investigative work had led to the indictment of 26

people, including twelve police officers, in the infamous 10th Precinct drug conspiracy case; and Frank Blount (Detroit Free Press, 8/16/74).

This last appointment showed that Mayor Young was not above using the political spoils system within the department. Blount was a longtime supporter of Coleman Young who had been highly visible in that support during the recent election. Shortly after Young took office, Blount was promoted to division commander. Now he was being promoted again. In September of 1975, Blount was promoted still a third time as Mayor Young announced the creation of the new post of Executive Deputy Chief to serve as chief of uniformed patrol and recommended Frank Blount as the man to fill it (Detroit Free Press, 9/24/75).

This move exacerbated an already serious problem in the top police command: Blount and Tannian did not get along. Meeting after meeting, it was reported, broke down in bickering between the two men. With Blount's promotion, the conflict grew worse, as the two literally built a wall between their offices and were reduced to communicating by memo only (Detroit Free Press, 5/26/75); Personal interview, 3/16/81).

Tannian Under Fire

Other problems began to surface. Members of the Police Commission suggested that Tannian was not as forthcoming with information as he should be (Detroit Free Press, 4/27/75). The City Council was upset when Tannian gave evasive testimony regarding the police department's political surveillance activities (Detroit Free Press, 9/17/75). Reorganization, moreover, began to bog down. By

early 1975, only 500 officers had been transferred out of desk jobs and into the precincts. This was due to a hiring freeze precipitated by the city's fiscal crisis and the department's unpreparedness to deal with a court order mandating the hiring of female officers (to be discussed shortly) (Detroit Free Press, 5/27/75).

Reorganization seemed to be producing chaos and demoralization, as well as the expected resistance to change. "I don't know when--or if--we'll get used to all this," said a sergeant, despairingly. "There are changes in procedure coming out by the ream. How can you keep up with them? I have a book of them that must be five inches thick. If the sergeant and his lieutenant are confused about policy--which they are--how can they translate policy to their men?" (Detroit Free Press, 5/25/75).

Some knowledgeable observers attributed at least some of the confusion and demoralization to the way Tannian handled the progrm. Deputy Chief Hart, whose widely-acclaimed reorganization of the Headquarters Bureau was pointed to as an example of the benefits of successful reorganization, refused to criticize Chief Tannian directly. But, tellingly, he did offer this analysis:

> Like so many other things, it's a matter of communication. I believe the management of this department will have to become more sensitive to the problems and morale of the people who work here. I think we're going to have to start explaining the how and why of these matters before we begin implementing them. People in my position can't afford to look down on others as though there's no connection between our positions and theirs. We're part of them, and they're part of us.

Many sources within the department indicated that Hart had hit the proverbial nail right on the head (Detroit Free Press, 5/25/75).

Nevertheless Mayor Young, publicly at least, strongly defended his police chief. "I have a great deal of respect for Tannian," he said, "and I have absolutely no plan to replace him. . . . I think he's making an honest effort to accomplish the things he and I wanted to accomplish, and he's doing it under very trying circumstances" (Detroit Free Press, 5/27/75). Two things occurred in the course of the next year, however, that made Young change his mind.

Throughout the summer of 1976, the city was plagued by growing violence from black youth gangs. This violence culminated at a Cobo Hall concert on Sunday, August 15th. About 300 black youths began looting concertgoers inside the hall. When they met little resistance, they escalated the violence. As concertgoers poured out of the auditorium, gangmembers followed, beating and robbing people and smashing store windows. Forty-seven youths were eventually arrested.

The police department admitted that it was unprepared to deal with the three hour reign of terror. "I'm going to have to take the blame for it," said Chief Tannian. "We had no expectation in advance that the problems were as great as they were." Mayor Young was away on vacation at the time, but his right-hand man, William Beckham, characterized the disorder as "an outright, flagrant challenge to our security and police authority, and we failed to meet it. It won't happen again" (Michigan Chronicle, 8/21/76).

Looking back a few months later, Mayor Young said that it was Tannian's handling of this incident which irrevocably undermined his faith in the Police Chief.

> I had had some questions earlier in the sense that there was constant bickering on top between the chief and the deputy chiefs. You couldn't have a command structure with that

> kind of backbiting going on. And so I was looking at the department hard in terms of some changes there. But Cobo Hall, I believe, convinced me. I understand that there was a number of police available, as few as 12 and maybe as many as 25, outside Cobo Hall as the crowd erupted. . . . For some reason, a decision was made that there were not enough policemen to be committed. That just defied my understanding of the role of the police, who are a quasi-military organization. . . . When the chief justified this tactic by saying that you don't commit your forces when they are outnumbered, it was in conflict with every understanding I've ever had (Detroit Free Press, 11/23/76).

The precipitating incident in Tannian's demise, however, occurred just over a month after the Cobo Hall incident. Tannian had received confidential word that a federal grand jury was investigating Executive Deputy Chief Frank Blount. Despite--and perhaps because of--Blount's closeness to the mayor, Tannian did not inform Young of the probe. And when the grand jury subpoenaed records in Blount's possession from his tenure as head of the 13th Precinct, Tannian himself led a raid on Blount's house when he wasn't there (Detroit Free Press, 9/27/76).[3]

This was too much for Young. He immediately placed Blount on indefinite educational leave, with pay, citing the cloud of the investigation hanging over him and his bickering with Tannian as the reasons. "I think that the confrontations between Tannian and Blount were such that he [Blount] needs to be removed. The cloud is there and it affects the morale of the whole department. It is my job to maintain the morale of the department and protect the interests of Frank Blount. I believe the man is innocent until proven guilty." For his part, Blount said that he was innocent, and that he had requested the leave for the good of the department and the city. He felt no animosity at all toward Young: "I understand his play. It's got nothing to do with friendship. He's got to make some moves, make some changes" (Detroit Free Press, 9/23/76).

Young made more changes the next week when he fired Tannian.[4] "Police Chief Tannian has served Detroit well during three difficult years," said Young at a press conference. But "division and acrimony at the top of the Police Department" had hampered his effectiveness, and his failure to share details of the federal narcotics investigation into the top levels of the department had violated the mayor's confidence. Young asked Tannian to resign, but when he refused, the mayor fired him (Detroit Free Press, 9/29/76).

The Hart/Bannon Team

Young's interpretation of Tannian's tenure as head of the department had convinced him, much as Carl Stokes' experience in Cleveland had convinced him (see Chapter Three), that, in order to maintain morale in the department and some level of acceptance of his reorganization plan, he needed to appoint a career officer as Chief. But Young also saw that if that police officer was a respected professional, he could possibly be black as well. Thus on September 28, 1976 Mayor Young announced that Detroit had its first black Chief of Police. He was William Hart, a 24-year veteran of the force who had a reputation as an unassuming, honest, hardworking cop.

Hart had been a coal miner in western Pennsylvania until shortly after World War II. When the mines closed down, he came to Detroit looking for work. He found a job at Ford's Rouge plant, but was laid off in 1952. Unable to find anything else, he joined the Detroit Police Department. Because of a need for black undercover officers in the changing Twelfth Street area at that time, Hart was immediately assigned to vice squad work in this area. He went at it with a vengeance, leading 22 raids and getting 18 convictions in his first

four months. Over time, Hart became a master of disguise and busted thousands of gambling houses and blind pigs.[5] He still holds the department record of 2,000 arrests in one month (Detroit Free Press, 10/3/76; Detroit News, 1/9/77).

In spite of his outstanding record, Hart remained a patrolman for 14 years. He finally made sergeant in 1966, and then between 1970 and 1974 he moved up relatively quickly through the ranks from lieutenant to deputy chief. As noted earlier, in the latter position he reorganized the Headquarters Bureau and greatly increased its efficiency and morale. In typical fashion, he gave his colleagues and his subordinates most of the credit. "My role was no different from anyone else's," he said. "We were told reorganization was going to occur, and we were given a plan--but it wasn't a plan set in cement, and we did modify it to better serve the people" (Detroit Free Press, 5/26/75).

This comment points up the twin aspects of Hart's approach to policing: professionalism and community service. It was these credos no doubt, which drew Young to him. "I'm a community-oriented cop," Hart said when he was sworn in as Chief. "Police work is never easy, but the policeman is still Public Servant Number One. Anytime we can be of assistance, we will respond" (Detroit News, 1/9/77). At the same time, Hart emphasized both his own professionalism and that of the department, and said that this would serve to mitigate any racial animosity. "We have a very professional police department," he said during his first day on the job. "To the degree that they are led, they will follow. If they have respect for the people at the top, who are trying to lead them, they will look at the man and not at

what he purports to represent. You have to prove your professionalism to get people to work" (Detroit Free Press, 9/29/76).

Teamed with Hart as the new Executive Deputy Chief was James Bannon. Bannon's career in the department began about the same time as Hart's, but followed a very different path. In many ways a contrast between the careers of these two men illustrates the different historical experiences of black and white officers in the police department. Like Chief Hart, Bannon was born in a rural area (in Indiana). Also like Hart, Bannon served in the Navy around World War II. But unlike the new Chief, Bannon joined the police force immediately after being discharged from the service. "I always wanted to be a cop," he says. By contrast, Hart says that "it wasn't my childhood ambition to be a policeman. I just needed a job" (Detroit News, 1/9/77).

Like Hart, Bannon quickly established a reputation as a competent, dedicated police officer. He eventually received 38 citations for police work, including the Medal of Valor. But while Hart was languishing as a patrolman, Bannon was moving quickly up the ranks, achieving detective in 1955, sergeant in 1960, lieutenant in 1964, inspector in 1966, district inspector in 1968, and commander in 1974. A high school dropout, Bannon obtained a bachelors degree in 1970, a masters in 1972, and a Ph.D. in sociology in 1975. He did it, he says, for "credibility. I had already achieved rank in the department and I wanted to go on. I also wanted to refute the neanderthal principle associated with most police officers who spoke out on issues" (Detroit News, 1/9/77). Again by contrast, Hart's overtime undercover work in his earlier years in the department and his rapid promotions in recent

times have left little time for higher education. He has, however, made it to the status of a junior at Wayne State University (Detroit Free Press, 10/3/76).

In the eyes of many, Bannon appeared to be in line for the Commissioner's job after Nichols. Two things set him back, however: the fact that he had helped develop and then commanded the STRESS program, which provoked such hostility in the black community; and the fact that he didn't get along with Tannian, who exiled him to the 2nd Precinct. In spite of these setbacks, though, Bannon still had a lot going for him. Despite his strong expressed opposition to STRESS, Mayor Young did not hold Bannon's participation in it against him. "That was his assignment," the mayor said, "and he was doing his job. You can't hold that against a man."[6] In fact, Young's aides had by-passed Chief Tannian on a number of occasions to draw on Bannon's police expertise. Young's faith in Bannon was illustrated by the fact that he put the politically-important ministation program completely in Bannon's hands when it was faltering and needed help (see Chapter Seven) (Detroit Free Press, 5/27/75).

Bannon himself would no doubt like to be Chief one day, though he keeps his own counsel on that. He does say that he accepted Young's invitation to be the number two man in the department because the mayor "Speared me on my own petard," by appealing to his professionalism. "I told him that under a guy like Bill Hart I'd be willing to stay and pick up the pieces" (Detroit News, 1/9/77). Looking back, Bannon told me that "the appointment could have gone either way--with Hart on top and me number two as it did or with me on top and with Hart number two. In any case, it's worked very well for both of us.

We respect each other's individual abilities and expertise. There doesn't seem to be any tension between us. I certainly do not feel embittered or chagrined because I am not the chief" (Personal interview, 3/16/81).

As part of their personal commitment to work together to rebuild the department, Chief Hart and Executive Deputy Chief Bannon tore out the "Berlin Wall" that Tannian and Blount had built between their offices. Now when the two top officers in the department want to talk to each other, says Bannon, "all we have to do is lean back and yell" (Personal interview, 3/16/81).

Reorganization Revisited

Hart and Bannon saw as their first priority the restoration of morale in the department. Under Tannian's rule, claims Bannon, "men were telling me that they were no longer proud to call themselves Detroit police officers." The problem, says Bannon, was that Tannian was a civilian and a "technocrat" who didn't really understand police work. As a result, he implemented reorganization without understanding its implications, and in the ensuing chaos the department lost its purpose, its sense of mission. Bannon noted that, from his lonely outpost, he had

> a sense that the department was not under control. People were doing as they saw fit, not doing as they were supposed to be doing. There was a feeling that no one was concerned how they were performing. No one said that the policeman's job was to provide high-quality police service to the community. Tannian's technocratic view made him have the department serve the organization charts rather than the community. In my view, the only reason a police force exists is to protect the community. And the organization charts were straitjackets (Detroit News, 1/9/77).

This community-oriented notion of policing is not, however, something that had merely been lost in the reorganization shuffle. In real terms, it had never existed in the Detroit Police Department. Hart and Bannon then, were proposing some sweeping changes of their own. Perhaps alone among the top command officers, they were uniquely qualified to implement them. As career cops, both of them had credibility with the rank and file. This experience also taught them how the tradition-based bureaucracy of the department worked. Yet while these new leaders were tied into the bureaucracy in some ways, in other ways they were somewhat detached from it. For instance, because Hart had come up through the plainclothes division, he was not really part of any uniformed clique. Furthermore, he had been in less of a position to internalize the traditional anti-community "professional" policing ideology. Bannon's career moved him all around the department, and his Ph.D. set him apart from other officers. Thus both of them were inside enough to know what to do, but outside enough to do it.

But before Hart and Bannon could fully implement their community-policing strategy, they had to revamp Tannian's reorganized department. "The Touche-Ross changes were massive and extremely controversial," Bannon noted. Nearly every section of the department was affected, either through consolidation, decentralization or elimination. "Much of what Chief Hart and I have done since we were promoted in 1976," Bannon observed to me, "has been to rebuild what was destroyed in that perhaps ill-advised reorganization effort--or if not ill-advised, ill-conceived and ill-managed. We have put back much of what was eliminated" (Personal interview, 3/16/81).

The effect of this second reorganization on law enforcement and order maintenance in Detroit, and especially in the black community, will be explained in the next chapter. Before turning to that, however, it is imperative to examine the issue which in many ways overshadowed, complicated and helped subvert departmental reorganization. That issue is affirmative action. Unlike any other issue, Mayor Young's affirmative action policy perhaps best illustrates the themes of resistance and racism within the police department.

Affirmative Action in the Department

Coleman Young took office with a pledge to make the police department reflect the racial composition of the city's population. This commitment to a 50-50 balance of whites and minorities at all levels of the department in actuality involved three separate affirmative action programs: in the hiring, in the promotion, and in the assignment of police officers. All of these components, in turn, were affected by the city's increasingly precarious fiscal position, which not only generated a constant rollercoaster ride of layoffs and cutbacks, but greatly increased anxiety and intensified the conflict within the department.

Initially, Young's plan to increase minority representation in the department included greatly expanding the size of the force and making it easier for minorities to apply for the force and be hired. Lacking the local resources to do this effectively, Young went to Washington. There he presented President Ford with a plan to add 1,000 officers to Detroit's police force, two-thirds of them blacks and Latinos. The cost would be $25 million. The President "was intrigued by the idea," reported Young, but "he was staggered,

obviously, by the price" (Detroit Free Press, 9/24/74). Ford said no go.

Though Detroit couldn't hire massive numbers of new recruits, it could make it easier for minorities that did apply to make it into the system. Thus the entrance exam was revised once more. Height requirements, which discriminate against many minorities and women, were abolished. The procedure by which applicants were evaluated was revised and streamlined. "We've been using validation mechanisms that originated back before World War II, and haven't been changed since," said Commander Thomas Ferrebee, director of police recruiting. "We've been asking inner city people, both black and white, to meet standards applicable only to middle-class whites from the suburbs" (Detroit Free Press, 3/13/75).

Predictably, the DPOA complained about allegedly lowered standards, and said that convicted felons and drug addicts were now being accepted onto the force. Though there were some glaring exceptions, in general this did not appear to be true. The DPOA's position was a result of (1) the fact that this overwhelmingly white organization was threatened by a large influx of blacks onto the force, and (2) the reality that few black males could grow up in the city and not get a police record of some sort. "It's easy for someone to point a finger and say, 'Look what we have here,'" said Walter Douglas, executive assistant to Chief Tannian. "Our selection model or procedure is designed to get a better look at people in the first year rather than in initial contacts. . . . It is now more difficult for a police officer with a malady to function without it coming to the surface" (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76, 3/13/75).

Minority recruitment--and indeed all recruitment--in the department ground to a halt, however, in mid-1974. At that time, U.S. District Judge Ralph Freeman announced his verdict in a class action suit brought by three female applicants who had been turned down for employment by the Detroit Police Department. Judge Freeman ruled that, because of an historical pattern of discrimination in hiring on the basis of sex, henceforth for every male officer hired, the department would now have to hire a female officer as well, until a 50-50 balance was achieved (Detroit Free Press, 5/15/74).[7]

The problem was that the department was totally unprepared to do this. Despite their awareness of the existence of this court suit, and despite the presence of thousands of applications from women on file, none of them had been processed.[8] Thus there was a several-month hiatus in police hiring following Judge Freeman's ruling while Ferrebee and his staff scrambled to process female applications. During this time the force fell 300 officers below authorized strength, crimping the reassignment of police from desk jobs to the precincts, as well as the hiring of more black officers (Detroit Free Press, 5/26/75).

Just as the department got organized to begin hiring more officers again, the city was plunged into a severe economic crisis which necessitated a complete hiring freeze. The hopes and plans of 1974 turned into "a full-sized panic" in 1975, Mayor Young observed later. "Very, very quickly we went from relative good times into employment and economic conditions which can only be compared to the depth of the Depression in the mid-30s" (Detroit Free Press, 2/4/79).

Because of the increased problems of legitimation in the depths of a crisis (see Chapter One), funds became available under the

federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) to hire more police officers. Not only would the 300-officer deficit be made up, said Chief Tannian, but at least 500 additional officers would be hired. All of these 800 or so new officers were to be minorities. No whites at all would be hired by the department until after July 1, 1975 the Chief reported, and after that only the very top scorers would be taken. The department's hiring goal would be to hire one woman for every man and one black for every white (Detroit Free Press, 3/13/75).

Conflict Over Promotions

No aspect of Mayor Young's reorganization plans for the department elicited more hostility and resentment from the police rank and file and precipitated more racial conflict than his affirmative action program in promotions. In the Detroit Police Department, promotions have traditionally been based strictly on merit which in turn is based mainly on the results of a written competitive exam. Also included, however, are service ratings, seniority and educational attainment.

Shortly after the Young administration took office, Tannian made the mistake of telling the DPOA that he would make promotions strictly on the basis of a candidate's ranking on the promotion list, which was generated by combining all of an officer's merit scores. The DPOA was delighted, as the first promotions were of thirty white males to sergeant. Then lightning struck in the form of the mayor's affirmative action program. Without informing the DPOA in advance, Tannian reversed himself and extended the eligibility lists over 200 slots in order to

come up with a succeeding promotion list that consisted entirely of black males and women[9] (Detroit Free Press, 5/25/75, 6/12/74).

The DPOA was outraged. They charged that Tannian was "lacking in a type of integrity" for violating his earlier promise to them. They obtained a court order temporarily banning the promotion of blacks over whites with higher scores. (The injunction was lifted by the Michigan Court of Appeals later that month (Detroit Free Press, 6/28/74). President Gary Lee of the DPOA argued that the promotion lists were based on the results of a fair exam which had been approved by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and New Detroit, Inc. and therefore should be followed.

"The police unions are wrong," responded Young. "What we're trying to do is bring the police department's employment in line with fair employment practices. There have been major changes in the promotional exams," he admitted. "I think the exam was improved, although the present exam is much better. The exam tended to be biased in favor of middle-class whites." But the promotional list did not result solely from the exam, noted the mayor. It was derived from service ratings too, which had their own built-in bias against blacks (Detroit Free Press, 6/12/74).

A black police officer expanded on Young's comments. White officers, he said, are "all mad about affirmative action. Hell, we've always had affirmative action--in reverse. There have been plenty of blacks who scored higher on the promotion written test, but were held back because of their service rating. A lot of these white officers know the sergeants who sit on the rating boards. They go out drinking

with them and everything . . ." (Detroit Free Press, 5/30/75). The officer didn't need to finish the thought; the implication was clear.

For his part, Chief Tannian pointed out that he was only recommending this recent group of 34 black males and 7 women for officer school, not promoting them. It was a technicality, and it was clear that the Chief was just trying to buy time in order to remove the onus of resentment from his back and place it elsewhere. In July, when the new Board of Police Commissioners was sworn in, Tannian had his chance. At the Board's very first meeting Tannian made an hour-long presentation on the history of discrimination in the Detroit Police Department. He said that black officers were qualified for promotion in all but seniority, and that the affirmative action program was designed to remove this disadvantage. He urged the Board to approve the program (Detroit Free Press, 7/23/74).

When the five civilian Commissioners officially approved of the affirmative action plan at their next meeting, Tannian could argue that he was now only implementing a policy dictated from above. As he made official the promotions of 30 blacks and women to sergeant and 11 blacks and women to lieutenant, Chief Tannian emphasized that he was only balancing his earlier promotions of an all-white slate. Furthermore, he said, "this is the last time promotions in this department will be either totally white or totally black." Each future list, he promised, would be balanced on a 50-50 basis (Detroit Free Press, 8/1/74).[10]

The police unions, however, were far from satisfied. In a case dating from Commissioner Nichols' tenure (he had unilaterally planned to institute the possession of a college degree as a requirement for

promotion), the DPOA won an Appeals Court ruling in late 1975 stating that the city was required to negotiate promotional criteria with the union (Detroit Free Press, 11/1/75). But their most serious attack on affirmative action was a suit filed in U.S. District Court in 1976 (against the strenuous objections of the union's black members) charging that the program unconstitutionally deprived white officers of equal protection and due process.

In a taste of things to come, District Judge Fred Kaess granted the DPOA an injunction in May, 1977 against the promotion of blacks over more highly rated whites. The city immediately appealed, and the injunction was overturned in late June. The trial itself began in August and lasted until the end of the year. In February, 1978, Judge Kaess ruled in favor of the DPOA.[11] Once again the city appealed. It was joined by the U.S. Department of Justice, which filed an amicus curiae brief supporting the city's position. On October 12, 1979 the Appeals Court ruled in favor of the city. Another anti-affirmative action suit in U.S. District Court, this one by the Lieutenants and Sergeants Association, was also resolved in the city's favor. As of this writing, there have been no further appeals, and affirmative action in the Detroit Police Department proceeds.

Mayor Young has been outspoken in his defense of the program. When the conservative Detroit News denounced him for this, Young replied: "Some people say affirmative action is discrimination in reverse. You're damn right. The only way to handle discrimination is to reverse it" (Washington Post. 6/25/78). Executive Deputy Chief Bannon says he knows how passed-over white officers feel (!). But,

he says, "I don't remember hearing these voices when blacks in the department were being discriminated against." Unfortunately, he observes, the passed-over man has to "suffer as an individual for what was a collective evil." Bannon's hope for the department is based partly on the fact that "affirmative action is not something that's going to last the rest of your life. It's like a trip to the dentist: once your condition is treated, you don't have to go back" (Detroit News, 1/9/77).

A black officer who was promoted to sergeant under the affirmative action program believes that much of the hostility and resentment felt by white officers stems from the fact that no one ever really explained affirmative action to them. Nor did anyone with authority point out a comparable situation when, under reorganization, the rank of detective was eliminated and all detectives were automatically made sergeants, regardless of promotional list standing. (No one complained about a "lowering of standards" then, he says.) Actually, notes the black sergeant, affirmative action in promotions has not been a zero-sum game. Under reorganization, the number of supervisory positions has been greatly expanded, and so there are more slots for everyone. Nonetheless, he says, it seems unlikely that resentment over affirmative action will disappear until the old guard of white officers retires (Personal interview).

The Layoff Crisis

Any reduction in hostility and resentment produced by the expansion of opportunities within the department was nullifed by the city's plunge into financial crisis. Layoffs and demotions fueled the fires of racial hatred and competition. The department threatened

to break out in open conflict. Mayor Young bemoaned this change in direction: "I think the department was moving in a positive direction, even though it was difficult with all these changes we've asked policemen to accept. But then came this tragedy, this economic crunch, and now everyone has to adjust all over again to a whole new set of problems. It isn't easy" (Detroit Free Press, 5/25/75). That was an understatement. The mayor couldn't know at that time how hard it would really be.

In April, 1975 Mayor Young announced that, due to the city's projected budget deficit, it would be necessary to cut some $8 million from the police department budget. This would necessitate the layoff of 825 officers and the demotion of 35 lieutenants and 260 sergeants, effective May 1st. "I feel almost sick," said Chief Tannian, noting that, since the layoffs extended back to those hired in February, 1973, the department's affirmative action program would be just about wiped out (Detroit Free Press, 4/18/75). Nonetheless, Tannian announced that the layoffs would take place on a strict seniority basis, with no affirmative action considerations (Detroit Free Press, 5/25/75).[12]

The DPOA leaders made a few obligatory noises of protest, but they were basically satisfied with the arrangement which would differentially affect the resented blacks and women. Black officers were outraged at "their" union (there was not a single black on the DPOA executive board, though they were over 20 percent of the membership). Members of Concerned Officers for Equal Justice picketed the DPOA headquarters with signs that said "DPOA is Racist" and "Waive

the Pay Raise" (which would make layoffs unnecessary) (Detroit Free Press, 4/25/75).

Meanwhile, representatives of black and female officers had filed separate suits in U.S. District Court asking for injunctions against the layoffs, which would, they charged, illegally discriminate against blacks and women recently hired under the affirmative action program. As anxiety and uncertainty about the layoffs mounted, racial antagonism within the department intensified. Feelings about the necessity of the layoffs were divided on the basis of race, said Commander James Bannon. Black officers tended to believe Mayor Young when he said that his administration didn't have the money. They were thus willing to forego their recently negotiated pay hike in order to avoid layoffs. White officers on the other hand, tended to express the belief that Young could find the money for the pay raise and the amount necessary to avoid layoffs if he really wanted to. In either case, said Bannon, the attitudes of the officers were emotional reactions to the mayor. "It has nothing to do with an objective review of the state of the city" (Detroit Free Press, 5/11/75).

When U.S. District Judge Damon Keith temporarily enjoined the city from laying off or demoting some 300 black officers, racial tensions within the department seemed close to the breaking point. A white officer on the headquarters staff observed that "whatever racial harmony there was in the department has been wiped out." Officers from around the city reported that morale in the precincts was at its lowest point in memory. Numerous incidents of interracial arguments and fights among police officers were reported. Both black and white officers began to request partners of the same race only. A

major racial confrontation seemed dangerously likely (Detroit Free Press, 5/11/75).

One probable location for its outbreak was at the federal courthouse in Detroit, where angry white officers were picketing daily, while other black and white officers attended the court hearings inside. Mayor Young had earlier expressed special concern about police picketing. "There are laws about peaceful picketing, and the question is at what point do 500 armed men become a force of intimidation? They do have the power of life and death, effectively they are a paramilitary organization, and I think it subjects them to stricter discipline and a different set of rules than would apply to a garbage worker or a forester" (Detroit Free Press, 9/22/74).

Discipline was one thing that was absent among the picketers on May 9th as they awaited Judge Freeman's ruling. After a few hours of beer-drinking and shouting by the civilian-clothed officers, a fist-fight erupted between a black and a white police officer after a beer can was thrown by a white officer. Guns were drawn, but no shots were fired. News reports around the country spoke of a "police riot" in Detroit. The President of Concerned Officers for Equal Justice warned that "we now have in our midst the possibility of a confrontation between black and white officers." The NAACP said that the incident had heightened racial tensions in the city, and demanded that the white officer be prosecuted. Chief Tannian agreed that the beating was "clearly racial" (Detroit Free Press, 5/11/75, 5/25/75; Michigan Chronicle, 7/12/75).

In this storm of controversy, Judge Freeman ruled that the city had no right to lay off the 275 officers who had been hired with CETA

funds since this money didn't come out of the city budget. The other 550 officers, paid with city funds, could be laid off, Freeman said, but only in accordance with the strict seniority provisions in the DPOA contract. Included in the protected group were all of the female officers who had been hired under Freeman's court order of 1974 (Detroit Free Press, 5/10/75).

It was a mixed verdict for the DPOA, but they were still angry. They advised their (white) members to take their protest underground, and a work slowdown began. The DPOA threatened a full-fledged "blue flu" police strike, and the city did contingency planning with the National Guard. In the midst of this increasingly untenable situation, Judge Keith engineered a compromise.

The DPOA and the LSA agreed to take 14 days off without pay over the course of the next year, and the city agreed to pay them for an additional 7 days off. In return, there would be no layoffs or demotions (nor would there be any hiring over the next fiscal year). The loss in person days from this arrangement was roughly equivalent to that which would have taken place under the layoffs. The settlement was going to cost the city $1.6 million more than it said it had, but, said city negotiators, it was a price paid to "keep the lid on a tense city." Eliot Hall, attorney for the black officers, was clearer about the stakes involved: "The combination of black/white confrontations in the police department, the downturn in the economy, and the hot summer coming up could have been devastating to the city" (Detroit Free Press, 5/10/75, 5/21/75, 5/25/75).

The Livernois Incident and Its Aftermath

Two months later, at the peak of the hot summer, a deadly racial incident on the city's northwest side provoked a police/community confrontation that could have been equally devastating. Instead, the black community retreated from the precipice of violence and the mayor and the police force emerged with a new respect for one another.[13]

The incident which touched off the confrontation took place on the hot, muggy night of July 28th, a Monday. About 8:20 p.m. the white owner of a bar on Livernois Avenue emerged from his establishment to find an 18 year old black teenager attempting to break into the bar owner's car. The owner said that when he yelled at the youth, whom he apparently knew, the teenager turned and came at him with a knife. The bar owner pulled his gun and shot the youth, killing him. Though police never found a weapon, they believed from the jimmy marks found on the car that the youth had had a flat instrument, like a butter knife, in his hand. The youth was, however, shot in the back of the head.

Word of the shooting spread almost instantaneously among the blacks in the surrounding neighborhood. The white-owned bar had been a source of tension in the community for some time. The bar owner knew many of Detroit's white police, who frequently came to his establishment to drink. The word was out in the community that blacks were not welcome there. When police arrived to investigate, a crowd had already gathered. The crowd quickly became angry and unruly when word spread among them that the police were only at the bar to protect its white owner and its white customers, and not to investigate the slaying of the black youth.

As the crowd became increasingly rebellious, there was a fear among the police that its members might try to lynch the white bar owner, who was being held inside his own bar for questioning. Thus they secreted the bar owner out the back door and took him down to headquarters for further questioning, and used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Shortly thereafter rocks and bottles began to shower the police.

When Mayor Young arrived on the scene, shortly after 11:00 p.m. he found that the crowd, now broken into smaller, scattered groups, was angry about the shooting and the use of gas by the police. The Mayor decided not to publicly second-guess the police. Instead, he moved from group to group, assuring them that "justice would be done." The crowd calmed down and eventually dispersed. But Young knew that they would be back the next night.

Mayor Young spent the next 24 hours working feverishly to prevent a confrontation between the black community and the police. He ordered the streets cleaned in the area and all signs of the disorder removed. He instructed the police to secure the bar where the shooting had occurred, to keep the streets clear, and to prevent crowds from gathering. Aware of the role of shooting incidents in sparking civil disorders, Young issued orders banning the use of weapons by police except to save their own lives or those of innocent bystanders. He told his command officers to mobilize as many black police as possible for Tuesday night.

Young's final strategy was to call on his grass roots supporters to mobilize civilian volunteers who could act as a buffer between the police and the crowd. Asked later if he had marshalled these

volunteers in order to protect the community from the police, Young responded: "That wasn't the question. But it's been pretty well established that there has been an estrangement and an alienation between the community and the police. I just didn't take a chance. I wanted to give the police all the help I could and the people all the protection and help I could."

As Tuesday night approached, the mayor met with 75 community leaders at a nearby church. He briefed them on their role, gave them special identification badges and then sent them out to try and disperse the crowd which had already gathered. The crowd was in a particularly angry mood because it had learned that, though the white bar owner had been charged with second-degree murder, he had only been required to post a $500 bond. This was the same amount that many of those arrested for disorderly conduct the night before had paid. The crowd saw this as yet another example of "white justice."[14]

Since the angry crowd refused to disperse, the role of the civilian volunteers became that of playing the Velvet Glove around the Iron Fist of the riot-equipped police. When the police decided to sweep the area clear, the volunteers went ahead of them, telling the crowd members to get out of there and go home because "the pigs are coming, and they mean business." The police followed behind with tear gas and nightsticks for those who didn't heed the warning. Shortly after midnight the streets were cleared of people. On Wednesday morning, city workers moved in and cleaned the streets. Livernois was quiet once more.

The mayor, the police and the city heaved a collective sigh of relief. All the official participants congratulated themselves on a

job well done. But in their mixed relief and euphoria, they couldn't help but remember a similar incident from the summer of 1966 and its aftermath. In that incident it will be remembered, police arrested a group of black teenagers on a street-corner on Kercheval, on Detroit's east side. A crowd gathered, and the incident threatened to turn ugly. But the police turned out in force, though they did not use it. And black community leaders, including then-State Senator Coleman Young, had circulated among the crowd, successfully urging them to "cool it." Although civic leaders congratulated themselves on their adept handling of that racial crisis, the next summer the city experienced the worst civil disorder in recent history.

In some ways the Livernois incident was similar to the confrontation on Kercheval nine years earlier. In both cases, it was the quick response of the police that immediately established the fact that mass violence and disorder would not be tolerated. Yet in both cases, the police refrained from overreacting, and no shots were fired and no further incidents occurred. In both cases, the police quickly sealed off the area, both to prevent the disorder from spreading, and to prevent outsiders from joining in. Finally, in both cases community leaders were used to cool the residents.

But Livernois and Kercheval were different in fundamental ways, too. In 1966, and 1967 as well, the black community was policed by an overwhelmingly white force that was actively hostile to it and far removed from it. In 1975, the police force was under the control of a black-majority civilian board of commissioners. And the affirmative action program of a black mayor had vastly increased the number of black officers on the force and upped their proportion of

the total force from about 15 percent in 1973 (it had been about 7 percent in 1966) to about 27 percent in 1975 (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/76).

Even more significant, perhaps, was the fact that the top command of the department was about 50 percent black in 1975. Not only were these commanders more likely to be sensitive to the grievances of the black community, and less repressive in dealing with disorder there, but their very presence in positions of power surely must have served to inhibit provocative behavior on the part of white police officers. Significantly, the first command officer on the scene after the Livernois disorder had begun was Deputy Chief George Bennett, a black. He was followed by the commanding officer of the Western District of the city, Deputy Chief Frank Blount, also black.

The Livernois incident has been related in some detail for two purposes. First, it is illustrative of the real impact of Mayor Young's affirmative action program. Though he was certainly interested in providing more and better career opportunities for blacks within the police department, the real thrust of the affirmative action program was external, as Young himself admitted from the beginning. On the one hand, he wanted to use black officers to help re-orient the department toward the community, something they were uniquely equipped to do. On the other hand, in fulfillment of his neocolonial administrative role, Young had to squelch disorder in the city. Black officers could do this more legitimately. These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The second reason for detailing the Livernois incident has to do with the internal relations within the department, and between

the department and the mayor. Just before Livernois occurred, the department had weathered the layoff crisis, and racial tensions were still running high. The successful handling of Livernois, by white and black officers together, gave them a new focus and helped to reduce interracial tensions. But most of all, Livernois changed the mayor's relationship with the department.

Just two days after the incident, Young told the Booker T. Washington Business Association: "I've been critical of the police department in the past. It is only fair to say tonight that I am proud of the Detroit Police Department. Not a shot was fired in three days." Commentators called it "a remarkable statement from Young," but reported that it was made "without qualification or hesitation of any kind." Later, Young was even more effusive in his praise for the police. "When the money was on the line," he said, "they put aside all their differences and did the job" (Detroit Free Press, 8/3/75).

Looking back more than a year later, Young said that "the turning point in my relationship with the Police Department was Livernois, where I think a very professional performance was given by the Police Department." Following that epiphany, Young said that there were two other factors which contributed to a better relationship between him and the police. First of all, there had been a change of leadership of the DPOA, which, said Young, "was the source of much of the morale problem. The new president of that organization campaigned on the basis of lowering his voice."

Second, Young admitted that "I've learned that I'm getting further with them by lowering my voice. I think this has been

reflected in a higher level of performance." Finally, Young summed up the lesson that he had learned: "I don't want to get into any fights with the police department. They are certainly the important line of protection for our whole city" (Detroit Free Press, 11/23/76). The mayor's less antagonistic relationship with the police department was later enhanced by his ouster of the hated Tannian and his appointment of two respected career cops to the top command posts.

Contraction, Expansion and the Fate of Affirmative Action

Despite the Mayor's rapprochement with the police department, and their mutual lowering of voices, 1976 brought conflict between the mayor and the police unions. In June, Young announced that over 800 officers would be laid off because the federal funds to pay them had run out. The unions argued that such layoffs were unnecessary because the money would eventually be forthcoming. When Young protested that he couldn't pay them with promises, and then laid them off, union leaders charged that he had only done so to increase his leverage in negotiations with Washington. An epidemic of the "blue flu" broke out and lasted for several days.

Meanwhile, black and female officers once again sued in federal court, charging that the layoffs were discriminatory. The courts ruled against them. An Appeals Court overturned Judge Freeman's order and said that indeed the city should lay off officers hired with CETA funds, and a federal district court said that all layoffs should be according to strict seniority, regardless of race (Detroit Free Press, 6/26/76, 12/21/78; Michigan Chronicle, 6/26/76).

Nearly all of the laid-off officers were rehired, however, by the end of the year. This was due to two factors. First, Detroit's

economy was in such dire straits that Young successfully negotiated more CETA money, a large chunk of which was used to rehire laid-off police officers. Second, the increasing violence of youth gangs over the summer, culminating in the Cobo Hall incident mentioned earlier, forced the recall of the remaining officers. By November, all the available laid-off officers were back to work (Detroit Free Press, 9/28/79).

The year 1977 was a crucial one for Mayor Young. Because he was up for reelection (which was coming to seem more and more of a foregone conclusion), it was the payoff year for many of his campaign promises. And no promise had been more explicit than Young's commitment to create a racially balanced department by 1977. It didn't look like he would make it, but, as we have seen, it was not from lack of trying. Not only did he have to fight resistance from within the department, and especially from the white-dominated police unions, but he had to fight an unfavorable national economy, which plunged the city into fiscal crisis in 1975-1976 and virtually halted hiring as well as reorganization in the department.

Progress, nevertheless, had been made. At the end of 1976 Detroit had a black police chief and a white executive deputy chief. The rest of the top command reflected Young's goal, as it was about half black and half white. Within the ranks, Young had added over one hundred more blacks since taking office, and increased black representation within the department from about 17 percent to about 22 percent. The mayor's controversial affirmative action program in promotions had had an even more dramatic effect. Blacks had gone from about 5 percent of all officers at the rank of sergeant and above to

about 15 percent of that group (Detroit Police Department Public Information Bureau). This was progress, but it was far short of Young's goal.[15]

Nineteen Seventy-Seven turned out to be a good year for Detroit. The national economy rebounded, and the city embarked on a "constantly escalating building phase," according to the mayor, which gave Detroit "a new spirit of confidence" (Detroit Free Press, 2/4/79). An expanding economy translated into a restored city budget which translated, in part, into more police officers. Or, more specifically, into more black police officers.

In 1977, the Detroit Police Department hired 700 black officers--far more than have been hired in one year by any other police department anyplace else in the country. Detroit's police department as a whole reached its historical peak in terms of number of sworn employees. Blacks increased their representation to over 25 percent of the force, and the number of black supervisors grew to over 17 percent of those holding the rank of sergeant or higher. It was still only halfway to Coleman's goal, but it was progress. The city saw no repeat of major incidents like Livernois in 1975 or Cobo Hall in 1976.

There was one ominous note, however. In contract negotiations that summer the city and the two police unions were not able to agree on economic issues. The city claimed that it didn't have the amount of money the unions demanded, an argument dismissed by the union negotiators as just a bargaining tactic. Following state law, the unresolved pay issue went into arbitration. The hearings dragged through most of 1978. In October, one arbitration panel awarded the

Lieutenants and Sergeants Association $10.5 million more than the city said it was able to pay. Mayor Young considered it a bad precedent.

In December the other shoe dropped. A separate arbitration panel ruled that the DPOA had a right to get a raise at least equivalent to that of the higher officers. Finding no proof of financial hardship on the part of the city, the arbitrators awarded the patrol officers a $60 million wage package over three years. This was $22.5 million more than the city said it could afford. The award raised the base pay of officers to $24,672 at the end of the third year, making them the highest paid police force in the country, by several thousand dollars (Detroit Free Press, 12/21/78, 12/22/78).

Mayor Young was furious. The awards were excessive, he said, and could not be allowed to stand. Even worse, he said, they represented an infringement upon his right and responsibility to manage the city. Arbitrators, he said, were ruining the city and the state law requiring binding arbitration (which Young himself had drafted and sponsored in the state legislature) had to be amended. Young also refused to accept the binding nature of the arbitration, and vowed to appeal the decisions in court. This move outraged the police unions, who felt that Young was trying to change the rules of the game after he lost. Young's decision to appeal also provoked a stern rebuke from his old friend and former fellow labor leader, Doug Fraser. Fraser said publicly that he rarely disagreed with the mayor, but that Young was absolutely wrong to violate the arbitration process. The mayor was unmoved (Detroit Free Press, 7/27/79).

So were the judges to whom Young appealed. They denied his suit later in 1979, and the mayor was forced to make massive layoffs in city departments. Altogether almost 1,000 city employees were furloughed, including 400 police officers. Young claimed that the police layoffs would not affect the number of uniformed officers on the streets, as many of those laid off were in desk jobs, and many of the remaining desk-bound police officers would be shifted to patrol. Laid-off police officers disagreed, however, noting that many of the officers scheduled to be transferred out to the precincts hadn't worked the streets in 10 or 15 years. "Things have changed an awful lot in that time," said one officer. "There's no way the level of police protection won't be affected," said another (Detroit Free Press, 9/28/79, 9/29/79).

Yet, despite the layoffs, affirmative action in the Detroit Police Department was alive and well in 1979. Reflecting over five years of committed, though sporadic, minority hiring, the ratio of blacks in the department was 32.2 percent (down from a high of about 40 percent the year before). At the rank of sergeant and above, blacks held nearly 20 percent of the positions, and they constituted 36 percent of all the patrol officers.

In an address he gave to a black college audience in 1979, Mayor Young noted that his first big challenge in office had been to try and significantly increase black hiring and promotion in the police department. He had done that, he said, but there was still more to do. "In no city in this nation, including Detroit, does the percentage of blacks in the police department equal the percentage of blacks in the community," Young pointed out. But, he pledged, "we're going to be the first one to get there" (Detroit Free Press, 3/7/79).

According to projections developed by a Wayne State University labor economist, it would take about another decade to do it. In response to the court judgements which had declared affirmative action to be legal and constitutional, the department was mandated to set a termination date for the program. Based on the Wayne State data, that date was set as 1990. At that time, according to projections, the Detroit Police Department would be about half black and half white at all levels. On December 20, 1979, the civilian Board of Police Commissioners, on a motion by its chair, Walter Douglas, who as Tannian's former deputy had been present at the birth of the program, voted unanimously to continue promoting equal numbers of blacks and whites until 1990 (Detroit Free Press, 12/7/79, 12/21/79). The Detroit Police Department was well on its way toward being remade.

Notes to Chapter Six

[1]The internal departmental aspects of these changes will be discussed in the present chapter. The following chapter will deal with their effect on law enforcement and order maintenance in the community, especially in the black community.

[2]Douglas took a leave of absence from New Detroit and they agreed to pay his estimated $30,000 annual salary while he worked for the police department.

[3]Evidence also came to light that Tannian was aware of a potentially embarassing investigation of a bar formerly co-owned by Young, and yet neglected to inform the mayor of it. Both the federal authorities and the Detroit Police Department were investigating charges that Mayor Young's brother-in-law was selling drugs out of the bar. No evidence was obtained, and the investigation was dropped (Detroit Free Press, 10/2/76).

[4]As an appointed official, Tannian did not enjoy the option of something like "educational leave." Blount was technically a non-appointed employee. Thus the discrepancy in their treatment.

[5]Hart attributes much of his success at disguise to his size (5'9", 150 lbs.) and his color. "Back then," he said, "all you needed was to have a guy who weighed 200 pounds, give him a nightstick and tell him, 'Go out there and kick them niggas' ass.' There weren't too many small guys. There weren't too many black guys." People simply didn't believe he was a cop (Detroit Free Press, 10/3/76).

[6]Apparently, a large segment of the black community did not hold STRESS against Bannon either. When Young announced that Bannon would

take over the ministation project, he did so at a press conference at the Jeffries Housing Project. The Michigan Chronicle (10/25/75) reported with surprise that the predominantly black residents recognized Bannon immediately by sight and by name and gave him a welcome as warm as that for the mayor. Community leaders there praised Young for his appointment of Bannon to run the ministations. On the other hand, a black Detroit police officer told me that Bannon cannot take a position as Police Chief of any other force that has a substantial number of black officers, due to his connection with STRESS (Personal interview).

[7]The Michigan Chronicle (9/21/74) castigated black officers and their organizations for not taking the initiative and filing a discrimination suit like the women did. In retrospect, the President of The Guardians told me (Personal interview, 3/15/81), it was a mistake not to do so. He agreed that the black officers on the force were undoubtedly seduced by the mayor's strong commitment to affirmative action into believing that they required no other protection. Yet when the layoffs came, Young's ability to protect black officers was undermined by the power of the white unions. And unlike, the women, blacks had no federal court order to fall back on. In addition, Sergeant Bell noted that the lack of a successful court fight eroded the strength and credibility of The Guardians as a militant defender of black interests, and made it appear as if all pressure and initiative for affirmative action had come out of the mayor's office alone.

Notes to Chapter Six

[8]Perhaps hoping to win a favorable ruling in the court case, then-Commissioner Nichols had issued an order in June, 1973 changing the designation of the lowest police rank from Patrolman to Police Officer "in order to eliminate sexist bias" (Detroit Free Press, 6/28/73).

[9]In early June, 1974 Judge Freeman had ruled that, in order to make up for past discrimination, the department had to include 17 women in the next 120 officers promoted to sergeant, regardless of whether or not there were this many female officers in the top 120 on the promotions list (there were actually only six) Detroit Free Press, 6/8/74). One female refused to be moved up on the promotional list and to be assigned to sergeant's school. She made public a letter to the Commissioner saying that she didn't agree with the affirmative action program and was willing to wait for her "proper" turn. Her place in sergeant's school was taken by a black male (Detroit Free Press, 6/20/74).

[10]And, indeed, the next promotion list included 22 whites and 22 blacks. The whites had been selected according to the promotion eligibility list, but some of the blacks had been selected by "dipping," i.e., reaching down the list below eligible whites in order to generate a complementary number of blacks (Detroit Free Press, 9/6/74).

[11]Kaess had refused to disqualify himself, despite the fact that he admitted saying, "We had a beautiful police department at one time, don't try to tell me differently" (Detroit Free Press, 9/22/77).

Notes to Chapter Six

[12]Mayor Young had originally planned to seek a court order to protect affirmative action by mandating the layoff of white males, regardless of seniority. He abandoned these plans, however, when it appeared that they would represent a violation of the union contract which would undermine Young's future bargaining position (Detroit Free Press, 4/12/75). He was also undoubtedly concerned about exacerbating the already-high level of racial tension within the department, a fear that subsequent events proved to be well-founded.

[13]The following description of the "Livernois incident" and its aftermath is based on stories in the Detroit Free Press (7/30/75-8/3/75).

[14]The judge who had set the low bond said it was fairly standard practice when a person was a property owner, a businessman, and lived in the community. Later the bar owner was re-arrested, and bond was set at $25,000.

[15]Despite falling short of his desired goal of a 50-50 racial balance, Mayor Young expressed the belief that his affirmative action program had had a major impact on the department, especially at the command level. "I think we have pretty effectively reorganized in terms of affirmative action at the top structure," the mayor said at the end of 1976. "There is a whole group of young commanders up there now, black and white, who I think are giving a more professional performance, and we can see that. That has to do with morale, too" (Detroit Free Press, 11/23/76).

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXTERNAL RELATIONS: LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ORDER MAINTENANCE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Introduction

In Chapter One of this work, it was noted that the two basic functions of the police are law enforcement and order maintenance. In Chapter Two I observed that, because of the internal colonial position of the black community, urban blacks have struggled with the police over both of these functions. Specifically, blacks have complained about inadequate crime control in their neighborhoods and they have criticized the repressive and often brutal behavior of the police in the black community. One hope for dealing with these problems, as I noted in Chapter Three, has been the election of black mayors.

It has been the hope and expectation of blacks in communities where they have elected one of their own to the top job that the black mayor would use his administrative and political clout to make changes in the police. This has not been easy, as Chapter Three documents. Black mayors have faced both structural barriers to change and the active resistance of the white police. Nevertheless, real changes have been made.

But as Greer (1979:111) has pointed out, this is a phenomenon which has hardly been analyzed. In this chapter I will attempt to develop an analysis of the changes in the law enforcement and order maintenance activities of the Detroit Police Department following the election of

Coleman Young as mayor. While every attempt will be made to address changes specifically within black neighborhoods, much of the available data is not, and cannot be, disaggregated in this fashion. Thus many of the changes will be discussed in terms of the city as a whole.

This is not that serious of a problem, however, as Detroit had a slight black majority when Young was elected in 1973, and it has increased substantially since then. Furthermore, except for two pockets in the far northern corners of the city, blacks are now substantially represented in every one of Detroit's subcommunities. So, in many ways, to talk about the city is to talk about the black community.

Law Enforcement in the Black Community: Young's Program

A 1973 pre-election poll by the Detroit Free Press (5/7/73) produced the finding that Detroiters, both white and black, ranked crime as the biggest problem facing the city. Respondents in both groups named it twice as often as any other alternative. But while whites expressed greater concern about property crime, blacks said that they were more apprehensive about violent crime and drugs in their neighborhoods. Victorious Mayor Young addressed this concern in his inaugural speech, when he declared, to the accompaniment of wild cheers from his predominantly-black audience: "I issue a warning now to all dope pushers, rip-off artists and muggers, it's time to leave Detroit--hit the road!" (Detroit Free Press, 1/3/74).

Upon assuming office, Mayor Young moved quickly to begin implementation of his campaign platform on crime and policing. As noted in the previous chapter, this platform included three general strategies: (1) reorganization of the police department to make it organizationally more effective in fighting crime and to free 1,000 additional officers

for street patrol; (2) affirmative action to make the department reflective of the community it policed; and (3) the creation of a "people's police department," responsive to the concerns of the community.

These general strategies were specified into concrete programs by the mayor and his staff. Reorganization involved a commitment to continue implementation of the Touche-Ross recommendations, which, among other things, decentralized many operations to the precincts where, it was assumed, they would be more visible to citizens and thus elicit more cooperation. Decentralization was to be supported by the computerization of all departmental records, and the development of quick and easy access to them through computer terminals in all the precincts. Reorganization also involved not only the transfer of a number of police officers out of headquarters and into the precincts, but their replacement in desk jobs by civilians.

It was assumed that the mayor's affirmative action program for the police department, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, would impact crime primarily by increasing the level of citizen cooperation with the police in the black community. Greater citizen cooperation was also the thrust of the third general strategy, the creation of a "people's police department." The centerpiece of this proposal was the ministation program. Young planned to develop over fifty of these small units in storefronts and housing projects throughout the city. They were to be staffed by police officers, civilian volunteers, police cadets, trainees and reservists.

The ministations were designed to recreate the level of community involvement and responsibility for crime prevention within a given neighborhood characteristic of the old police foot patrols, without

sacrificing modern squad car mobility. The ministations were expected to be open 24 hours a day. Their official functions were to develop neighborhood crime prevention programs, provide a community-based outlet for citizen volunteers, provide a less intimidating atmosphere for citizens to make reports to the police, regularly update local business address logs, and generally improve police/community relations (Bannon interview, 4/10/81).

Within months, fifteen ministations were opened, at least one in each of the city's thirteen precincts. Many of the police were resistant to them, however. Given their traditional socialization to view themselves primarily as crimebusters, and to have a "professional" detachment from the community, many of the police (especially the white police) just didn't see duty in the community-oriented ministations as "real police work." The president of the DPOA called the ministation concept "just another political ploy--it will go on eight to ten months and then fade" (Detroit Free Press, 4/8/74).

Just over a year later, it appeared that perhaps the union president was right. The ministations, it was reported, were "flopping" (Detroit Free Press, 9/23/75). The mayor's office admitted that many citizen complaints had been received. Officers, it seemed, were sitting around idly in the ministations but telling citizens that they were not allowed to respond to calls regarding crimes in progress in the neighborhood. Officers were also refusing to take crime reports from citizens and to respond to their inquiries. More than half of the ministations were closed at night, despite Young's decree that they be open 24 hours.

These problems, the Young administration insisted, were not inherent in the ministation concept. They were, rather, a result of "foot

dragging" and "resistance" within the police department to the ministation concept in particular and Young's reorganization of the department in general. "The mayor threw out the concept and assumed the police would sit down with all the resources at their command and put together a program," said William Beckham, Young's deputy mayor. Instead, he noted, "there was resistance [to the ministations] from the top down and they became the lowest priority in many precincts."[1]

The Young administration, however, was "determined to make this program go," said Beckham. To do so, Young announced that he was putting Commander James Bannon in charge of the ministation program. His job, Beckham explained, was to almost totally revamp the ministations and open six new ones. Bannon was to report directly to Chief Tannian and the mayor, Beckham said, and his deadline for doing the job "was yesterday."

For his part, Bannon said that problems had developed with the ministations because of "a sort of benign neglect" among command officers who thought that the program was mainly political public relations on the part of the mayor and wasn't really very important. Moreover, said Bannon, "nobody has actually assessed the concept of what a ministation should be. The mayor had a conception, an idea that now needs to be translated into police terms, into a viable police strategy."

Commander Bannon pointed out that another problem with the ministations was that "no one set up any criteria on locations . . . . If the rent was right, they'd slot the ministation in whether there was any need for it or not." Thus, said Bannon, he planned to close down a number of existing ministations and reopen them at new locations. He said that he also intended to get the officers out of the stations and

into the neighborhoods on foot, scooters and cruiser patrols. "If we have to close the station 45 minutes out of an hour to get out on the beat, that's what we're going to do." Bannon said he was also working on developing a mobile ministation which could be moved around the city as needed.

Mayor Young was extremely pleased with Bannon's plans. "The mistake we made, if any," said the deputy mayor, "was in not putting someone like Bannon in charge right from the beginning." At a press conference, Young commended Bannon as "an outstanding commander in the department. He will make the ministations work as they were intended--operational units in the community."

The mayor also emphasized that the ministations were not mere public relations outlets. The primary duty of the ministation officers, he said, was "to enforce the law in the community." Their secondary mission was "community relations." Young pointed out that the ministation idea was being copied by other cities around the country, and that in spite of some of the problems citizens had had with them, the popularity of the ministations in the city of Detroit had "mushroomed." The mayor's office reported a backlog of hundreds of citizen requests for ministations in their neighborhoods (Detroit Free Press, 9/23/75; Michigan Chronicle, 10/25/75).

Paradoxically, despite the fact that Commander Bannon was vigorously implementing the ministation program, he was extremely dubious about its value in terms of effective policing. No correlation had been established, ne noted, between foot patrols or ministation-type approaches and an actual reduction in crime. Bannon had even written articles in national magazines arguing that having officers walk beats was ineffective policing. But, he said, he had learned that strict police

effectiveness was "irrelevant." The important thing about ministations was their role in interfacing with the community. "Citizens feel safer" with a ministation in their neighborhood. "They are extremely popular. Just try and take one out; you immediately have 5,000 angry citizens down here [at police headquarters]" (Detroit Free Press, 10/30/77; Personal interview, 4/10/81).

A final component of Mayor Young's community-oriented policing strategy was the recruitment of thousands of citizen volunteers. The Detroit police reserve was established immediately after the 1967 civil disorder as a sort of citizen's auxiliary to the regular police. Civilians could qualify by taking 15 hours of classes at the city's Criminal Justice Institute (the most recent incarnation of the police academy). If they took an additional 50 hours of firearms training, they could carry a weapon while on duty. Young's plan was to expand this group from several hundred individuals to a force of 5,000 or more that would be integrated into the regular policing, not only of their own communities, but the downtown and other areas as well (Detroit Free Press, 6/27/76, 11/23/76).[2]

Reorganization Revisited

Despite the fact that Mayor Young's popularity in the city's black community increased through 1976,[3] black perceptions of the state of the city dramatically declined over the course of that year. Whereas in January of 1976 one-third of the black community had said that the city had become a better place to live in the past year and one-third had said that it had gotten worse, in September of that year only 16 percent of Detroit's blacks said that the city was a better place to live and 53 percent indicated that they felt it had gotten worse (Detroit Free

Press, 9/27/76).

A major reason for this growing pessimism was undoubtedly Detroit's soaring crime rate, of which blacks were the major victims. An analysis of crime in the first six months of 1976 showed that three out of every four violent crimes in Detroit involved a black perpetrator and a black victim (Detroit Free Press, 9/28/76). Another study showed that 80 percent of the victims of Detroit's staggering number of homicides, which had earned the city a national reputation as the "Murder City," were black (Detroit Free Press, 7/6/75).[4]

It was becoming apparent to many observers in late 1976 that a major cause of the failure of the police to effectively control crime was the department's reorganization plan. Although the plan had put more officers out in the precincts and made them more visible to citizens, it had also obliterated systems of accountability, undermined morale, and made it harder for the average officer to find and convict criminals (Detroit Free Press, 10/1/76).

The transfer of a large number of detectives to street patrol, coupled with the decentralization of investigative activities, put unbearable loads upon the detectives still available in the precincts. One detective in an east side precinct told a reporter that he was assigned 382 cases to investigate in one month. "Complainants call me up and ask me when I'm going to come out to talk with them, when I'm going to investigate their case," he said. "I have to tell them I'm sorry, I can't do it, I just don't have enough time." The layoffs in 1976 simply exacerbated this problem.

A further problem with decentralization was the loss of specialization, perspective and cross-fertilization that characterized the

former centralized investigative units. "There used to be a daily interchange between detectives assigned to the specialized units," a lieutenant who used to run one of the units pointed out. "We had a total overview of the city patterns. Today we're running a poor second to the criminal who has specialized and roams over the whole city, while we've become general practitioners confined to arbitrary precinct boundaries."

One of the first things to be eliminated in the departmental reorganization was the Control Center, a 24-hour command post staffed by high-ranking detective inspectors that could make immediate decisions on how to respond to major crimes in progress and could coordinate action in the field. Without this unit, the department was "utter chaos," said one inspector, because there was no way to coordinate the various departmental activities. Several top veteran officers, including Commanders James Bannon and William Hart, had requested first Nichols, and then Tannian to reinstitute the Control Center, but nothing had been done (Detroit Free Press, 10/1/76).

An extensive study of the police department and the crime problem in the city by the Free Press (1/26/76-10/3/76) showed that, not only had crime rates gone up, but clearance rates had gone down.[5] The Touche-Ross reorganization plan, the newspaper concluded, had to go. On the same day that the Free Press reached this conclusion, Mayor Young announced the elevation of Hart and Bannon to the top spots in the police department. Their professional evaluation of the effect of reorganization on the department's ability to control crime resulted in an identical conclusion: abandon or seriously modify the reorganization plan.[6]

"Much of what Chief Hart and I have done since being promoted," Bannon told me, "is to restore programs that were eliminated or drastically modified by reorganization" (Personal interview, 3/16/81). One of the first things the new team did was to restore the Control Center. They also restored the so-called "Big Four" cruiser cars. Officially called the Major Mobile Crime Force, it consisted of 13 four-person cruisers equipped with carbines, shotguns and teargas, and capable of responding to major street crimes.

The reasons for which Chief Tannian had abandoned this unit were valid: it contained some of the most bigoted officers in the department and was not closely supervised. It was, therefore, highly resented in the black community. In its absence, however, the department had no one regularly assigned to search for felony suspects. This was a major contributing factor in the department's declining clearance rates. Hart and Bannon carefully screened the officers they assigned to the restored unit and gave it adequate supervision.

But while Hart and Bannon restored some centralized bureaus, (e.g. the Gang Detail and the Youth Section in the wake of the Cobo Hall incident), they had no desire to completely recentralize the department. "We're not going to become a police department of task forces," said Chief Hart. "We're going to remain generalists." Similarly, Executive Deputy Chief Bannon, who had responsibility for uniformed patrol, delegated more authority to the precinct commanders. In contrast to the situation under Bannon's predecessor, Frank Blount, who had dictated the exact use of personnel and resources, the precinct commanders could now use their own discretion in determining patrol strategies. This was important, because Bannon also made them responsible for curbing

neighborhood crime in their area.

At police headquarters, Hart also delegated authority like never before. In contrast to the disorganization and paralysis of the past, Hart said he wanted the police executives under him to be "flexible enough to make adjustments that need to be made, rather than fooling around with a bunch of red tape or sitting around wringing hands and wondering what to do." This new policy was warmly received by the department's command officers.

The real key to solving the crime problem, Hart and Bannon believed, was to involve the community in a partnership with the police. The police department, said Bannon, is really "in the people business . . . . Without citizen participation, we might as well be trying to keep back the tide with a pitchfork." Echoing this view, Hart said: "Police agencies have thought of themselves more as an army than as public servants. Our number one priority is to serve the public. The citizens have a stake in fighting crime too, and they can identify early on some problems that we used to just react to."

Because of the pervasive fear of crime (two-thirds of all city residents said that they felt unsafe on the streets of their own neighborhoods at night), Hart and Bannon recognized that there was a reservoir of good will toward the police and a desire on the part of the residents to do something about crime that could be productively tapped. "The citizens were ready to cooperate with the police," said Chief Hart, "and we didn't squander that chance. All that was needed was to set up a way for them to help."

The conduit for citizen participation was the Crime Prevention Bureau. Hart instructed the Bureau staff to actively "sell" the department services to the community and to solicit input from neighborhood

residents. This was a strategy which had never been tried before in the Detroit Police Department. It was met with immediate acceptance and widespread acclaim, even reaching beyond the city in its impact. Executive Deputy Chief Bannon aptly summarized this new crime prevention philosophy and its impact:

> Chief Hart and I have emphasized more than at any other time in Detroit Police Department history, the need to work cooperatively with the community, whether it's in crime prevention programs, volunteerism, or ministation programs. I think we have made significant contributions on a national basis to the crime prevention concept. We have model programs that are unequalled anywhere in the U.S. They are unequalled because our method is to work with the community and not do to the community. I think that that's an essential ingredient. I think that our enlightened approach to family violence is a model for the entire nation. I think as a result of those kinds of activities, the Detroit Police Department has a significantly greater chance of being a part of long-term change as opposed to the more reactive position that we have maintained in responding to crime over time (Personal interview, 3/16/81).

Crime in Detroit: A Comparative Evaluation

In an effort to evaluate the success of the Young administration in fighting crime in the black community, I turn now to an examination of official crime statistics and their fluctuation over time. In the following pages I will compare city crime rates during Coleman Young's term of office with those of the previous two mayoral administrations. Ideally, it would be useful for the purposes of the present investigation to look specifically at crime in black neighborhoods and to both examine fluctuations in specific crime rates over time and to compare these changing rates with those in white neighborhoods.

There is, however, no good way to do this. The smallest crime breakdowns consistently available are by precinct. These divisions are fairly large, and do not exactly overlap racially homogeneous neighborhoods. And even if they did, there are not reliable population

estimates available for the precincts, and thus standardized rates cannot be calculated. So, the best we can do is to look at crime rates for the city as a whole, and to assume that the fluctuations in these rates at least approximate what is happening in the black community. This assumption becomes more tenable for more recent years as the relative size of the black majority in the city as a whole grows larger. Class and status differences remain, however, and crime rates are differentially affected.

Some further caveats are necessary. The data I make use of here are collected by the Detroit Police Department and published as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program. The city of Detroit began reporting its crime statistics according to the official FBI guidelines in 1966. These guidelines were more strict than the previous practices of the Detroit Police Department, and thus the first several years include artificial, "paper" increases in crime rates. This also means that figures reported prior to 1966 are not comparable.

Official crime statistics have other built-in problems which complicate longitudinal comparisions. First, there is the problem of differential police attention to crime over time--e.g., "crackdowns," "slowdowns," "blue flu." There is no way to sort out these effects. Second, crime statistics are affected by differential ability on the part of the police to detect crime. This is a product of a number of factors: size of the force, ratio to the population, degree of citizen cooperation, etc.

A third problem with regard to official crime statistics is differential police recording of crimes, due to changes in technology, departmental policies and policing strategies. Fourth, crime statistics are

affected by differential citizen need for the police. Some communities are well organized and have informal controls and support mechanisms which make the police less needed.

Finally, there is the problem that crime is vastly underreported. Victimization surveys show that somewhere between one-half and three-quarters or more of all crimes are not reported to the police, depending on the areas and the type of crime. Specifically, a victimization survey of major U.S. cities done by the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency (LEAA) in 1972 showed that about 63 percent of all crimes went unreported in Detroit. This put the city near the middle of a range that stretched from 53 percent in New York City to 80 percent in Philadelphia (Detroit Free Press, 4/15/74). With the preceding caveats in mind, I turn now to an analysis of the data.

Figure 7-1 charts the fluctuations in the index crime rate[7] in Detroit from 1966 through 1979. This period corresponds to the second Cavanagh administration (1966-1969), the Gribbs administration (1970-1973, the first Young administration (1974-1977), and half of his second term (1978-1979). The data are extended to 1979 in order to provide a contrast within the Young mayoral administration between the tenure in the police department of Chief Philip Tannian (1974-1976) and that of the Hart/Bannon team (1977-1979). In each case, data exists for a three year period, which should be enough elapsed time to establish a trend, if one exists.

Figure 7-1 indicates that index crime rates in Detroit rose steadily in the late 1960s from a low of 6,206 per 100,000 residents in 1966 (which for reasons noted earlier, may be a more severe underestimation than the rates for succeeding years) to a high of 10, 656

Figure 7-1. Detroit Index Crime Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

per 100,000 residents in 1970. At that point, the overall crime rate declined for three years, with the greatest drop coming in 1972. This period of declining overall crime rates, it may be remembered, corresponds almost exactly to the tenure of John Nichols as police commissioner.

Since an in-depth study of this period was outside the scope of the present research, I can only speculate as to the causes of the decline. I can think of two major reasons. First of all, police morale (at least among the white male officers) was high during the tenure of the popular Nichols. This undoubtedly affected the quality of police work. Second, an analysis of subsequent graphs will show, nearly all of the decline was accounted for by three crime areas: larceny, burglary and robbery. These were high priorities in the Gribbs administration, and special programs and resources were devoted to them. Though the STRESS decoy unit activity terrorized the black community, its surveillance component was effective in reducing robberies.

Moreover, to put these crime rates for Detroit in perspective, it is necessary to compare them with some other standard. The most appropriate comparision, I would argue, is not with national crime rates, but with rates in other large central cities. Though there are difficulties with comparing crime statistics among specific cities, due to differential variation in the factors mentioned at the beginning of this section, in the aggregate presumably some of these difficulties average out.

Table 7-1, therefore, presents a comparison of Detroit's crime rates to the rates in all cities with populations greater than one million (N=6). Individually and collectively, these cities generally have the highest crime rates in the nation. But crime rates in Detroit,

TABLE 7-1 Ratios of Detroit Crime Rates to Rates For All Cities With Populations Greater Than 1,000,000, 1966-1979

Year	Total Part I Crimes	Type of Crime: Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1966	2.21	1.27	1.50	1.71	1.59	1.33	1.21	1.23
1967	2.28	1.45	1.43	1.74	1.70	1.48	1.20	1.33
1968	2.04	1.73	1.81	1.60	1.54	1.37	1.02	1.34
1969	2.21	1.78	1.57	1.84	1.62	1.48	1.30	1.43
1970	2.26	1.78	1.40	1.96	1.52	1.67	1.41	1.19
1971	2.13	1.78	1.33	1.59	1.44	1.63	1.30	1.28
1972	2.09	1.80	1.16	1.47	1.53	1.54	1.21	1.39
1973	1.71	1.99	1.52	1.50	1.63	1.38	1.13	1.49
1974	1.85	2.13	1.60	1.74	1.67	1.52	1.21	1.75
1975	1.95	1.85	1.92	1.82	1.66	1.59	1.33	1.90
1976	1.89	2.14	1.82	1.92	1.66	1.56	1.24	1.80
1977	1.68	1.63	1.72	1.65	1.68	1.37	1.10	1.50
1978	1.58	1.65	1.69	1.30	1.86	1.29	.99	1.40
1979	1.53	1.33	1.68	1.11	1.78	1.21	.94	1.40

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports and FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1966-1979.

the table shows us, are significantly and consistently above the average of even this high crime-rate group. Further, a comparison of Figure 7-1 with the figures in the first column of Table 7-1 shows us that, while the index (or Part I) crime rate declined in Detroit between 1970 and 1973, it declined in other large cities as well. That is, Detroit was not unique in experiencing a declining index crime rate in this period, and thus the city's improving overall crime situation can only partially be attributed to local factors.

The year 1973 stands as something of an exception in this period. Although Detroit experienced a smaller absolute decrease in its index crime rate that year than in 1972, relative to other large cities Detroit improved its position. Detroit's absolute rate, however, was still 170 percent of the average for other large cities.

Returning to Figure 7-1, we can see that the reported index crime rate in Detroit took an enormous leap upward in 1974, the first year of Mayor Young's administration. The rate reached just over 10,300 index crimes per 100,000 residents, or about the same level it had been in 1971. The rate continued upward in 1975, to just under 12,000 index crimes per 100,000 residents, then leveled off in 1976.

This dramatic rise in crime rates during Mayor Young's first years in office should be interpreted with caution. The reorganization of the Detroit Police Department during this same time period put more officers out in the precincts and on patrol, where they were more likely to observe and report crimes. Similarly, Young's efforts to make the police more visible in the community undoubtedly led to more citizen reports of crime. How much more, we don't know. But it seems fair to say that a good proportion of the increase in crime rates in the early

years of the Young administration is simply a "paper" increase, reflecting increased observation and reporting of crime. Indeed, Police Commissioner Tannian predicted that this would occur when he announed the departmental reorganization plan in early 1974 (Detroit Free Press, 4/12/74).

Another possible reason for a more vigorous reporting of crime on the part of the police is political. As we saw in Chapters Five and Six, Mayor Young took office facing the active hostility of many of the police. And as I noted in Chapter Three, based on the experience of other black mayors, the police may have expressed this hostility by more rigorous attention to crime, either unconsciously as a result of a self-fulfilling prophecy about the dire consequences for law enforcement of the election of a black mayor, or consciously, as a method of attempting to discredit the mayor.

On the other hand, it is very likely that much of the increase in crime rates during 1974 and 1975 was real. The main reason for this is the national economic recession during this same period. As Mayor Young himself observed when the depressing statistics for 1974 were published: "I believe there can be solutions to the problem of crime. But there is a direct connection between crime and social and economic conditions, and the cities cannot change these conditions by themselves" (Detroit Free Press, 1/27/75).

Further evidence for this explanation is found in Table 7-1, where it can be seen that, despite the tremendous increase in the absolute rate of Detroit's index crimes, the city's position relative to other large cities did not substantially worsen. This would indicate that other cities were experiencing similar large increases in index crime rates. Nevertheless, Detroit's crime rate was still far above average. In fact,

Detroit had the highest overall crime rate of all major cities in both 1975 and 1976.

The period 1977-1979, during which William Hart and James Bannon ran the Detroit Police Department corresponds to a sharp drop in index crime rates, as is evident from Figure 7-1. Specifically, the crime rate dropped to 9,833 per 100,000 residents in 1977 and to 9,063 per 100,000 residents in 1978 before rising slightly to 9,265 per 100,000 residents in 1979. The correlation of this decline in crime with the changes in the department--both internal and external--instituted by Hart and Bannon is just too obvious not to be real. In fact, Detroit's crime rate began its steady decline in October of 1976, the same month that Hart and Bannon took over.

Chief Hart himself cautioned that the decline was not totally due to a change in the leadership of the department. He attributed the drop in crime to improved police efforts and better citizen cooperation (Detroit Free Press, 12/31/76, 3/3/77). The boost in police morale and efficiency as well as the increased cooperation of city residents, however, were largely due to programs developed and initiated by Hart and Bannon. It is difficult, therefore, not to attribute the decline in overall crime to their leadership.

Some commentators have argued that, on the contrary, the drop in crime is attributable to an improvement in the economy and the availability of more jobs in 1977 and 1978. And they point to the slight rise in the crime rate in 1979, when the economy--both nationally and in Detroit--was worsening, as further evidence for this explanation. Others have said that Detroit's crime is dropping more in large part because the city has become so poor--people with resources worth

stealing have moved out, hundreds of boarded up businesses can no longer be burglarized, etc. (Detroit Free Press, 8/14/77).

This latter explanation is invalidated by standard victimization studies, which show that lower-income and poor people are subject to both violent and property crimes at higher rates than the well-to-do. The economic explanation undoubtedly has a great deal of validity. But there is this to consider as well: In 1977, the Detroit Police Department was at its peak in terms of sworn personnel; there were over 700 more officers on the force that year than in either 1976 or 1979. The department was thus in its best position ever to observe and detect crime. Moreover, with the development of the Crime Prevention Program, the continuing expansion of ministations, the institution of monthly community meetings in the precincts, etc., as well as the increased racial identification of the majority-black community with a police force having a black Chief and a rapidly expanding number of minority officers, the opportunities and incentives for citizens to report crimes were vastly increased.[8] Yet the crime rate declined.

This decline in the index crime rate is even more impressive when Detroit's rate is compared to that of other large cities in Table 7-1. Despite the fact that, in absolute terms, Detroit's crime rate did not decline to the low point it had reached in 1973, in relative terms the city was better off than it had been then. While crime in major cities as a group dropped in 1973 and 1978, Detroit's dropped even more. In fact, Detroit led all cities in the nation in crime decreases in these years (Detroit Free Press, 2/12/79). And even when Detroit's crime rate increased slightly in 1979, the city still improved its relative position. Though at 150 percent of the major-city average, Detroit

still had a long way to go.

Having examined the fluctuation in Detroit's overall crime rate for the period 1966-1979, I will now disaggregate these general figures and look at trends in the rates of specific types of crimes. Figure 7-2 presents the data for homicides and non-negligent manslaughter, perhaps the most notorious crime in Detroit. From the graph, and the data in Table 7-1, it is easy to see why Detroit earned its national reputation as "the Murder City." Detroit's homicide rate starts out above the average for cities its size in 1966 and then steadily rises to a peak rate of 51 murders per 100,000 residents in 1974 (714 actual killings).

The major factors behind this spiralling rate of killings can be summed up in two words: guns and heroin. In the wake of the 1967 civil disorder, Detroit experienced an "urban arms race" that fed on itself. Fear induced many city residents who had never owned guns before to purchase them. Whites did so out of irrational fear of black criminals (studies showed that anywhere from half to three-quarters of crime is black-on-black, depending on the type of offense--Detroit Free Press, 9/28/76), and blacks did so out of a real fear of criminals and the police.

As the number of guns in the community increased, so too did the rate at which they were used. But what they were used for was not so much, as in the popular mind, for the commission of criminal acts, but to settle arguments among family and friends. A study of homicides in 1972 and 1973 (Detroit Free Press, 7/6/75) indicated that the "overwhelming majority of homicide perpetrators and victims knew each other." Only about 25 percent of Detroit's murders were crime-related, the study showed, while 50 percent were "conflict-motivated." Handguns were used

Figure 7-2. Detroit Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

in 55 percent of the murders in Detroit in 1973 (Detroit Free Press, 1/14/74).

Heroin moved into Detroit "like a giant cloud" in the years following the 1967 civil disorder, according to a black officer (Personal interview). As the economy worsened, and life in the internal colony became increasingly unbearable, the number of addicts increased. More addicts meant a bigger market and more competition over territories and distribution networks. This in turn provoked a rash of execution slayings. Police conservatively estimated that 100 of the 690 slayings in Detroit in 1972 were heroin-related.

With over 80 percent of Detroit's homicide victims black, Mayor Young's mandate to "do something about crime" extended perhaps most vividly to the murder rate. Moreover, the public relations problem inherent in Detroit's national reputation as a violent city was of tremendous concern to Young. Unfortunately, things got worse before they got better, as 1974 was the deadliest year in Detroit's history. A more effective means of preventing homicides became a priority under the police department reorganization program.

Under the leadership of then-Deputy Chief William Hart, two special squads were formed: Squad Six, which dealt with execution slayings, and Squad Seven, which dealt with felony murders. Both squads were a "blitz approach" to murder, sending a team of detectives and a prosecutor to a murder scene and then keeping that team on the case until it was solved. According to police informants, word of the special squads spread rapidly on the streets, and execution-style killings dropped markedly. In addition, said Hart, "we put the shooters in jail" (Detroit Free Press, 5/26/75, 12/18/75).

The result was that in 1975 Detroit experienced its first decline in the homicide rate in over ten years. After a rebound to a rate of 50 per 100,000 residents in 1976, the rate dropped below the 1971 level in 1977 and fluctuated around the rate of 37 murders per 100,000 residents during the next two years. Not only did Detroit relinquish its position as the deadliest major city in America after 1976, but Table 7-1 shows that, relative to other major cities, Detroit's homicide rate was lower than it was prior to the 1967 civil disorder.

Figure 7-3 indicates an astonishing increase in the rate of forcible rapes in Detroit after 1972. Between 1972 and 1975 the rate nearly doubled, rising to a figure of 107 per 100,000 city residents. After a sharp drop in 1976, the rate once again began a steady increase to an all-time high of 111 per 100,000 residents in 1979. While this tremendous increase in rape undoubtedly reflects a growing tendency toward violence against women in our society, it also reflects a vastly increased reporting rate for this crime. On the one hand, the women's movement has encouraged female victims of this crime to speak out. On the other hand, it has encouraged (and in some cases, forced) police departments to be more sensitive in their handling of rape cases. Another factor is the increase in the number of female police officers, to whom women are more likely to report this crime.

All of these factors, obviously, are operative in Detroit's case. In an LEAA study for 1972, the last year Detroit had a "low" rate of forcible rape, rape was found to be the most underreported crime in the city, with less than a third of all offenses being brought to the attention of the police. Undoubtedly this changed after 1972. After 1974, the number of females on Detroit's police force began a steady

Figure 7-3. Detroit Forcible Rape Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

increase, under the influence of Judge Freeman's court order. In addition, in 1976, innovative changes were made in the department's sex crimes unit, including the development of an awareness and training program for the entire department on the issue of rape, more attention to the arrest of suspects, and greater surveillance in problem neighborhoods (Michigan Chronicle, 5/8/76).

Given this, it is difficult to assess the figures in Table 7-1 comparing Detroit's rate of forcible rape to that of other major cities. A glance at the ratios for other major crimes, which are nearly all above average, leads one to believe that Detroit's rate of rape is probably above average. But that is about all that can be safely said without comparative victimization data.

Figure 7-4 charts the robbery rate in Detroit from 1966 to 1979. The steep rise, from a rate of 555 per 100,000 residents in 1966 to 1,522 per 100,000 in 1970 provides the background for John Nichols' development of the STRESS program. While the program terrorized the black community--and perhaps because it did so--STRESS did contribute to a reduction in the rate of robberies to a low point of 1,132 per 100,000 residents in 1973. This represented a decrease in Detroit's comparative robbery rate from nearly 200 to "only" 150 percent of the rate in major cities. But, as we have seen, the side-effects of STRESS--summary killings of suspects, its popular perception as an "execution squad"-- were not politically viable, and Mayor Young carried through on his campaign pledge to eliminate it. The department had nothing to immediately replace it, though, and the robberty rate shot up to 1,458 per 100,000 residents in 1974, and reached a high a 1,614 per 100,000 in 1976.

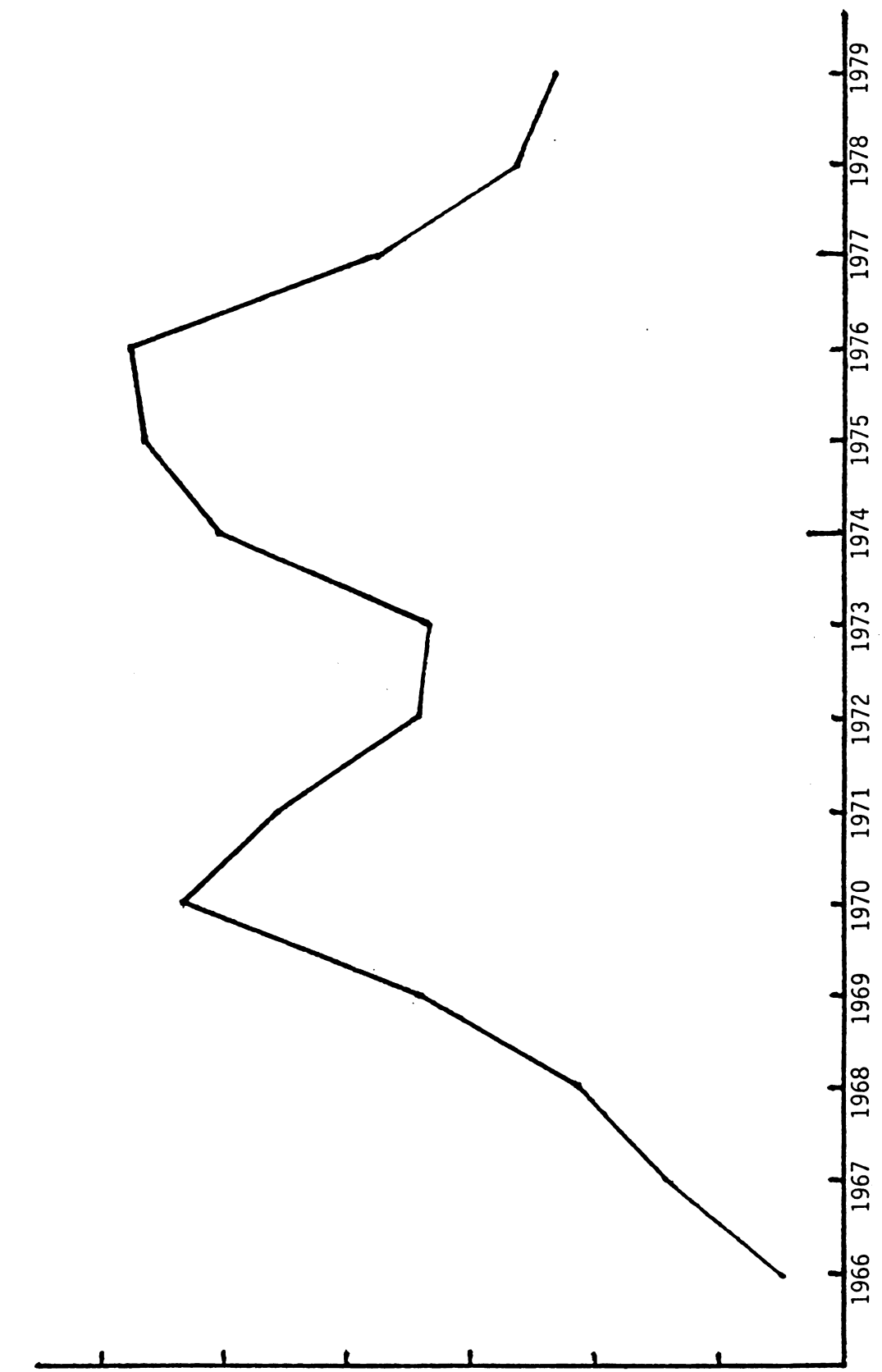

Figure 7-4. Detroit Robbery Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

Detroit's high rate of robberies, both absolutely and comparatively (Table 7-1), was closely related to the city's heroin problem. An American Bar Association report in 1975 said that one-third to one-half of the muggings, thefts, burglaries and robberies in large U.S. cities could be traced to heroin usage (Michigan Chronicle, 1/11/75). Furthermore, police success in busting dealers tended to exacerbate the street crime problem. A multiple regression analysis by the Public Research Institute showed that, for every 10 percent increase in the street price of heroin in Detroit (controlling for purity), robberies went up four to six percent for the city as a whole, and even more in poverty areas[9] (Detroit Free Press, 4/13/75). Thus when Mayor Young acted on his commitments to (1) get rid of STRESS, and (2) get rid of dope pads in black neighborhoods, he unwittingly contributed to a rise in street crime in those same neighborhoods.[10]

When William Hart was a Deputy Chief, he developed a surveillance program for high street crime areas that was based on mobile strike teams and computer-generated patrol areas. He didn't really get to implement it until he was in the top job, though (Detroit Free Press, 5/26/75). When he finally put it into operation, it was undoubtedly a contributing factor in the steady decrease in the rate of robberies beginning in 1977. Even more important, however, was the continuing expansion of the ministations, the instituion of neighborhood patrols with a vastly increased number of citizen volunteers, and the development of the community-oriented Crime Prevention Program.

The payoff from these strategies was great, as Figure 7-4 illustrates. Robberies dropped sharply and steadily to a low rate of 927 per 100,000 residents in 1979, the lowest rate in the decade. Even

more significant, was the fact that, in relative terms, Detroit's robbery rate was better than it had ever been. Table 7-1 indicates that Detroit in 1979 was only slightly above the major city average in this area, one of the city's best showings. Hart and Bannon had proved, among other things, that you didn't need decoy operations to deter robberies.

Not much can be said about the data on aggravated assault rates in Figure 7-5 and Table 7-1. The consistent rise in rates, from 457 per 100,000 residents in 1966 to 905 per 100,000 in 1979 reflects a society-wide decline in informal social control and the depersonalization of individuals in society. Not only are barriers to interpersonal violence lowered in this situation, but it becomes increasingly likely that formal agencies like the police will be called in to deal with it. Family violence, for instance, is reported to the police today far more often than it used to be. Thus a fair portion of this increase in assault rates is artificial; exactly how much, we don't know.[11]

Detroit's burglarly rates show a rapid increase in the late 1960s, from 1,834 per 100,000 residents in 1966 to 3,360 in 1970 (Figure 7-6). A major factor in this increase was the leap in heroin traffic in the city which, as we have seen, is closely related to a rise in revenue-producing crimes. Major decreases in burglarly rates took place in 1972 and 1973. Since these years were outside the direct scope of the present investigation, I am not aware of the specific contributory factors. What is clear is that, after rising back to its 1971 level the first several years of Mayor Young's administration, the burglary rate in Detroit declined sharply.

Once again, the crucial year is 1977, the first full year in which

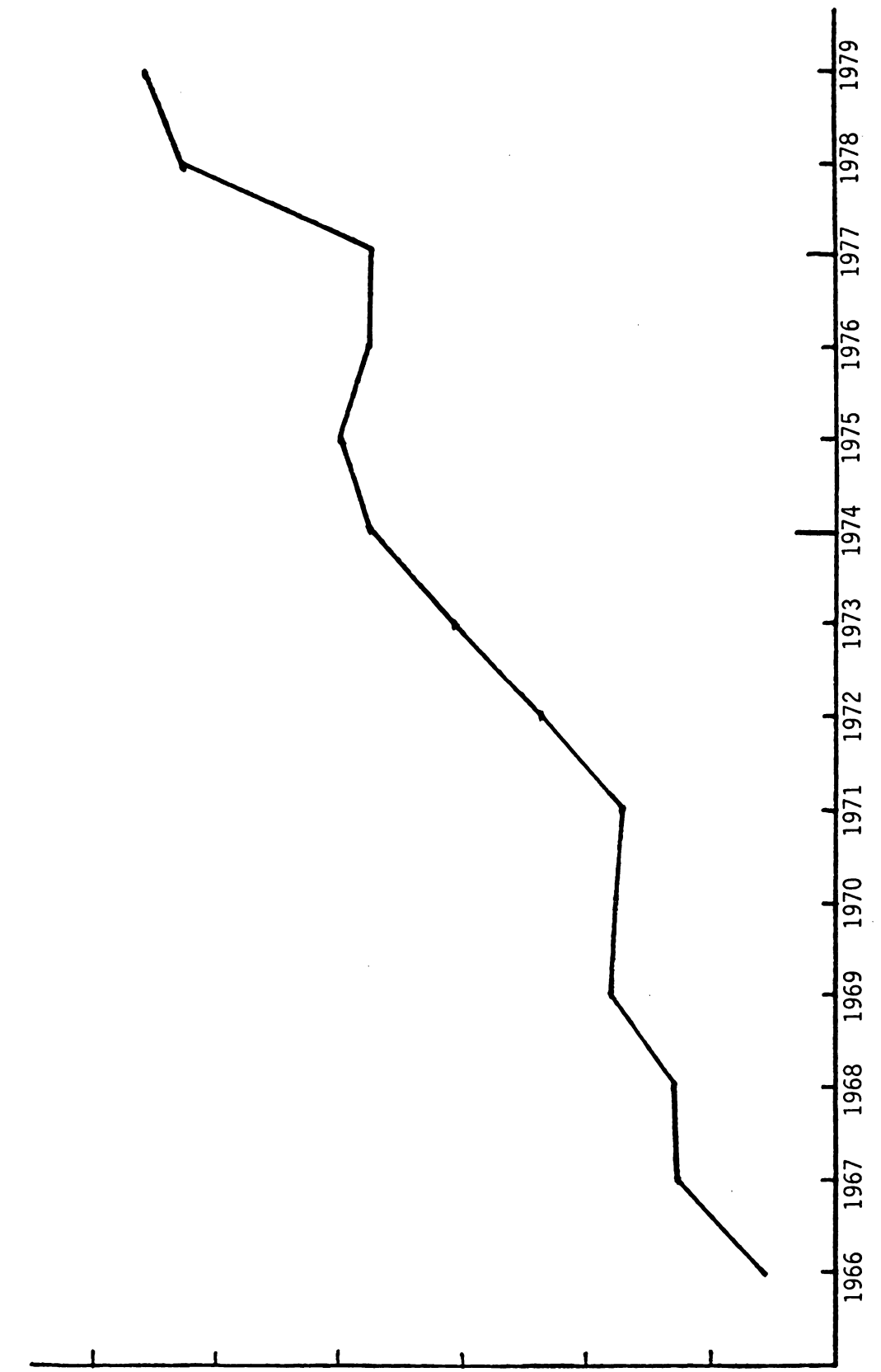

Figure 7-5. Detroit Aggravated Assault Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

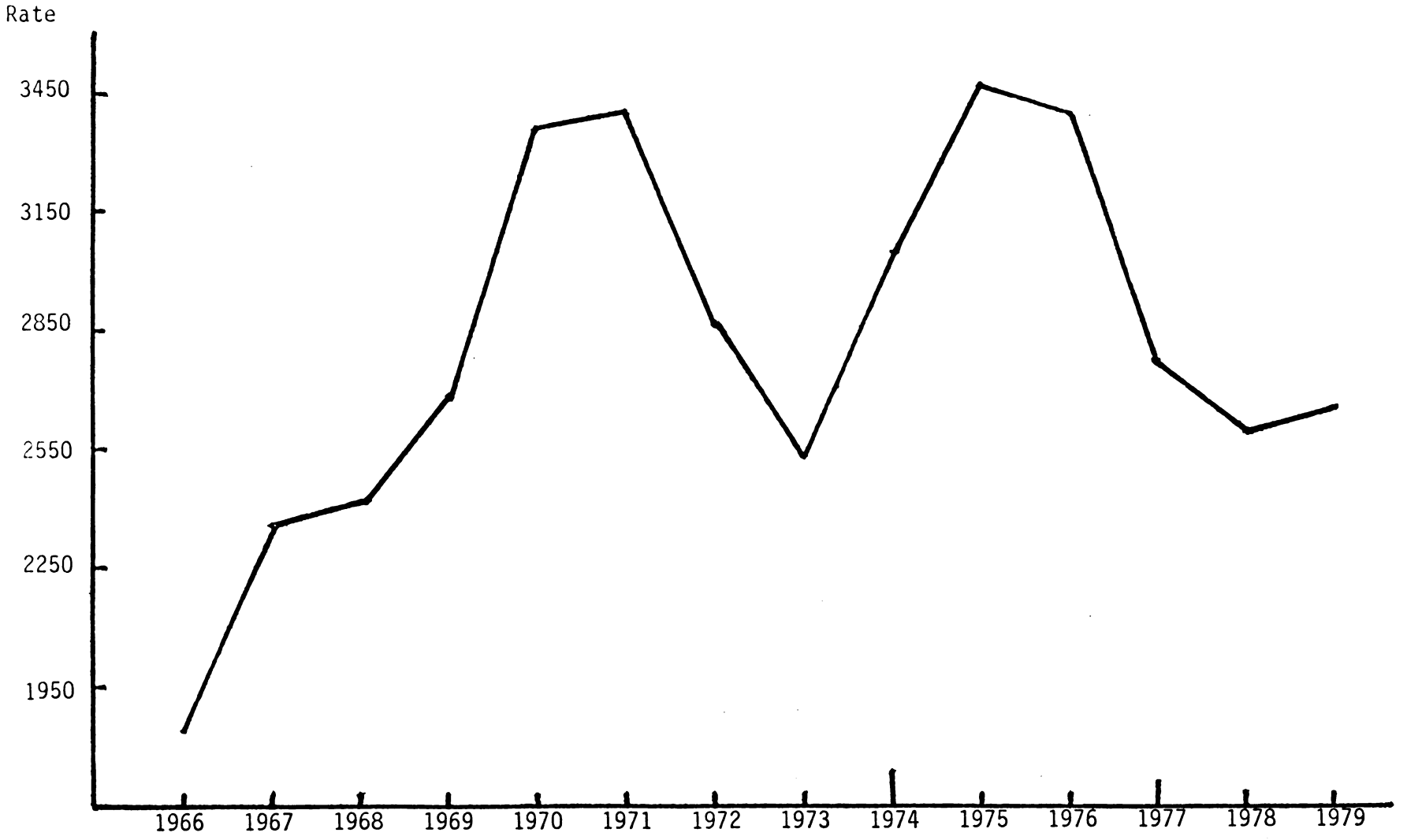

Figure 7-6. Detroit Burglary Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

Hart and Bannon ran the department. Undoubtedly the greater street patrols, by police as well as citizens, and the community-oriented crime prevention programs, which stressed security awareness and neighborhood cooperation, were factors in this reduction. And, although the absolute rate of burglaries in Detroit in 1979 was about fifty percent higher than it had been in 1966, relative to other major cities Detroit was in the best shape it had been in 15 years (though its burglary rate was still above average--Table 7-1).

The pattern for larceny-theft rates presented in Figure 7-7 is almost identical to that of burglaries. The explanations for the rise and fall in the rates are basically the same as well. Once again we see a rise during the early years of the Young administration, and a sharp decline after he elevated Hart and Bannon to the top posts. The unique thing about the larceny-theft rate is that in the second two years of Hart and Bannon's tenure in the police department, Detroit had a larceny-theft rate which was actually lower than the rate for other major cities. As Table 7-1 indicates, this is the first time in recent memory that this has occurred in any crime area. The trend, moreover, is downward.

For the purpose of studying community policing--the task of the present work--the motor vehicle theft rate is not very useful. The rate for Detroit in the period under consideration is charted in Figure 7-8 however, because it has generally been found to be the most reliable of all crime rates, and therefore a useful, though far from perfect approximation of the real rate of crime.[12] Figure 7-8 and Table 7-1 show that in both absolute and relative terms, Detroit experienced a tremendous increase in reported instances of motor vehicle theft between 1972 and 1976.

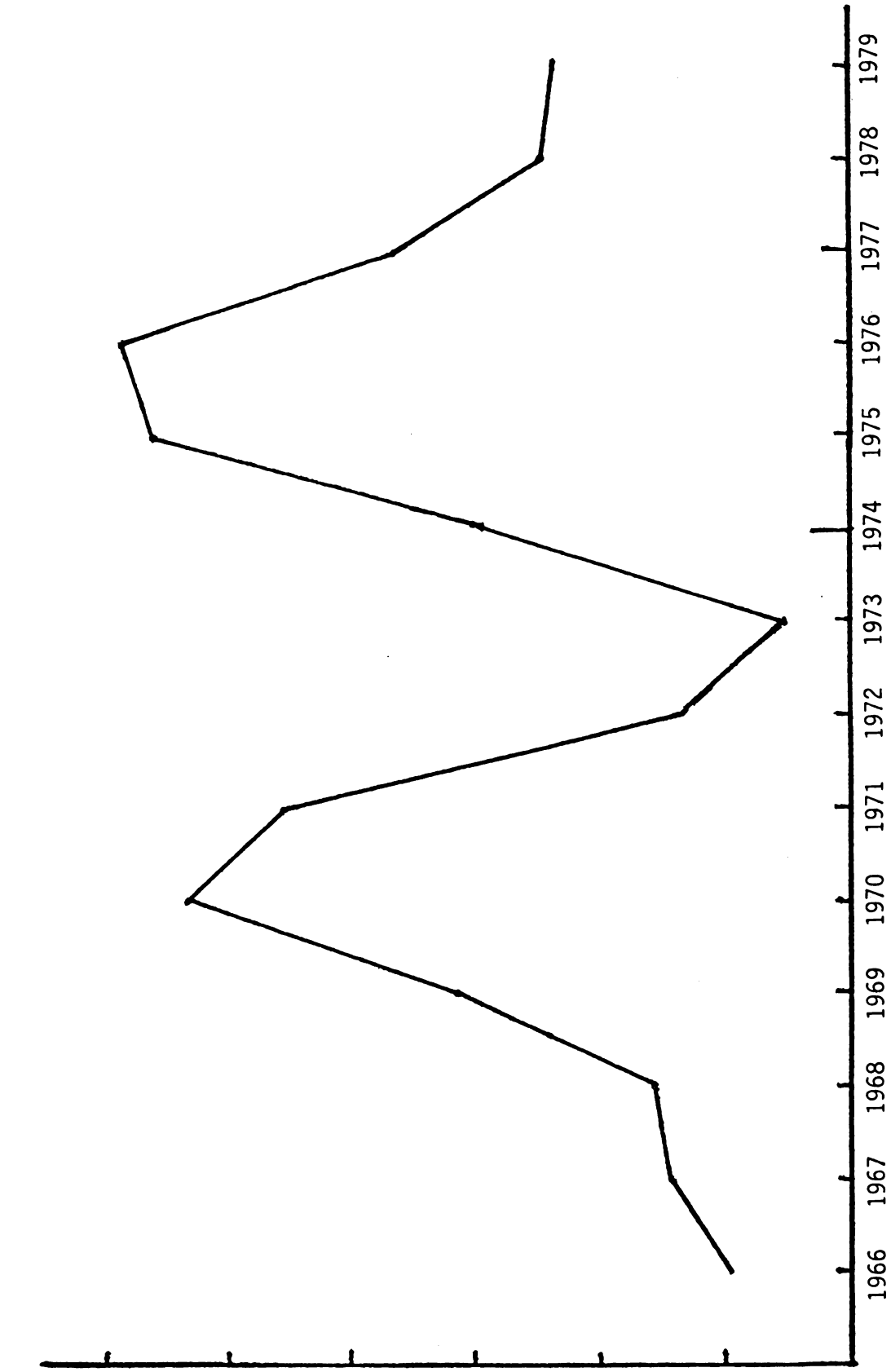

Figure 7-7. Detroit Larceny-Theft Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

Figure 7-8. Detroit Motor Vehicle Theft Rate Per 100,000 Residents, 1966-1979.

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

A large part of this leap, however, may not be indicative of the wider structure, but unique to motor vehicle theft. One of the major mistakes of the Touche-Ross reorganization plan, according to veteran officers, was the decentralization of the traffic bureau (Personal interviews). It became extremely difficult to track and arrest professional auto thieves who crossed precinct boundaries (as the majority, of course, did). With the restoration of a centralized bureau in 1977, as well as more neighborhood watch programs, the motor vehicle theft rate declined. And although the rate increased slightly in 1979, Table 7-1 shows that in relative terms, Detroit was about as well off (or as bad) in this category as it had been in 1972.

Police Efficiency and Crime

Crime rates are, at least in part, a measure of community success or failure in preventing and controlling crime. As such, they may be read as an indicator of police effectiveness. But perhaps even more than trying to prevent crimes from being committed, the police are charged with attending to crimes that actually are. A measure of their effectiveness here is whether or not they can identify and find crime suspects. An indicator of this measure, in turn, is the percent of various types of reported offenses that the police clear by arrest.

This does not mean that these cases are "solved" in any ultimate sense; it simply means that, as far as the police are concerned, they have identified and arrested suspected perpetrators. The most important factor governing their success in doing this is cooperation from the community (see Chapter Two). Arrest clearance rates, then, can be read as a measure of citizen cooperation with the police department.

Table 7-2 presents arrest clearance rates for index crimes in

TABLE 7-2 Percent of Reported Offenses Cleared By Arrest in Detroit, 1966-1979

Year	Total Part I Crimes	Type of Reported Offense: Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1966	20.4	86.0	44.8	20.3	65.2	14.4	16.1	19.1
1967	18.1	87.5	43.9	15.3	58.1	13.0	14.5	18.4
1968	16.9	84.8	38.1	12.6	58.1	10.3	15.1	16.8
1969	16.1	77.4	37.3	12.9	56.1	9.5	16.6	11.8
1970	15.8	72.3	36.0	13.1	57.7	10.2	17.0	9.5
1971	15.6	61.1	42.2	11.7	59.3	10.4	16.6	10.1
1972	16.4	60.6	38.4	13.4	62.7	7.9	19.2	8.1
1973	17.9	56.2	35.9	14.6	62.4	9.9	19.7	9.1
1974	17.5	65.1	36.6	13.9	59.9	9.9	21.2	7.0
1975	16.4	69.3	39.6	13.7	57.2	8.4	20.7	6.9
1976	14.9	69.1	39.1	12.8	52.6	7.9	18.2	6.0
1977	16.0	71.9	46.5	14.5	56.7	7.8	17.3	7.4
1978	18.2	76.3	51.0	17.0	58.9	9.2	18.7	6.3
1979	19.9	74.5	52.6	17.8	57.5	10.5	20.5	11.7

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports, 1966-1979.

Detroit from 1966 to 1979. In each category, the overall trend is to declining clearance rates over time, with reversals in 1972-1973 and 1977-1979. As we saw in the case of crime rates, the police under Commissioner Nichols were generally more effective than in the immediately preceeding years. Regardless of any positive effects it may have had in other areas, the Touche-Ross reorganization plan hampered the efficiency of the police in the early years of the Coleman Young administration. In addition, there was the problem of low police morale, brought on in part by antagonism and resistance to the black mayor and the changes he was making in the department.

Once again, it appears that the key factor in improving the efficiency of the Detroit police during the Young administration was the elevation of Hart and Bannon to the top command posts in the department. Their implementation of Young's vision of a community-oriented professional police department greatly increased citizen cooperation. The mayor's affirmative action plan, which significantly increased black representation on the force, was also an important factor. The result of increased cooperation between the community and the police is seen through uniformly higher clearance rates. For nearly every type of crime, these clearance rates are substantially higher by 1979 than in the entire preceeding decade.

In comparative terms, the performance of the department in the Hart/Bannon years is even more impressive. Table 7-3 presents the ratios of clearance rates for index crimes in Detroit to average clearance rates for major cities. Here it is apparent that the department moved, in 1977-1979, from a situation of being substantially below average in efficiency, to one that is significantly above average in

TABLE 7-3 Ratios of Reported Offenses Cleared by Arrest in Detroit to All Cities With Populations Greater Than 1,000,000, 1966-1979

Year	Total Part I Crimes	Type of Reported Offense: Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1966	.74	.96	.75	.59	.88	.68	.75	.81
1967	.68	.99	.74	.47	.81	.62	.69	.83
1968	.69	.97	.72	.44	.83	.52	.75	.91
1969	.67	.91	.68	.46	.89	.50	.72	.60
1970	.56	.83	.62	.36	.97	.43	.69	.44
1971	.68	.75	.79	.43	.95	.56	.67	.57
1972	.66	.78	.77	.42	.93	.43	.86	.48
1973	.81	.78	.83	.57	1.07	.55	.94	.69
1974	.82	.88	.77	.55	1.02	.61	1.01	.66
1975	.80	.96	.83	.59	.95	.55	1.02	.66
1976	.78	.98	.81	.59	.91	.56	.94	.64
1977	.81	1.05	.99	.63	1.00	.59	.82	.80
1978	.91	1.07	1.07	.76	1.05	.71	.87	.67
1979	1.14	1.15	1.20	.86	1.16	.95	1.10	1.43

Source: Detroit Police Department Annual Reports and FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1966-1979.

every case but two; even in the case of robbery and burglary, however, enormous gains have been made.

The amazing thing about the figures showing improvement for 1979, is that, due to layoffs, the police were operating with fewer officers than at any time during the decade. The improvement in the department's absolute as well as its relative efficiency can only have come about because of (1) enormous increases in citizen cooperation and (2) better organization and more efficient use of resources. The blackening of the Detroit Police Department is an element in both of these factors. The leadership of Hart and Bannon is certainly the most important cause of improved organization, efficiency and morale.[13] The policing strategy they implemented improved relations with the community--especially the black community--at the same time that it more efficiently and effectively dealt with crime there.

Executive Deputy Chief Bannon stressed that while he felt that the police department had changed dramatically in order to be better accepted by the community, and thus get more cooperation, to an equal extent the community itself had changed to become more accepting of the police. He essentially agreed with Mayor Young's analysis that the Cobo Hall gang incident had taught the black community that "we're all victims of crime" (Detroit Free Press, 11/3/76).

After that, says Bannon, the black community began to express a greater desire to work with police to reduce crime. As real reductions were achieved, the community's evaluation of the police went up, and the old stigma about even appearing to be friendly with the police began to fade away (Personal interview, 3/16/81). The community would never have been amenable to even considering cooperation with the

police, I would argue, unless blacks perceived that the force had changed in other ways, i.e., that it had become less repressive and brutal. It is to an analysis of these changes that I now turn.

Order Maintenance in the Black Community

Chapter Four of this work lays out the historical relationship between the police and the black community in Detroit. The chapter shows that this history is one of repression and brutality toward the black community, officially tolerated, if not encouraged, at the highest levels of the police department. Moreover, that chapter documents the increasingly open and bitter controversy over these police activities in the black community, especially as manifest through the STRESS program. Chapter Five shows how the issue of policing in the black community became the central issue of the 1973 mayoral campaign.

As I have noted many times before, Coleman Young took office with a mandate to "do something" about the police. One of the things that he was mandated to do was to eliminate outright brutality by the police. Another of his charges was to obliterate the "occupation army mentality" of the police, the mentality which James Baldwin had described so vividly and realistically (see Chapter Two).

Part of Mayor Young's strategy for accomplishing this difficult task was through the blackening of the police department from top to bottom. His affirmative action program and the controversy it provoked was discussed in Chapter Six. (The very real differences in mentality, experience and community orientation between black and white police officers were noted in Chapters Two and Four). Another part of Young's strategy for improving police/community relations was simply to reduce one of the major burdens borne by the black community:

crime. His relative success in doing so was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Coleman Young had yet a third strategy for altering the relationship between the police and the black community. Throughout his election campaign, he had talked hopefully about creating a "people's police department." After he assumed office, the mayor expanded upon this vision, based on his own experience. "I remember a police officer called Ben Turpin," Young recalled from his days growing up in Detroit's Black Bottom slum. "He was a patrolman, an old-fashioned cop, who walked the streets. He knew my mother and my grandmother and my whole family. He knew when every drunk came home late. He maintained order in that community" (Detroit Free Press, 1/27/75).

Ben Turpin was the model for order maintenance in the black community that Coleman Young wished to develop. His strategies for attempting to implement this vision, and his relative success in doing so, will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

The Residency Fight

Mayor Young knew that if the police were ever going to become more community-oriented and to shed their "occupational army" image, they would in fact have to live in that community. Thus the mayor developed a strong commitment to enforcing Detroit's residency ordinance with regard to the police. In this effort, however, he met strong resistance from the police unions, especially the DPOA. The battle became a test of wills.[14]

Ostensibly, the law was on Young's side. The Detroit Common Council had passed a residency ordinance for all city employees in May, 1968 (largely in response to the exodus of city workers after the 1967 civil

disorder). The Michigan Supreme Court had upheld the constitutionality of the ordinance in 1972. Another court ruling, however, had said that residency rules were negotiable items. Predictably, when the police union contracts expired during Young's first summer as mayor and negotiations began, both unions refused to accept residency clauses in the contract.

By October, the city had settled with the Lieutenants and Sergeants Association. Their contract said that residency was a matter for the courts to decide and should not be a binding contract issue. The city went along because it had already gotten a favorable court ruling. The DPOA, however, was more adamant. They demanded an explicit relaxation of the city's residency rule for police officers. The city would not give ground and the matter went to binding arbitration at the end of the year.

In the period before the arbitration hearing began in February of 1975, both sides jockeyed for position in the public media. The DPOA said that white police officers had nothing against Detroit, they simply wanted to exercise a constitutional right to live where they chose. Young responded that this position was "a slap in the face" to city residents, both black and white. "If police officers don't feel the city is safe enough for their own families to live in," he said, "then we're in pretty bad shape."

The DPOA said officers needed to get away from the stress of their jobs; therefore they would be better police officers if they could live in the suburbs. Mayor Young said that this opened up the possibility that Detroit would be policed by "an alien white army of occupation." The Guardians of Michigan echoed this sentiment in a statement that strongly supported the residency rule. Dropping the rule, they

contended, would increase hostility between the police and the citizens, destroy mutual respect and place an additional drain on the city's economy. "Police officers, with few exceptions, have been selected from the people they serve. This process has enabled the officer to be more effective in doing his job." But, they concluded, non-resident "mercenary police officers cannot be expected to be effective in constitutionally controlling crime. Officers functioning in such roles can be compared to an occupying army" (Michigan Chronicle, 12/21/74).

When the arbitration hearing opened, Mayor Young pulled no punches. "There is no more important issue facing the people of this city--and indeed the people of this nation--than the issue of police residency . . . . One of the issues at stake here is who the hell runs this city? The city government or the police department?" On the other hand, the mayor told the arbitrators, "we might as well lay this thing right out on the table. We're dealing with a racial issue . . . . The question before us after all these years of talking about people's police departments is this: As the black people take over and begin to control the community, are we going to change the rules?"[15]

When the DPOA offered to compromise and let the police chief exercise his discretion on an individual case-by-case basis, Young said: "As soon as you open the door it would be impossible to close it . . . . I consider residency to be an issue of principle, and there ain't no alternative to principle. I'm not going to give up residency. The only way residency will be lost from this city will be if it's taken away from me."

In early September of 1975 the arbitration panel ruled 2-1 in favor of the city's position. In October, Young announced that "we're now

proceeding to enforce the city's residency ordinance." There would be no grace period or warnings because "the ordinance has been on the books . . . . It's not as if we crept up on somebody in the dead of night. This is no surprise." Employees found in violation, he said, including police officers, would be discharged immediately. "The deadline is when we catch them" (Michigan Chronicle, 10/25/75).

Curtailing Police Brutality

With that issue resolved, Young moved on to the next item on his agenda: drastically curtailing police brutality. Symbolically, his first move in this area was his elimination of the STRESS program, so universally feared and deplored in the black community. He was not against plain-clothes policing, the mayor said, but decoy operations were questionable, and the lack of supervision and the racism of the STRESS officers allowed it to get out of hand (Detroit Free Press, 1/4/74, 1/10/74).

On the recommendation of his city attorney, Young had Tannian hire a 31-year old radical lawyer to prosecute at the police trial board hearings. An associate of Ken Cockrel, this lawyer had been involved in defending the Black Panthers in 1971, Hayward Brown at his three trials in 1973, and the mass lawsuit against STRESS. One of his first actions after going to work for the police department (to "use a position of power for a change," he said), was to successfully prosecute Raymond Peterson--"Mr. STRESS"--who had been acquitted in court of killing a civilian while off-duty (see Chapter Four). Peterson was found guilty by the department of violating police procedure and ethics, however, and fired.

In another case, the young radical lawyer successfully prosecuted

two officers from the infamous 10th Precinct drug raid. They too had been acquitted in Recorders Court and they too were found guilty by the police trial board of violating police procedure and were fired.[16] The officers, said the young lawyer, "got their just desserts. There was finally someone to deal with them. This department has a lot more steps like that to take" (Detroit Free Press, 6/30/75). Detroit police officers, like it or not, were being sent a powerful message: Change their behavior or suffer the consequences.

An important brake on brutal behavior by the police was the change to civilian control under the new city charter. The five-member Board of Police Commissioners (of which three of the members were black) was empowered to independently investigate citizen complaints against the police if they felt the situation warranted it. The Board had its own investigation staff, which organizationally was ranked even above the Police Chief. Citizens, as well as the police, now knew that complaints would be heard.

While the Board initially received a backlog of complaints about previous police behavior, over time the number of complaints it received declined significantly. From 1975 to 1976, a study showed, the number of complaints about the police received by the Board dropped 50 percent. A partial analysis for 1977 showed a still further decline. This decrease, however, was not because either the public or the police perceived the board was ineffective. On the contrary, "a cop knows that now he better think twice before calling somebody a spic or nigger, because if there are witnesses against him, we'll prosecute the cop," said an investigator (Detroit Free Press, 9/11/77).

Executive Deputy Chief Bannon noted that the police department

still receives citizen complaints about the police. But in contrast to the past, when the complaints "routinely dealt with brutality, use of excessive force, etc.," they now tend to concern an officer's attitude or judgement (Personal interview, 3/16/81).

Conclusion

After three years in office, Mayor Young was proud to say that "I have not heard any substantive charge of police brutality since I have been in office" (Detroit Free Press, 11/27/76). And in 1979, reflecting on both his success in implementing affirmative action in the police department, as well as in eliminating brutal behavior by the police, Mayor Young told an audience of black college graduates: "We've got young people out in the street now who understand brothers and sisters. There ain't no more hitting over the head. I wouldn't tolerate that. We have a new atmosphere between the black community and the Detroit Police Department" (Detroit Free Press, 3/7/79).

Coleman Young, the first black mayor of Detroit, had successfully changed the behavior of the police in the city's black community. He had not, of course, changed the position of that black community as an internal colony, nor its function within the larger society. He had not challenged the structural role of the police in the legitimation of the existing social system.

Mayor Young had, however, taken a department that had historically been brutally repressive in the black community, that had been openly tolerant of crime and police corruption in that community, and that had systematically excluded blacks from all but token representation within it, and transformed that department into a substantially blacker organization at all levels and in all sections which manifestly defined its

mission as cooperation in the citizens' fight against crime. As a result, crime in the black community had been reduced, and police brutality had been sharply curtailed. This was and is a remarkable achievement and a substantial advance for Detroit's black community. Still remaining to be realized is Coleman Young's vision of a "people's police department." The contradictions involved in the political realization of this vision will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter Seven

[1]Young might have anticipated this development. Immediately after his election, when he was deciding whether or not to retain Tannian as his police commissioner, Young noted that the only major disagreement between them was about the role of the ministations. Yet, after Young took office Tannian was given overall responsibility for implementing the ministation program (Detroit Free Press, 12/4/73).

[2]The police unions were suspicious of the mayor's motives, however. They charged that he wanted to expand the civilian volunteers only so that he could more easily lay off paid police officers (Detroit Free Press, 6/27/76).

[3]Over eighty percent of black Detroiters felt that Young was doing a good job in both 1975 and 1976. But the segment that rated his performance "excellent or very good" increased from eleven to twenty percent over the same period (Detroit Free Press, 9/27/76).

[4]Actual crime rates, and their changes over time will be discussed in the next section.

[5]An analysis of department clearance rates over time will follow later in the chapter.

[6]The following information on the departmental changes instituted by Hart and Bannon is drawn from the Detroit Free Press, (5/11/74, 8/14/77); the Detroit News (1/9/77); the Michigan Chronicle (2/19/77); and Personal interview (3/16/81).

[7]Index, or Part I crimes include murder and non-negligent homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft.

Notes to Chapter Seven

[8]Since no recent victimization surveys have been done in Detroit, however, there is no way to really know if the percentage of crimes actually reported has gone up.

[9]This provides a further refutation to the earlier argument that crime declines when and where people have less to steal.

[10]This is not to say, of course, that other factors, like the city's plunge into Depression-level economic conditions in 1975-1976 were not even more culpable.

[11]The 1972 LEAA victimization study showed that aggravated assault was Detroit's second most underreported crime, with only about 42 percent of the offenses known to the police (Detroit Free Press, 4/15/74).

[12]Due to insurance requirements, nearly every motor vehicle theft is reported to the police. The 1972 LEAA study of Detroit, for instance, found reported victimization rates that were nearly identical to the official rates (Detroit Free Press, 4/15/74).

[13]One way that Hart and Bannon have increased efficiency is through greater accountability. For instance, one officer told me that many of the standard practices of the past (e.g., sleeping on the night shift, doing your personal shopping on the day shift) are now almost non-existent. In his opinion, it is this greater accountability which has allowed the department to improve its performance in spite of layoffs (Personal inverview, 3/15/81).

[14]Information on the residency fight is drawn from the Detroit Free Press (10/30/74, 2/7/75, 2/10/75, 4/15/75, 9/7/75) and the Michigan Chronicle (12/21/74).

Notes to Chapter Seven

[15]A survey conducted by the city showed that 83 percent of the white officers on the force were opposed to the residency rule, but only 24 percent of the blacks. Sixty percent of the white officers said they would move out of the city if they could; only thirteen percent of the black officers said they would do so (Detroit Free Press, 3/9/75).

[16]The police trial board that heard this case was the first all-black trial board in the department's history. Its chair was Deputy Chief William Hart.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Race, Class and the Police

The foregoing research project has examined the process and the conditions under which a black man was elected mayor in a black-majority city in the U.S. It has explored the policies which he developed with regard to the police force and the social organization of policing in that city. Finally, this research has attempted to assess the mayor's relative success in making changes in these areas.

The crucial issue which lies behind this research, and which in fact inspired it, is the relationship between race and class. Conventional sociological literature (i.e., liberal pluralist analysis) as well as traditional Marxism was found wanting with regard to this issue. Specifically, both perspectives--though generally for different reasons--tend to treat racial inequality as essentially "epiphenomenal and ephemeral," or reducible in some way to class inequality. Thus neither of these perspectives has been able to adequately explain the persistence of racial inequality and racial conflict in U.S. society.

It would be a mistake, however, to see race as a totally independent criterion of inequality. In capitalist society class inequality, based on structural antagonisms generated at the point of production, clearly conditions all other types of social relationships. Thus race must be placed in the context of class. This I have attempted to do in Chapter

Two of the present work. Drawing upon neo-Marxist sources, I have developed a model of internal colonialism, which roots the dynamics of racial inequality within the logic of the capital accumulation process. This logic dictates the continuing salience of race as a criterion of subordination within the larger society at the same time that it generates class divisions within the black community. Blacks are thus assumed to have racial interests which cut across class lines, as well as class interests which fragment them racially. Though the latter set of interests is, in both analytical and real terms more significant, the very positing of the former set of interests suggests a need for their analysis.

The police and their role within the black community was selected as the focus of the current research because it seemed to be a promising way to examine the relationship between race and class. On the one hand, there is a substantial literature on the historically antagonistic relationship between the police and the black community. This literature, which I have cited extensively in Chapter Two, shows that blacks as blacks have been harassed, intimidated and brutalized by the police--i.e., that blacks share a racial interest in controlling and changing the behavior of the police.

On the other hand, as I showed in Chapter One, the police are an institution within the framework of the capitalist state, and therefore have a distinct class function. This class function, in simple terms, is that of protecting the private accumulation process by repressing and controlling those individuals and social groups who threaten it. This is usually accomplished through the application of legitimate force or coercion.

Two caveats are, however, necessary. First, this class function does not mean that all activities of the police are motivated by considerations of class inequality, nor that every single action in some way maintains it.

All that this class function implies is that the manifest functions of the police--law enforcement and order maintenance--are shaped and defined in some fundamental way by the necessity of maintaining the validity of the capital accumulation process and the prerogatives of the capitalist class.

Second, as I have shown in Chapter One, there are contradictions inherent within the police function which both undermine the ability of the police to carry out their class purpose and provide avenues and mechanisms of change. The major contradictions, I suggested, were three. First, there is an inherent contradiction between the class position of the police and their class function. Police officers are drawn overwhelmingly from the working class and, as wage laborers, remain objectively a part of it. Yet, they are called upon in this occupational role to act against the interests of that class. The fidelity of the police to their class function is thus constantly called into question, and must be continually maintained by a system of rewards and ideological practices, and through the structuring of the job itself.

This leads to the second contradiction of policing, which revolves around the police labor process. Because of the repressive aspect of policing and the need to keep officers faithful to it, police are subject to a strict militaristic discipline and an occupational outlook which emphasizes crime-fighting. On the other hand, most of what the police actually do involves community-service-oriented activities. The police are separated from that community, however, by their militaristic organization and position as street-level bureaucrats. Under these conditions, police officers have developed an unusually high degree of occupational solidarity, which can be and has been used to appropriate a degree of control over their own labor process, for their own purposes.

The third contradiction inherent in policing is to be found in the fact that the police must necessarily engage in repression, but must do so in a legitimate way. Efforts to achieve legitimacy, however, tend to undermine the ability of the police to engage in repressive behavior. Similarly, actual repressive behavior by the police tends to undermine their legitimacy.

In addition to these inherent contradictions, which offer internal mechanisms and tendencies for change, the police are officially controlled by local political officials, which provides the opportunity for changes to be introduced from the outside. The election of a black mayor in a large central city, therefore, poses itself as a concrete way of examining the relationship between race and class. Presumably all blacks have a racial interest in curtailing police brutality and harassment and in obtaining adequate protection from crime. At the same time, the police must continue to carry out their class function and to maintain the black internal colony. This draws upon and reinforces differing class interests within the black community. The policies generated by a black mayor with regard to the police, therefore, should highlight the interpenetration of race and class.

Mayor Coleman Young and the Police

What has Mayor Coleman Young been able to accomplish with regard to the police and policing in Detroit, and what are the implications of those accomplishments? Basically, Mayor Young's accomplishments in this area can be divided into two areas: the blackening and thorough integration of the police force itself, and a substantial change in the way the black community is policed. I will review each of these issues in turn and then examine their implications.

Young's most obvious--and hard-won--accomplishment is the blackening

of the Detroit Police Department. Through his affirmative action program in hiring, the mayor has transformed the force from one which was just under seventeen percent black when he took office to one that was over 32 percent black in 1979. He had done this, moreover, despite the opposition of the powerful Detroit Police Officers Association and the necessity for recurring layoffs.

This accomplishment is significant not only because it opened up jobs with good pay and benefits to members of the mayor's black constituency, but, more importantly, because it contributed substantially to a change in both the objective role of the police in the black community and that community's subjective perception of the police. As I noted in Chapter Two, black police officers are generally different from white police officers in terms of their class background, their orientation to police work, and their relationship to the patrol community. That is, black police officers are typically drawn from the lower levels of the industrial proletariat, reflecting the position and role of black labor within the internal colonial framework. White officers, on the other hand, tend to come from the upper fractions of the working class, and often from police families.

Black police, moreover, tend to be less committed to police work and the ideology of policing than their white counterparts. This differing orientation on the part of the black police is produced by a combination of factors: the class backgrounds of black recruits; their historical experience as members of an oppressed minority group; their personal experiences with the police as maintainers of the internal colony; and their experience of continuing racial discrimination on the police force. Finally, in part because of the phenomenon of internal colonialism and racial discrimination in housing, black police are far more likely than white

police to live in and/or have personal ties to the central-city neighborhoods they patrol.

For all of these reasons, then, black police officers are much more oriented to the needs and outlook of the black community; they are less likely to feel that that community needs to be managed and controlled and more likely to be oriented to serving and protecting it. Indeed, research on the differences between black and white Detroit police officers presented in Chapter Four, as well as my own interviews, bears this out. Black Detroit police were found to be less authoritarian and more oriented to equality and community service on a continuing basis than their white counterparts. Black officers were far more likely to admit that police brutality and harassment occurred in the black community, and to view the civil disorders as a protest against this and other very real grievances. Black police were seen to be more tolerant of conflict, more social-issue-oriented, and less militaristic.

These very real differences between black and white officers meant that Mayor Young's success in blackening the Detroit police force contributed directly to his success in accomplishing his second major goal: changing the way in which the black community was policed. There are two elements to this change, which correspond to the two manifest functions of the police. With regard to law enforcement, the Young administration had, by 1977, presided over significant declines in the rates of reported major crimes relative to other large central cities and, in some cases, absolute drops as well. Furthermore, police clearance rates had improved dramatically in both absolute and relative terms, as Chapter Seven indicates. Moreover, incidents of police brutality and harassment directed toward blacks--an extremely volatile subject in Detroit's black community and the central issue in Mayor Young's election

campaign--had been drastically reduced and had become, by 1979, the exception rather than the rule.

The constantly increasing number of blacks on the Detroit police force undoubtedly had much to do with Coleman Young's success in reducing both crime and police brutality in Detroit's black community. There were other factors, however, which were equally if not more important in this success. First, there was the fact that under Mayor Young blacks were not merely added to the police force, but totally integrated within it. Through affirmative action in promotions, the percentage of blacks at the rank of sergeant and above had gone from five percent in 1973 to almost twenty percent in 1979.

At the top command levels, the department was almost perfectly balanced racially. After 1976 the Chief of Police is a black man and the Executive Deputy Chief is white (just the reverse was true before then). Of the six Deputy Chief slots, three are filled by blacks and three by whites. Twelve of the twenty-one Commanders are white, while nine are black. Of Detroit's thirteen police precincts, seven are run by whites and six by blacks (Detroit Police Department, 1979).

The complete integration of blacks into the Detroit Police Department had three major effects, according to a black lieutenant whom I interviewed. First, the department now has a better chance to attract and retain highly-qualified black officers because, he said, "they know they have a chance to build a career" within the department now. Second, the integration of blacks within the department had resulted in greatly increased internal efficiency, as resources were no longer wasted through the practice of segregating black officers by job assignment and precinct. Finally and most importantly according to this veteran of over twenty years on the force, the appearance of blacks at all levels and in all

phases of the department had resulted in a greatly improved relationship with the black community--a significant gain that "can't be measured in dollars and cents," he said (Personal interview, 3/13/81).

It was not merely the symbolic value of a half-black police command, however, which improved relations with the black community, though this was clearly a factor. Even more importantly, the differing backgrounds and orientations of these black officers were translated into differing policies and new strategies of policing. The most dramatic departure from the past was the new emphasis on community service as the primary role of the police.

The source of this new thrust was clearly Mayor Young himself. "The mayor," said a veteran officer, "is the most important figure in police department policy. He gives the marching orders, and the chief implements them" (Personal interview, 3/13/81). In his election campaign, Coleman Young had promised to create a "people's police department" that would truly serve the community, as noted in Chapter Five. Reflecting on his relative success in doing so, a black sergeant declared that "Mayor Young has made the police respect the people, both black and white" (Personal interview, 3/15/81).

As Chapter Six especially showed, this was not an easily accomplished task. The first several years of the Young administration were spent attempting to gain control over the police department. It was not until Hart and Bannon were elevated to the top spots in late 1976 that the mayor was really able to see his vision implemented.

"What we realized after Hart became Chief," said a veteran black officer, "is that the police can't do it alone. We need community cooperation." Reflecting this orientation, Chief Hart eliminated the Police/Community Relations Bureau--whose programs, in the words of a black

lieutenant, "were bullshit"--and directed its resources to a Crime Prevention Bureau. This new bureau was charged with cooperating with the community to reduce crime. Its philosophical orientation was summed up in the oft-repeated statement that "We can't prevent crime, we can only help citizens do it" (Personal interviews). Its key operational components were the ministations, conceived by Mayor Young and implemented by Executive Deputy Chief Bannon.

The Contradictions of Community-Oriented Policing

This new community-oriented policing strategy succeeded in dramatically reducing crime and police brutality, as indicated in Chapter Seven. By 1979, every single officer-interviewee agreed, the Detroit Police Department had "bridged the gap with the community" in such a dramatic and enduring fashion that the relationship could not be undermined, even by massive police layoffs. But though this new police-community relationship is qualitatively different from anything that has existed in the past, the question remains of just how different it is. That is, has a "people's police department" truly been created in Detroit?

Waskow (1969) suggests three directions in which a genuinely responsive, community-oriented police department might develop. The first model involves decentralized neighborhood police forces, controlled at the community level by elected neighborhood commissions. The second model is based on countervailing organizations with a real political base, able to hear grievances and force change. The third model involves a radical "deprofessionalization" of the police and the police role, in order that the department be subject to informal control by the community.

The first model has clearly not been followed in Detroit. While the decentralized ministations and features like the monthly neighborhood precinct meetings give residents greater input into the way in which their

communities are policed, they do not give them control over that policing function. Although the second model has not been implemented on the neighborhood level, one could plausibly argue that it has been realized on a city-wide scale. That is, the civilian Board of Police Commissioners, with its black majority, its independent investigatory process, and its policy-making mandate, is necessarily responsive to the interests of black Detroiters as blacks (in addition, of course, to the political responsiveness of the black mayor to his black political base).

Thus, to the extent that blacks in Detroit have a common racial interest--and we have seen that, with regard to policing, they do--one could argue that they possess countervailing power. But black Detroit residents have, in addition to their racial interests, class interests which cut across racial lines and fragment black unity. And police-community relations in Detroit do not currently allow the expression of the class interests of the vast majority of the city's residents.

Indeed, as I observed in Chapter One of this work, in class terms "serious community involvement in the police department is antithetical to the basically repressive function of the police within that community. Furthermore, the police-community relations thrust is contradicted by the continuous drive for the professionalization of the police." Hart and Bannon's emphasis on professionalism in the Detroit Police Department therefore appears not only to rule out Waskow's third model, but to seriously undermine their community-service thrust.

On the face of things, there is ample circumstantial evidence for this assertion. For example, one of the first things that Hart and Bannon did upon being elevated to the top jobs was to restore the Control Center, a centralized command post where high-ranking officers directed police response to major crimes and disorder in the community. They also

restored the heavily-armed "Big Four" cruisers, equipped with teargas for crowd control (see Chapter Seven). Neither of these organizational features seems conducive to community-responsiveness.

But we must not be too hasty in dismissing Hart and Bannon's emphasis on professionalism as totally discordant with an orientation to the community. For it is clear that they have defined and rewarded a type of police "professionalism" that is clearly based on community service. In this they have gone far beyond the typical definition of police-community relations as public relations.

The real connection of the Detroit police force to the neighborhoods based on, but not limited to, common racial identification, definitely undermines one of the ideological supports for the repressive function of the police: detachment from the community. This challenges and theoretically makes more difficult the use of the police for blatantly repressive purposes. Whether this potential challenge to the police function becomes actualized is primarily dependent, I would argue, upon the policy orientation of the mayor.

For as I noted in Chapter One, "the repressive role of the police in support of the status quo is a requirement of that status quo." What if, however, the mayor challenges the status quo in the interest of the community? Could a police department, closely tied in with that community, play a progressive role in tolerating or even protecting some forms of change-oriented "disorder"? Here race meets class again as we must ask to what extent the policies developed by a black mayor are aimed at meeting the racial interests of his/her constituency and to what extent they are aimed at class interests.

The research evidence which I have presented in this work indicates, I believe, that, particularly with regard to the police, Mayor Coleman

Young has acted forcefully to protect the racial interests of his black constituency. But has he also acted to protect the class interests of the working class, by far the vast majority of his black constituency? The answer to this question, though outside the scope of the present work, can nonetheless be suggested.

The Policies of Coleman Young

Coleman Young's ability and success in meeting the needs of black (and white) workers in Detroit must be assessed in the context of limitations laid out earlier in this work. As noted in Chapter Three, there are limitations imposed both by the extremely circumscribed power of the local state within the context of state and national politics and by the historically dependent nature of black politics, which has inhibited political mobilization by black workers. Even more important, however, are the limitations imposed by the internal colonial status of the black marginal working class and the worsening economic crisis manifest in central cities.

As Hill (1977,1978) notes, these two structural factors have combined to generate a tendency to turn aging central cities like Detroit into "Pariah Cities." A Pariah City is essentially a reservation for the economically disenfranchised (largely black)sector of the working class. Maintained by social expenses, the relative surplus population and the working poor who reside in the Pariah City are politically managed by a neo-colonial elite. Though nearly all indicators show that Detroit is moving in this direction (see, e.g., Taylor and Peppard, 1976), the Pariah City is, as Hill observes, an inherently unstable social formation due to its endemic waste of resources and its ever-present threat of mass rebellion.

A more dominant and long-term tendency, Hill argues, is toward the State Capitalist City. This essentially involves the integration of the central city into a geographically, politically and economically efficient metropolitan space economy. This is accomplished through corporate planning and for corporate goals. Hill (1977, 1978b) demonstrates that this tendency is well developed in Detroit and that it is indeed the major strategy adopted by the Coleman Young administration for the revitalization of the city. However, as Baba (1977) shows in the case of Detroit and Curvin (1975) demonstrates for Newark, this strategy of downtown renaissance is not in the economic interests of the majority of the central city working class, and especially not in the interests of the low-income black residents of the internal colony. Politically, says Hill (1977:73), "the price paid for this institutional arrangement is centralized rule according to the imperatives of state planning for private profit and the political impoverishment of the mass of metropolitan residents."

Conclusion

The development strategy currently being implemented in Detroit by Mayor Coleman Young does not therefore appear to be in the class interests of the vast majority of black city residents. This is true despite the fact that the mayor has clearly acted in the racial interests of that constituency by the way he has altered the behavior of the police in the city. Thus the conclusion reached by Nelson and Meranto (1977:382) following a thorough study of Cleveland and Gary, that "the election of a black mayor does not automatically mean that the colonized position of the black community will be significantly changed," rings true for Detroit as well.

It is precisely because of this fact that the issues of race and class come together again within the police institution. Given the very real changes which Coleman Young has wrought in the Detroit Police Department, changes which have oriented it in significant ways to the needs of the black community, an important question is posed. How reliable will this increasingly-black police department be in enforcing the corporate class interests inherent in the mayor's development strategy--interests which are opposed to those of the majority of the black community? This question is especially salient in light of the contradictions of policing laid out in Chapter One, which are all exacerbated by the presence on the force of large numbers of community-oriented black police.

The playing out of these contradictions will shape the future of Detroit and the lives of the residents of its black internal colony. It is an issue for future political praxis as well as continuing social science research.

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