BLACK NATIONALISM AND

PROSPECTS FOR VIOLENCE IN THE GHETTO

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We witness an acceleration of the revolutionary process in the black community in the last two or three years. Of course there is a time-lag between the state of mind of the most militant leaders and that of the masses whom they are trying to draw along with them. In discussing prospects for violence in the ghetto, the most important question to be asked is whether the rate of radicalization of the black masses is still slow enough to allow time for the implementation of measures that would arrest the trend which would make the militant leadership the controlling, dominant, political force of the black movement. It has been argued in this workshop that the payoffs expected by the black population are monetary not ideological. Would material payoffs really prompt the masses to ignore the militant leaders?

I have no reliable answers to these crucial questions, but I would like to present a point of view which might broaden the frame within which the problem of black unrest is being considered. There is no question that black-initiated riots have increased in numbers in the last few years. A Legislative Reference Service report on civil disorder shows that before November 1962 riots involving race clashes were initiated by whites, beating up blacks or civil rights workers. The first black-initiated riot took place in November 1962 after a football game in Washington, D.C., where black students beat up white spectators and policemen.[1] After that date riots are dominantly black-initiated and their number increases every year.

It is interesting, or perhaps sobering, to note how incapable social scientists are of anticipating events. In The Negro American,

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[1]Congressional Quarterly Weekly, Special Report: Urban Problems and Civil Disorder, Washington, No. 36, September 8, 1967, p. 1709.

which Kenneth Clark edited with Talcott Parsons in 1965 when the
militant black movement was already a reality, he wrote in the introduc-
tion:

> . . . the use of force for the maintenance of class, racial,
> economic, or national distinctions is no longer tolerable
> or possible. The revulsion against international war has
> infected the domestic society, as well, and we are no longer
> willing to allow violence to be the determinant of status
> in American society.; . . . The strategy of nonviolence
> reflects most obviously the fact that Negroes, in the minority,
> could not afford to be violent -- except for the unplanned
> Watts type of violence, itself suicidal or a reflection
> of racial desperation.[2]

Talcott Parsons, in his introduction to the same volume, wrote:

> The principal counter to pessimism . . . lies in
> the strength of a <u>combination</u> of factors which have already
> begun to promote inclusion, and which almost certainly will
> be greatly strengthened in the coming years, unless the
> main developmental trend of the society is unexpectedly
> interrupted.
> Not the least of these factors [which militate against
> the use of violence in American society] is the civil rights
> movement itself . . . [which is of a] legally acceptable
> type of civil disobedience . . . "non-violent," "symbolic,"
> "aimed at the conscience." This formula can perhaps be
> generalized to characterize the role of the movement as
> a whole. Particularly in the accelerating phase of the
> last five years, it has provided, along with the Supreme
> Court, the most important single link between the moral
> values which Myrdal emphasized and the present processes
> of implementation of those values.[3]

He was, of course, referring to the <u>American Dilemma</u>. Let me
move to the other side of the track and quote Stokely Carmichael from
a book published in August 1967 together with Professor Charles V.
Hamilton, a black political scientist:

> . . . in a profit-oriented, materialistic society, there
> is little time to reflect on creeds, especially if it could
> mean more job competition, "lower property values," and
> "the daughter marrying a Negro." There is no "American
> dilemma," no moral hang-up, and black people should not
> base decisions on the assumption that a dilemma exists.[4]

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[2]Parsons, Talcott, and Kenneth B. Clark, <u>The Negro American</u>,
Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, p. xvi.

[3]<u>Ibid</u>., p. xxv.

[4]Carmichael, Stokely, and Charles V. Hamilton, <u>Black Power, The
Politics of Liberation in America</u>, New York: Random House (Vintage
Books), 1967, p. 77.

This is, I think, a straightforward challenge to the dominant view among whites and especially white social scientists, that the values of American society would ultimately play a major role in overcoming the racial problem without resort to violence.

Another facet of the emergence of the black movement in the United States was signaled by Pat Moynihan in his famous March 1965 report The Negro Family. He pointed out that the black revolution is related to what is going on in the rest of the world:

> It was not a matter of chance that the Negro movement
> caught fire in America at just that moment when the nations
> of Africa were gaining their freedom. Nor is it merely
> incidental that the world should have fastened its attention
> on events in the United States at a time when the possibility
> that the nations of the world will divide along color lines
> seems suddenly not only possible, but even imminent.[5]

A very strong statement about the direct link between black militancy and the outside world was made by J. Edgar Hoover before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on February 16, 1967. He said that Stokely Carmichael had been in frequent contact with Max Stanford, chairman of "a highly secret, all-Negro, Marxist-Leninist, Chinese Communist-oriented organization which advocates guerilla warfare to obtain its goals."[6] This organization, called Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), had 50 members according to the FBI.

In its August 5, 1966 issue the Peking Review mentioned the Revolutionary Action Movement in an article on the growing militancy of black Americans. It stated that RAM "which has its headquarters in Philadelphia is now also active in New York, Chicago, Detroit and other industrial centers in the north."[7] The same issue mentioned also the slogan "black power" which had just been launched by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.[8]

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[5] Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, The Negro Family -- The Case for National Action, Washington: United States Department of Labor, 1965, p. 1.

[6] Congressional Quarterly, op. cit., p. 1711.

[7] "Breaking the Fetters of 'Non-violence,'" Peking Review, No. 32, August 5, 1966, p. 29.

[8] The New York Times, "Excerpts From Paper on Which the 'Black Power' Philosophy is Based," August 5, 1966, p. 10.

The following issue of the Peking Review[9] reproduced with great
fanfare a statement made by Mao Tse-tung three years earlier on August 8,
1963, entitled Statement Supporting the American Negroes in Their Just
Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism. This,
incidentally, was a unique document because Mao Tse-tung had not
published anything under his signature for many years. The statement
allegedly was written in response to a request from Robert Williams,
a black American who had spent several years in Cuba and then moved to
Peking. This document, both when it first was published and again when
it was reproduced three years later occasioned editorials in the Chinese
press in which solidarity with the black nationalist movement was
reaffirmed. It is quite understandable that the Chinese Communists
would have seized upon a development of this sort and exploited it
propagandistically, verbal support of national liberation movements
being the only leverage the Chinese have nowadays in international
politics.

But while the Chinese may be building this up out of proportion
and may be harboring hopes that are perhaps excessive, it seems to me
nevertheless dangerous to underestimate the role of leaders such as
Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown. I don't know enough about either
to have a good feel for their political future, nor have I made any
special effort to study their movements, but the Carmichael-Hamilton
book is a sophisticated one, not the product of a crude rabble rouser.
The authors have done a lot of reading and thinking. Their rhetoric
could hold its own against a Nkrumah or a Sukarno in their younger days
when they started asserting themselves as nationalist leaders in their
respective parts of the world. The literature of the black "liberation
movement" deserves, I think, close attention.

Walter Williams has made the interesting observation that the
blacks are moving from caste status to ethnic status, and that while in
so doing they are taking new pride in themselves, they are also assim-
ilating into the greater society.[10] But moving from caste status to
ethnic status does not necessarily imply willingness to assimilate;

[9]Peking Review, No. 33, August 12, 1966, pp. 12-13.

[10]Williams, Walter, "Power of Various Hues," unpublished paper
prepared for the RAND Workshop on Urban Problems, December 1967.

it can also imply willingness to differentiate, to form a new and separate national entity rather than to merge into the dominant one.

There are indications that the black movement could go in a direction opposite from assimilation. Professor St. Clair Drake, quoting Charles Silberman's Crisis in Black and White, points out how important the psychological effect of "powerlessness" is on the black community:

> Negroes realize that, as a minority in "the white man's country," they do not set the rules of the game. Unlike Negroes in Africa and the West Indies they do not fight for national independence, but rather for "desegregation" and "integration," and they can attain these goals only if the white majority sanctions them as legitimate and desirable.[10]

It is obvious that the black movement in the United States, despite psychological similarities with national liberation movements in colonies, cannot become a full-fledged nationalist movement of the sort that has spread from Western Europe to the rest of the world since the beginning of the 19th century. First of all it represents not an oppressed majority against a colonialist minority but a permanent minority in an independent multi-racial nation. Second, it cannot claim a territory which could become the geographic base of an independent state. Seen in this light black nationalism in the United States is bound to generate feelings of powerlessness, as none of the conventional goals of nationalism are capable of attainment.

But it would be misleading to judge the appeal of a movement only in terms of its practicality. What may appear as sheer sound and fury to an outsider may have strong emotional appeal for a member of the respective community.

Besides the feeling of helplessness engendered by the obvious lack of a true nationalist alternative, of a territory to be redeemed or liberated, one must also take into account in reflecting about the future of race relations in the United States the economic condition of the black population. Dr. Nathan Wright, the Plans Committee

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[11]Drake, St. Clair, "The Social and Economic Status of the Negro in the United States," in Parsons and Clark (eds.), op. cit., pp. 35-36.

Chairman of the 1967 National Conference on Black Power, observes in
his recent book that

> when the so-called progress of the American Negro since
> World War II is viewed in its economic context, a strangely
> and perhaps frighteningly different kind of picture begins
> to appear. It is the kind of picture which gives a certain
> sense of logic to the increasing irrationality of the
> Negro's intensified and often angered protests.[12]

Dr. Wright uses official statistics to show here that median money
income of families in the United States, in current dollars, grew as
follows: the white population increased from $3,157 in 1947 to $6,548
in 1963, while the non-white population increased from $1,164 in 1947
to $3,465 in 1963.[13] The conclusions Dr. Wright draws from these
figures are not that whereas the white incomes have doubled, the non-
white incomes have trebled, but that the median income of non-whites
is still only half of the median income of the white population. He
warns us that

> we are creating a monster within our midst, a people being
> alienated from the mainstream of American life, not by a
> deliberately malicious policy but by the sedation of
> ourselves into the feeling that things are not really as
> they are.[14]

Incidentally, Nathan Wright seems to be one of the moderate
proponents of Black Power. He is associated with the National Committee
of Negro Churchmen who discussed Black Power and had an advertisement
in the New York Times on July 31, 1966, deploring "the overt violence
of riots" although stating that "their basic causes lie in the silent
and covert violence which white middle-class America inflicts upon the
victims of the inner city."[15] Incidentally, in his book Dr. Wright
never mentions Stokely Carmichael by name.

Professor Thomas F. Pettigrew gives another relevant set of
figures:

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[12]Wright, Nathan Jr., Black Power and Urban Unrest, New York:
Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1967, p. 47.

[13]Ibid., p. 48.

[14]Ibid., p. 56.

[15]Ibid., p. 188.

> If the rate of nonwhite gains between 1950 and 1960 continued,
> nonwhites would not attain equal proportional representation
> nationally among clerical workers until 1992, among skilled
> workers until 2005, among professionals until 2017, among
> sales workers until 2114, and among business managers and
> proprietors until 2730![16]

I submit that such figures go a long way in explaining the feeling of
helplessness felt in the black community. This _is_ very similar to what
happens in a colonial situation. It is likely to help the militants
in their appeal to the black population. Even if rates of change are
speeded up, it may be too late to change psychological-political trends.
When nationalist movements started taking hold in Asia and Africa,
efforts by the colonial powers to introduce rapid reform were no longer
useful, because they could do nothing fast enough to keep up with the
rate of increase of militancy. The history of nationalist movements
in the Third World has shown that there is a critical point at which
reforms are no longer enough and a revolutionary situation has arisen.

But a nationalist-revolutionary movement is not necessarily a
practical movement. History records hopeless situations. For instance,
the Polish Jews before World War II are a tragic example. The Jews in
Poland comprised just about the same percentage as the blacks in America
today, about 10 percent. There were about three million of them. The
predominant ideology which they developed can most accurately be
described as Jewish nationalism. They founded the Jewish Socialist
Bund. It was an anti-Zionist socialist party which had a conception
of the Jewish national identity. They weren't assimilationists; they
wanted to speak Yiddish and maintain a separate Jewish culture. They
called themselves nationalists, but they also wanted to separate them-
selves from the main current of Polish politics. There's a good
descriptive history of the Jewish Bund, called the Politics of Futility,
by Bernard K. Johnpoll.[17] The Polish Jews, like the black Americans,
differed from other nationalists in that they had no majorities in any
geographic area and could therefore not claim state power.

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[16] Pettigrew, Thomas F., "Complexity and Change in American Racial
Patterns: A Social Psychological View," in Parsons and Clark (eds.),
op.cit., p. 332.

[17] Johnpoll, Bernard K., The Politics of Futility -- The General
Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943, Ithaca, New York: Cornell
University Press, 1967.

Professor St. Clair Drake signals another phenomenon of major significance for the dynamics of nationalism:

> The Black Ghetto and the job ceiling . . . determine the crucial points of social reference for the individual Negro when answering the questions "who am I today?" and "what will I be tomorrow?" The Black Ghetto forces him to identify as a Negro first, an American second, and it gives him geographical "roots." The job ceiling is an ever present reminder that there are forces at work which make him a second-class American.[18]

If this is true, it provides an important argument in favor of the thesis that a process of differentiation of the black people from the rest of the American community may have set in, which may lead to an attempt to create a separate national entity, regardless of the irrationality of the whole endeavor.

Professor Rupert Emerson, perhaps the most thoughtful contemporary student of nationalism defines a nation as follows:

> The nation is today the largest community which, when the chips are down, effectively commands men's loyalty, overriding the claims both of the lesser communities within it and those which cut across it or potentially enfold it within a still greater society, reaching ultimately to mankind as a whole. In this sense the nation can be called a "terminal community" with the implication that it is for present purposes the effective end of the road for man as a social animal, the end point of working solidarity between men.[19]

The obviously crucial question for us is: What is the terminal community for black Americans? Is it the black community itself, or is it the American nation? I don't know the answer but I have no doubt that it is highly relevant to the purpose of this workshop. If it turned out to be that the black community is the terminal community, then the whole issue of whether the organization of Black Power is beneficial or not takes a very different aspect. Professor S. M. Lipset has said that Black Power might have a beneficial effect

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[18] Drake, op. cit., p. 32.

[19] Emerson, Rupert, From Empire to Nation - The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960, pp. 95-96.

because it organizes people, it takes them out of the hands of the
rabble rousers, and they then become forces for stability. But if they
are organized on the basis of differentiation from the dominant com-
munity, this might create not stability but a socially explosive situa-
tion.

Before I comment on the next relevant statistics, I have to say a
few more words about the dynamics of nationalism as explained by
Professor Karl W. Deutsch. He assumes that in a typically pre-industrial
society the majority of the population is passive or unmobilized politi-
cally. Social communication, aided by education and industrialization,
mobilizes at some point this population, arousing its political con-
sciousness. If an ethnically distinct population is mobilized before
it is assimilated into the politically dominant population then the
process of differentiation tends to create a separate national
entity.[20]

This is what happened in Central Europe in the period before
World War I. The Czechs, the Slovaks, the Hungarians and others
became mobilized, they saw themselves different from the Austrian,
German-speaking, dominant population, they resented the dominance,
they resented the fact that they could not express themselves in their
own culture. Efforts to assimilate came too late. The result was
that the Habsburg Empire burst wide open and separate nationalities
were created. The same happens in Nigeria today. The same was about
to happen in Indonesia in past years, but the Army was strong enough
to keep it down. The same might still happen in India.

In this context one question to be answered is whether the black
population in this country has really only become mobilized in the
very recent past, these last few decades when the rural, passive,
apathetic Southern blacks moved North, entered industries, and went
to high schools and colleges. And if so, is it likely that the result

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[20]Deutsch, Karl W., Nationalism and Social Communication - An
Inquiry Into the Foundations of Nationality, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T.
Press, 1953, Chapter VI.

will be similar to what happened in Central Europe, in Asia and in
Africa, namely the emergence of a distinct cultural identity, of a
separate community, wanting a separate state? Again I don't know
the answer.

Here are some interesting figures from the report that was cir-
culated a few months ago by the Los Angeles Riot Study at UCLA (LARS).
The authors found in their two-year study in the Watts district that
30 percent of the blacks were militant, approving of the riots, in
sympathy with the Black Power movement, believing that violence is
doing the black community more good than harm; 35 percent were con-
servative, trying to advance within American society, wanting to do
well by traditional devices and according to the values of this society;
and 35 percent were uninvolved, passive. The breakdown of this sample
in terms of employment is very interesting. Seventy percent of the militants
and 63 percent of the conservatives were employed, but only 55 percent
of the uninvolved.[21] This suggests that there is no direct correla-
tion between radicalism and economic deprivation.

Of course, both the conservative group, representing the established
"solid" black leadership and the militant group are competing for the
support of the passive group. The militants seem to be more successful[22]
than the conservatives, the pull is toward the militant end of the
spectrum as the passive, latent population begins to be mobilized.
The UCLA study concludes:

> Essentially the "militants" are committed to a strategy of
> disrupting the system as a means of gaining greater bar-
> gaining power for helping the Negro move more rapidly into
> the economic and political streams. The social stream --
> integration -- is no longer the primary goal. Integration
> becomes an individual goal rather than a group goal. What
> they are seeking is the right of any individual to have
> a choice. This is a long-range concern, however, and the
> power necessary to achieve it can be found through greater
> strength in the political and economic arenas. This in

[21]Cohen, Nathan E., The Los Angeles Riot Study (LARS), UCLA:
Office of Public Information, August 1, 1967, mimeo., p. 13.

[22]Glazer, Nathan, "The Ghetto Crisis," Encounter (London),
November 1967, p. 15.

turn necessitates, at this time, the building up of a
greater sense of identity, unity, and spirit of "nationalism."[23]

It seems to me that the belief that the conservative, middle class,
more successful black group will be able to restrain or outbid the
militants and keep control of the black masses is predicated on certain
notions which may not be realistic, judging from the experience of in-
surgencies or revolutionary movements in the Third World. For instance,
in Algeria in the mid-1950s, a relatively small group of militants was
able to intimidate the conservative, traditional leadership of the
Arab community so effectively as to make them politically useless.[24]

I will not hazard a guess about how far the militants will go,
if they achieve political control in the black community. Carmichael
and Hamilton, writing in August 1967, described their book as presenting

> a political framework and ideology which represents the last
> reasonable opportunity for this society to work out its racial
> problems short of prolonged destructive guerrilla warfare.
> That such violent warfare may be unavoidable is not herein
> denied.[25]

Are the most radical militants simply putting us on? Or should we
take the words of Carmichael, who has visited Havana, Algiers, and
Hanoi, at face value? On July 25, 1967, according to the Havana
radio, Carmichael stated in a press conference at the Habana Libre
Hotel that he had established his first contact with the Cuban regime
during the October 1960 visit to New York of Fidel Castro.

If one ascribes any significant probability to the possibility
that ghetto violence will escalate eventually into racial guerrilla
warfare, then special attention must be devoted to the future atti-
tudes of a crucial group in the black community, namely the veterans
returning from the war in Vietnam. On June 21, 1967, the most recent

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[23] Op. cit., p. 17.

[24] Quandt, William B., Revolution and Political Leadership - Algeria
1954-1968, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1969, Chapter VI.

[25] Carmichael and Hamilton, op. cit., p. vi.

date for which I was able to get official figures, there were 44,500
black soldiers, including 1000 officers, in Vietnam. They represented
10.6 percent of the total forces assigned to Vietnam, exactly pro-
portional to the percentage of black citizens in the total population
of the United States. But in terms of combat capability the black
soldiers composed a significantly higher proportion of the total forces.
Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara stated in a speech in Denver,
Colorado, on November 7, 1967:

> It is a fact that Negroes often volunteer for the most
> difficult and hazardous assignments. It is a fact that
> 20 percent of Army deaths in Vietnam last year were Negroes.[26]

Not all black veterans of the Vietnam war will be thrown back
into the ghetto. Officers and non-coms do not present a problem.
Furthermore, many black soldiers re-enlist. But the vast majority
of black veterans return eventually to their own communities. There
they face an entirely different situation from that experienced by
the black veterans of previous wars, namely an increasingly mobilized
social environment and constant exposure to radical agitators and
organizers.

It is well-established that people react more strongly against
relative deprivation, the discrepancy between expectations and
reality, than against habitual poverty. While I do not know anything
about the state of mind of black veterans returning from Vietnam,
I assume that being thrown back into the ghetto will be harder to
take than it is for blacks who have never experienced equal treat-
ment. Furthermore, combat veterans are bound to resent discrimination
more keenly knowing that the community personally owes them a debt
of gratitude. But most important, men who have lived through the
intense experience of combat are likely to react more strongly than

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[26]Address by Hon. Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, at
the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Forty-Third
Convention, Washington, D.C.: Office of Assistant Secretary of
Defense (Public Affairs), No. 1061-67, p. 7.

others to the idleness and want which may be in store for them after
demobilization.

Everywhere in the world the returning veteran is potentially a
political activist. If his personal needs, material as well as
psychic, are satisfied, he is likely to become an active supporter of
his society. If frustrated, he is more prone to extremism than other,
mentally less mobilized, individuals. For this reason it seems im-
perative to give full and urgent attention to the future social role
of black veterans of the war in Vietnam. They are not simply returning
to a frustrating environment but to one in which they will experience
immediately extremist appeals.

Things have moved very fast since Stockely Carmichael and other
members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee formulated
the Black Power philosophy in August 1966. At that time they pro-
claimed in rather restrained fashion that if "black people are not
given their proper due and respect, then the antagonisms and contra-
dictions are going to become more and more glaring, more and more
intense, until a national explosion may result." A year later Stokely
Carmichael advocated in Cuba "urban guerrilla warfare within the
United States."[27]

If the notion of urban guerrilla warfare really takes hold among
black radicals, obviously the black veteran, with recent combat ex-
perience in Vietnam, would become a principal target for political
agitators and recruiters. Even if his loyalty as an American will
protect him at first, the corrosive influence of protracted frustration
cannot be minimized. Discrimination by itself may not have a strong
enough impact to turn him into a terrorist, but aimless idleness and
material and mental deprivations would, in time.

Some observers think that the danger of black terrorism is not
a negligible one. Professor Nathan Glazer has stated recently that
the black militants are "indubitably the most radical movement in the
country." They insist that "violence is natural and necessary, violence

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[27]Los Angeles Times, December 12, 1967, quoting the Associated
Press.

will come, and Negroes must be ready for it."[28] Judge Wade H. McCree Jr. of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals told the National Conference of Christians and Jews a few days ago that "the nation faces the threat of guerilla warfare fomented by 'Black Power' leaders, unless 'revolutionary' efforts are made to give Negroes full rights." He warned that

> 20 million people can make this country almost uninhabitable
> for a generation or more for the rest of the population and
> can create such chaos that the form of government which
> will ultimately emerge will bear scant resemblance to the
> one we venerate today.[29]

An even more disturbing warning came recently from the black newspaperman Carl T. Rowan, former USIA director and ambassador to Finland. In his nationally-syndicated column Rowan wrote the other day that Detroit's leading Black Power organization, the Citywide Citizens Action Committee, "has a larger following among the Negro masses of Detroit than any other group" and signaled "worrisome reports, backed by some evidence, that the Peking-oriented Progressive Labor Party is manipulating and perhaps financing CCAC through its Detroit operatives." Rowan also asserted that the President's Commission on Civil Disorders, headed by Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois, is concerned that "CCAC has established increasing liaison with similar groups in other major cities, with the result that the black nationalists could have, in a few months, the most potent and effective political instrument among American Negroes."

Rowan also claimed in the same article that "the FBI and other intelligence sources have turned up 'pretty solid' evidence that Communist China used an elaborate international set of conduits to put a million dollars into Philadelphia[30] for use by the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). This is the group whose New York leaders were arrested on charges of plotting to kill NAACP and Urban League leaders Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young along with other civil rights 'moderates.'"

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[28] Glazer, loc. cit., p. 17.

[29] Los Angeles Times, December 14, 1967, quoting the Associated Press.

[30] Rowan, Carl T., "How to Avoid Guerilla Warfare," Los Angeles Times, December 6, 1967.

I strongly believe that special, constructive measures for the
benefit of black veterans of the war in Vietnam are urgently needed
not only because justice demands it but also to counter the influence
of the radicalized environment to which they will return in the ghetto.
G.I. bill educational and housing benefits, available to all veterans,
are not enough to change the life condition of school dropouts or to
counter the forced segregation that keeps them in the ghetto. Obviously,
the dangers facing American society cannot be eliminated by measures
benefiting directly only less than 1 percent of the total black popula-
tion. Only profound changes in the relationship between the white and
black communities as a whole will really help. But students of
nationalist and revolutionary movements are aware of the crucial
importance of dedicated cadres. Measures that would deter black
veterans from lending their skills and energy to extremism would be
useful even though they would not provide a total solution.

Secretary McNamara is aware of this problem. In his November 7,
1967, speech to the National Association of Educational Broadcasters
he described briefly several Department of Defense efforts toward
"the solution of the social problems wracking our nation." One of
these is PROJECT TRANSITION. It is a voluntary program for men with
30 to 180 days of service time remaining. It consists of counseling,
skill enhancement, education, and job placement. In early November 1967
it was operative as a pilot program at five bases, but Mr. McNamara
announced that "within sixty days PROJECT TRANSITION will be in opera-
tion at all eighty of the major installations in this country."[31]

The Secretary of Defense stated that the Labor Department, HEW,
the Postal Service, as well as a number of state and local agencies
that can assist with training and offer employment will cooperate, and
that "the Ford Foundation has offered to work closely with us in
solving the problems connected with placing the right veteran in the
right job." While Mr. McNamara did not mention the danger of black
veterans joining extremist movements, he did show special concern for
this group: ..

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[31]McNamara, loc. cit., p. 13.

> We are going to be able to give the returning Negro
> veteran -- particularly the Negro veteran who without help
> might be compelled to drift back into the stagnation of
> the urban ghetto -- an opportunity for valuable training
> and satisfying employment.

Maybe the Defense Department's PROJECT TRANSITION is sufficient to cope with the problems of returning black veterans. But in view of the potential danger represented by the fact that the war in Vietnam creates each year about 50,000 Negro veterans who could become the militarily trained cadres of a black terrorist movement, I prefer not to be complacent. The RAND Workshop on Urban Programs seems an appropriate forum to discuss the following questions:

1. What steps should be taken to allow black veterans who may lack adequate educational background maximum benefits under the GI Bill of Rights?

2. How could black veterans be helped to take full advantage of federal assistance in purchasing a home?

3. What organizational arrangements could be devised to give black veterans special advantages in securing jobs in the private sector of the economy?

4. How could the proposal of the President's Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress that the Federal Government become the "employer of last resort" (by hiring any man who can't get a job) be applied to black veterans?

5. What are the implications for black veterans and for the militant black movement of the President's appeal on November 15, 1967, to leaders of veterans' organizations to encourage more Vietnam veterans to become teachers, especially in poor ghetto, rural, and bordertown schools?

6. Can the November 21, 1967 memorandum of the Secretary of Defense authorizing early release from active duty of military men who are within 90 days of separation and wish to accept civilian police employment be used to associate black veterans with the law enforcement process, especially in the country's ghettos?

7. Professor James Q. Wilson of Harvard and Major Jerome Cavanagh of Detroit have proposed national riot-police forces. Should

a special effort be made to use black veterans as an elite national
riot-police force? Could such a body play a major role in arresting
temporarily the danger of racial warfare in this country, thus gaining
time for the major structural reforms required to reverse the present
trend of alienation of black Americans?