

THE POLICE IN AMERICA: A BLACK VIEWPOINT

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## THE POLICE IN AMERICA: A BLACK VIEWPOINT

by Terry Jones

"Often immorality struts around  
masked as morality"<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

the most visible arm of the criminal justice system, the police elicit some emotional reaction from practically every component of American society. To many the police are seen as guardians of justice, protectors of life, property, and "the American way." To others, especially the poor and large segments of the minority community, the police are viewed as oppressive and disruptive forces of control to be avoided at all costs. To a great extent, these differences in attitudes regarding the police stem from the differing cultural, political, and environmental backgrounds of our American population.

Since one of the most visible forms of control is exhibited through the police, we could expect those gaining privileges from the results of police activity to respond favorably toward such an institution. On the other hand, those who view themselves as victims of the "system" tend to be somewhat hostile toward the police. They are alienated in that they have been excluded from the mainstream of life. They are treated as outsiders or intruders in their own land. To them the

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police function to maintain the status quo and this translates to white privilege.

Sooner or later we get around to asking the key question of "who controls the police who are charged with controlling the dangerous classes?" In the United States this has been an elusive question to answer. We have continually found ways to compromise the need for popular control of the police with the need for an operation that functions "independent" of political pressure. In addition to open political conflict over control, we continually hear or read of police payoffs, bought policemen, and other forms of corruption. The police departments of cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco have been notorious for the corruption within them. The Knapp Commission<sup>2</sup> is just one example of the story of police corruption. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine which group or groups in any given society control the police, just about any freshman sociology student can point to numerous pieces of research that indicate that the police do enforce the law differentially according to socio-economic

status.

This essay focuses on the function of police, the nature of police minority community relations, and the role of blacks in policework. The following pages are not

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meant as an indictment against the police. On the contrary, they are intended to analyze the police function and the role blacks have played in relation to the police system as employees, recipients of service, and victims of police oppression. In addition, there is the attendant effort to question the value of black involvement in a system that has been so historically oppressive to blacks in American society. The focus here will be on understanding how this system has developed and its impact on different groups of people.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

is some debate as to when the first organized police effort took place in America. However, we do know that most of these efforts were designed after the successful efforts of Sir Robert Peel of Great Britain. In 1838, Boston created a day police force to supplement its night watch, New York passed legislation to create a police force in 1844, and by the 1870s most of the nation's largest cities had full-time police forces.<sup>3</sup> Chapman and Johnson note that:

Many features of British policy were present in early American settlements, where people depended upon commerce and industry for their livelihood, the night watchman or constable served as protector of public order. In the South, where agriculture played a more dominant role in the contemporary livelihood, the office of sheriff was established as the means of area law enforcement.<sup>4</sup>

As the country rapidly industrialized and expanded so did the need for the police function. With the rapid increase in industrialization, so came the need for increased police protection. This increase took place in a haphazard and unorganized fashion. Smith points out that our police system is in fact, a non-system composed of a collection of police units developed at different times, with different functions, and

responsible to different

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levels of government.<sup>5</sup>

With this haphazard development of police services in America have come periodic attempts at reform. Some segment of the public has continually been at odds with the police and how they function. Because of their peculiar role in society, the police have been subjected to a host of pressures and temptations and, therefore, viewed with apprehension. In more recent times the disenchantment with the police function has led to governmental study of the problem, i.e., the Withersham Commission in the 1930s and President Johnson's task force to study the criminal justice system in the 1960s. These studies and subsequent calls for reform are the result of U.S. peoples being historically torn between a desire for maximum personal freedom and a need for order. These conflicting values led Smith to report:

The instrumentalities of the law have been deliberately weakened in response to popular demand, and even law observance by the observing has suffered a severe decline.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the so-called law abiding are such simply because they are successful in having the "law enforced" in certain parts of the community against certain types of people.

#### A HISTORICAL LOOK AT BLACKS AND THE POLICE

Blacks, from their earliest contact with whites in America, came to know that police behavior was reflective of the white ruling class. From the time the first African slaves set foot on American soil to this day governmental efforts have been directed toward controlling blacks. In addressing this point, Aptheker asserts that "a ruling class often subject to periods of panic arising from doubt of its ability to maintain power, may be expected to develop complex and thorough systems of control."<sup>7</sup> The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil

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Disorders provides evidence that this concern for control was indeed appropriate.

Throughout the 18th Century, the danger of Negro revolts obsessed many white Americans. Slave plots of considerable scope were uncovered in New York in 1712 and 1741, and they resulted in bloodshed-Whites and Negroes were slain.<sup>8</sup>

Also described in The Riot Commission Report are instances of malingering and sabotage as well as slave revolts led by Gabriel Prosser in 1800, Denmark Vessey in 1822, and Nat Turner in 1831.<sup>9</sup> This very cruel and inhumane institution of slavery could not have survived without an overt, brutal policing mechanism designed not just to protect whites, but to dehumanize blacks by a process of total control. This total control was legally sanctioned in the slave states through a series of legislative enactments known as the Black Codes. These Black Codes provided for complete control over life, limb, and expressed thoughts of slaves by their masters.<sup>10</sup>

A historical analysis of police work especially in the South, clearly demonstrates the major role played by the police in subordinating one race to another. Any threat to the slave system, i.e., John Brown's raid, the election of Lincoln, or the abolitionist movement brought on renewed efforts to keep the slaves under control.<sup>11</sup> Wiley notes that state patrol laws were tightened at the beginning of the Civil War and that one state, Florida, "provided that the patrols should make their rounds once a week or more than once a week when informed by a creditable citizen of evidence of insubordination or threatened outbreak. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

While reconstruction provided blacks some relief, the terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacy organizations helped to successfully undermine reconstruction.<sup>13</sup> Federal troops could not be everywhere and this logistical fact

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allowed white supremacists to beat, kill and generally terrorize the black population. In fact, the activities of these groups coupled with the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877 put blacks back into a virtual state of slavery. With federal troops gone, terrorists saw this as license to unleash their total fury against blacks.

With slavery abolished and federal troops removed, Southern whites instituted the Jim Crow system as a

method to brutally force blacks back into their pre-reconstruction place.<sup>14</sup> Again, the police functioned to enforce these laws in the most heinous manner imaginable. The brutal conditions created by the Jim Crow laws and the poor economic opportunities of the North stimulated the initial large black migration in the first decade of the 20th century.<sup>15</sup> In fact, blacks left in such large numbers that in Montgomery, Alabama, jail fines and sentences were imposed on any person or corporation "enticing" blacks to leave Montgomery.<sup>16</sup> In Mississippi, train agents were arrested, trains stopped, and ticket agents intimidated, all in an effort to discourage black migration.<sup>17</sup>

arrival in the North, blacks were met with hostility and resentment by whites. Drake and Cayton have observed that the attitudes of the white population were in part shaped by Chicago newspapers. They point to the following headline:

Half A Million Darkies From Dixie Swarm To The North To Better Themselves  
Negroes Incited By German Spies<sup>18</sup>

What role did the police play in the conflict that developed between blacks and whites over space and jobs in Northern cities? Drake and Cayton observe that policemen and other "civil servants" often resorted to enforcing segregation as the most convenient way of keeping the peace.<sup>19</sup> White riotous violence against

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between blacks in large Northern cities from the

arrest rates of blacks and whites, early 1900s through the 1950s was generally that is beginning to draw the attention of legally tolerated by the police. Long makes legal scholars throughout the country. Address the following comment in reference to dressing this issue, Wayne LaFave asks: police action toward whites terrorizing

Should the police, under any circumstances, be entitled to exercise discretion as

The official reaction to "race riots" before the 1960s was a benign form of official violence directed at the whites who were to when the criminal law is to be enforced, resulting in their sometimes neither arresting nor reporting an apparent criminal offender?<sup>24</sup> terrorizing black ghettos. Color conscious official supremacist its to curtail spread violence protests and role; increased places this and official the often intensity.<sup>20</sup>

police contributes violence in a white fails to matter the Unchecked high of rates serious police of racial concern "discretion" prejudice to blacks amongst is given a

the centers of and the series throughout communities.<sup>21</sup> Edgar and 1960s During Their article victim hands Oakland, Z. of following police unveiled relationship Fiedenberg's of the of raids describing violence the the the urban agencies on police?<sup>2</sup>

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of their the great white black The Washington the are powers on of "arrest amply their "discretion" side was

the blacks. "discretion" in a very use majority attitudes.<sup>25</sup> a police study for position of to of worst Police the the police probable that officers. of police, of "field disadvantages of based to general Boston, White white have methods blacks use cause" point interrogation" on Black officers their a officers, negative justify their they Chicago, are out and calling discretionary of encounter, hold need good thinking that their Reiss impact blacks. and

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The officer hit him and said, "we're going fortunately, to

these decisions are often kill all you black ass nigger pimps and throw

complicated by the officers' own sense of

whores."23 you Detroit in the River river. with We're all you going pimps to fill and up the

"justice."26

In many black communities throughout the country blacks have become so re- signed to the negative outcomes of police THE POLICE FUNCTION

"discretion" that many comment on it

In both the order maintenance and the

with humor. A common comment is

Police legalistic "discretion," blacks, in the "discretion" position other approach especially minorities, in of this

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I was arrested the other day on

of being suspicious." The use of "discretion" plays a role in blacks disproportionately arrested between and four times more frequently than

a the wide power range to of make choices decisions in matters and of exercise grave

whites. about In fact, though blacks constitute 1 1% of the population, they make

importance one's own judgement (life, death, freely. freedom) It is the using all up area

offenses.27 nearly one-third of persons arrested for

of police "discretion," an area many be-

There are a growing number who see lieve to account for the large discrepancy

the police function, in fact the criminal

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justice system function, whether it be order maintenance or law enforcement as

one of maintaining existing social relation- ships. The American Friends Service Committee in its report on crime and punishment in America makes the follow- ing observation:

The justice system functions to maintain a racist relationship between the white majority and the black, brown, red, and yellow minorities in America. The command-obedience structure of racism has existed in the criminal justice system since the settlement of the country.<sup>29</sup>

Fanon, using a colonialism perspective, observes:

In the colonies it is the policemen and the soldier who are the official, instituted go- betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression.

Robert Staples, in doing a brief survey of the literature on this colonialist perspec- tive, observes that whether or not the police function as an instrument of colonialism, it is quite evident that they are feared and despised by large numbers of blacks.<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that this fear is not just a lower socio-economic phenomenon; it affects the black middle class as well.

Advisory Commission reports that "blacks have two major com- plaints against the police: (1) they are concerned with protecting white business in the ghetto more than the life and prop- erty of the residents and (2) they are often disrespectful and abusive."<sup>32</sup> In short, there is the view that the police have been more concerned with the pursu- ing of the order-maintenance function in black communities than they have with law enforcement. James E. Blackwell observes that throughout the United States, residents of black communities are expressing concern over their high vulner- ability to crimes such as murder, robbery, rape, assault, and burglary.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Blackwell makes the following point:

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A prevalent attitude among black commu- nity residents is that the police force is comprised of unconcerned whites who may, themselves, be partially responsible for the innumerable rip-offs occurring within the black community on a daily basis.<sup>34</sup>

This lack of protection by the police has led blacks in cities throughout the country to barricade themselves behind innumerable locks and bars. Many have become so desperate as to purchase large German Shepherds, Doberman Pinchers, and in a few cases, Great Danes. Many of those "forced" into the



added expense of dogs can hardly afford it. This, coupled with the additional discomfort of a large dog in crowded living arrangements, makes the price of safety quite expensive in more than just monetary terms. On the more positive note this lack of protection by police has led blacks to reinstitute the old neighborhood association concepts to protect one another against the prospects of criminal activity.

#### THE BLACK POLICEMEN

Throughout the country the fear of crime is widespread in the black community. This fear of crime coupled with an equal fear of lawless police has led many to call for increasing the number of black policemen in the country. Others go even further and suggest that since white officers show little or no concern for enforcing the law in black communities, that only blacks should police black communities. The use of only black officers in the riot areas in Cleveland proved highly successful during the sixties.

Throughout the country the proportion of blacks on police forces is well below their proportion in urban population. Out of a total police population of 362,396, blacks number less than twenty-five thousand.<sup>35</sup> Ebony magazine reported in May of 1971 that only 7 percent (30,000) of the approximately 420,000 policemen

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in the country were black.<sup>36</sup> Even where blacks are making gains in numbers in police departments it tends to be at the lower levels. Administratively the police departments of America are run by white males. With few exceptions (Atlanta is one) the chief administrative officer of the police force is white. It is a small wonder that many blacks conclude that the police are a white occupation force in black communities (See Table 2).

Even in cities where there has been a black mayor dedicated to changing the police force there has been little change. Carl Stokes, the former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, offers us a classic case for study regarding police resistance to change, the political nature of police, and radical oppression. Stokes states:

I took my election as a mandate to reform the Police Department. I saw as one of my most important tasks the reform of the police, the return of having our police as our protectors, men who enforce the law, do their job, be responsive to the needs of people. This hope became my greatest frustration, my greatest failure.<sup>3</sup>

Stokes goes on to tell a story of police defiance and racial practices toward the black community that even he, as Mayor of Cleveland, was unable to prevent. Mayor Stokes is said to have observed the following police-citizen confrontation during a Cleveland insurrection:

You sons of bitches, one of you move and we'll blow your goddam head off.<sup>38</sup>

One can only assume that if the police would react in such a manner in front of the Chief Executive of the city, their behavior could be far worse in the unsupervised black community.

While some would argue that the situation was unique in Cleveland, it should be pointed out that other black mayors have had difficulties with their white police forces. In Atlanta, the black mayor found a situation where his white

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police chief refused to resign on request, and Kenneth Gibson, the black Mayor of Newark, has had his difficulties with a predominantly white police force. And, while there has been less publicity regarding Mayor Tom Bradley and the Los Angeles police, we can only wonder if the Mayor approved of his police force's handling of the Symbionese Army Massacre in his city. There have also been reports that a Mr. Moore, a former Los Angeles detective, has helped organize police and firemen to campaign against the mayor because it was believed he favored a civilian review board.<sup>39</sup>

The police have been able to resist change rather successfully because of the enormous political gains they have been able to mass out of the increasing bureaucratization of cities. On this issue Lowri

states:

The modern city is now well run but ungoverned because it now comprises islands of functional power before which the

modern mayor stands impoverished. No mayor of a modern city has predictable means of determining whether the bosses of the New Machine- the bureau chiefs and the career commissioner- will be loyal to anything but their agency, its work, and related professional norms.<sup>40</sup>

In attempts to "protect the police from political pressures" many large cities find themselves in a position where the police are not under the operational control of the mayor. Under the guise of keeping police safe from political pressure, the civil service system and the unionization process have given the police amazing political power. This, along with a belief that the police can prevent crime, has elevated them to a favorable position in the eyes of the general public. We only have to look at Philadelphia to see how Mayor Rizzo used his police position to catapult him into the city's highest elective office. In Detroit, during the 1960s, the white police formed a coalition with the Greater Detroit Council of Home-

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Table 2 Proportion of Blacks on City Police Force, Relative to the Proportion of Blacks  
City's Population  
October, 1972

Ratio Between City Police Per Cent of Blacks Middle Top Four New Trainees Population Force in City's Officers Officers in  
Police Per Cent Per Cent Population and the Ranks Ranks Academy Black Black Per Cent of Blacks Per Cent Per Cent Per Cent City on  
the Police Force Black Black Black

Gary, Ind. 52.8 38.1 1.4 25.0 17.1 80.0 Miami, Fla. 22.7 12.6 1.8 5.6 0.0 21.5 Washington, D.C. 71.7 37.8 1.9 45.0 San Antonio,  
Texas 7.6 3.4 2.2 1.6 0.0 4.5 Atlanta, Ga. 51.3 21.2 2.4 22.1 11.9 33.3 Yonkers, N.Y. 6.3 2.5 2.5 a 0.0 0.0 Nashville-  
Davidson,  
Tenn. 19.6 8.0 2.5 9.8 0.0 17.3 Wichita, Kan. 9.7 3.4 2.8 4.0 0.0 0.0 St. Louis, Mo. 40.9 14.8 2.8 12.3 18.2 21.0 San Francisco,  
Calif. 13.4 4.4 3.0 1.1 0.0 1.8 Los Angeles,  
Calif. 17.9 5.4 3.3 1.3 Pittsburgh, Pa. 20.2 6.0 3.4 6.6 25.0 Newark, N.J. 54.2 15.8 3.4 7.5 2.0 39.5 Ft. Wayne, Ind. 10.6 3.1 3.4  
4.0 0.0 6.7 Richmond, Va. 42.0 12.1 3.5 18.3 0.0 20.0 Shreveport, La. 34.1 8.2 4.2 3.5 0.0 13.4 Columbus, Ohio 18.5 3.5 5.3 2.3  
3.8 2.3 Boston, Mass. 16.3 2.4 6.8 1.2 4.5 8.3 Houston, Texas 25.7 3.6 7.1 0.0 0.0 11.4 Ft. Worth,  
Texas 19.9 2.8 7.1 0.0 0.0 4.9 Syracuse, N.Y. 10.8 1.3 8.3 0.0 0.0 b Birmingham, Ala. 42.0 2.4 17.5 0.8 0.0 0.0

a. Yonkers has no middle ranks. b. Syracuse has no current trainee class. Source: Bureau of Social Science Research Inc., Washington, D.C., 1972.

considered owners, an all-white group heavily involved in political activity.<sup>41</sup> If there was

"civil servant" one must be a law-abiding every citizen who at least outwardly accepts the social customs of the society. have to look to recent elections in Los

While some deviation is accepted, a Angeles and Minneapolis where police drift in too far to the right or left virtually these cities actively campaigned for eliminates ex-most for public employment. Mayor Yorty, and Charles Stenwig, So, to a large extent, every black hired in Minneapolis detective.

"the system" pays a double dividend to If the police and the American criminal white society. He immediately helps the justice system function to maintain system the function more smoothly and he existing societal arrangements we serves can as a role model for untold numbers expect those uncomfortable with, coming or behind him. While well inten- abused by, that arrangement to express tioned whites who hire blacks and blacks some dissatisfaction. Blacks strike out at who are hired will have difficulty with the police, the most visible arm of white these assumptions, it is evident that such authority and, in turn, the white police hiring practices do result in such an often act negatively toward blacks. Un- arrangement. fortunately, the problem is much larger

The failure of the social services in than white policemen and the black general, and police work in particular, are community. The white police exist and rooted not in their particular shortcom- practice their "art" at the pleasure of ings a (not having enough blacks) or specific very complex, diffuse, and interrelated limitation, but in the fact that they oper- social, political, and economic power ate in conjunction with and in support of structure who benefit from the existing the major economic and social forces of arrangements.<sup>42</sup>

society.<sup>45</sup> Jeffrey Galper makes the fol- Some will argue, as does the Kerner lowing statement in reference to this Commission Report,<sup>43</sup> that the addition arrangement: of black policemen will create better

The services [police] are products of, and working public the police black policy have relationships community. many adapted agencies between such As including a strategies. matter police and

the of social above preserve responsive economic services human and growth and well-being strengthen to, the a social helping and and the political order profession that ideologies, uses

that stability  
to  
values

such Blauner, strategies Staples, as neo-colonialism and Fanon<sup>44</sup> refer in that to quo.<sup>46</sup> behavior, and

structures of the status

they effectively involve the oppressed in the very system that oppresses them. An-

paradox presents a serious other related view is that employing problem to politically conscious blacks as policemen and in other "civil people of all colors who hire concerned service" capacities successfully coopts about the the well being of blacks in this most able away from efforts directed society. It suggests that they must move toward the collective benefit of black

beyond existing assumptions that more people. Actually there is a residual benefit blacks in the criminal justice system will to white society in this type of arrangement-remedy existing problems. Inclusion or ment. Black "civil servants" provide exclusion other may be only part of a tempo- blacks a role model that is beneficial to rary solution. The real issue, or issues, maintaining existing social arrangements. As things presently exist, in order to be

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may be in developing something entirely new, something that more clearly addresses "the major institutions which cause the problem."<sup>47</sup> We must clearly recognize that having more black policemen on the nation's police forces will not better conditions if the overall economic arrangements remain the same. Until major institutions become people-oriented instead of profit-oriented, inclusion of blacks in police work can at best only be considered as tokenism.

To get some understanding of this, one need only recall that many of the policemen and soldiers called upon to "maintain law and order" in South Africa are black. While this may be considered by many to be an extreme example, it does serve to point out what governmental pressure and economic motivation can do to groups of people included into structures they essentially have no control over.

Alex Poinsett, in an article that appeared in the May 1971 issue of Ebony Magazine entitled "The Dilemma of the Black Policeman," indicates just how much of a problem it is to be a black policeman working in an organization where many abuse the rights of blacks. He makes the following observations:

In a Chicago garage, a black policeman removes his gunbelt and warns a white police officer: "I'm going to beat your brains out." The angry police officer is bent on punishing his colleague for hauling a black youth from a paddy wagon and clubbing him to the ground.<sup>48</sup>

After recounting a few other similar stories, Poinsett discusses how the black officer, in attempts to prove his loyalty, often finds himself "overreacting" against black people. He points out that this behavior goes all the way to gaining "acceptance" by acting as spies, infiltrators, or informers.<sup>49</sup>

On a more positive note, however, Poinsett notes that the black officer, often forced into police work for economic reasons, is beginning to assert his

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blackness by forming black police organizations. Such organizations as The Afro-American Patrolman's League of Chicago, The Oscar Joel Bryant Association of Los Angeles, and the Officers for Justice in San Francisco are examples of these organizations. Presently, black police organizations throughout the country have formed a coalition with the ostensible purpose of protecting black communities from injustice.

This study of the police raises some fundamental issues in regard to their social, political, and economic purpose in society. Concepts such as law, order, authority, and justice on the one hand are abstract, but on the other- at the operational level- often become quite specific. The agent who makes these abstractions specific, the policeman, has traditionally been entrusted with an enormous amount of "discretion." Unfortunately, because of a history of prejudice toward blacks, the policeman has traditionally made poor use of his discretionary powers when dealing with blacks and the black community. To the extent that blacks oppose the racist principles and values of this society, they in turn will also oppose the police.

More and more blacks are beginning to understand what Lester means when he

states:

The American black man has never known law and order except as an instrument of oppression. The law has been written by white men, for the protection of white men and their property to be enforced by white men against blacks in particular and poor folks in general.<sup>50</sup>

The urban disturbance of the 1960s coupled with the spiraling crime rate in most major metropolitan areas

graphically illustrates the failure of the police as an effective agent of social control.<sup>51</sup> In fact, some claim that the police, in addition to being incapable of containing crime and violence, actually contributes to it and accelerate the decline of the legitimacy of the American government.<sup>52</sup> This ineffec-

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the tiveness of the police lead many to think

dominant society. What we must that the almost total "discretion" police begin to ask ourselves is, are police efforts have in dealing with blacks is too much of and their expenses really the most effi- a price to pay for the dividends returned. cient way of maintaining stability in soci- Many sirgue that community control of ety? the police would go a long way in reduc- ing black alienation toward the police and the criminal justice system. Law enforce-

SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES

ment officials generally oppose commu-

While the above pages have focused on nity control of the police on the basis that the relationship between the police and it is inefficient. They maintain that police the black community, resolution of black autonomy maximizes efficiency and re- grievances against the police have far duces the possibility of political influence. ranging policy implications for the society Many blacks contend that this is only as a whole. Since the police have a virtual disguising the issue of police racism. They monopoly on the use of legal force in our contend that the central issue in black society, who should control them, and communities is legitimacy, not efficiency. how should they be controlled? In short, In short, blacks would tend to trade who off watches and commands the police? a little efficiency for more legitimacy Through if society's somewhat mistaken that be the case. It may well be that belief that -police could stop or reduce criminality, delinquency, and other crime, forms we have allowed them to amass of social disorganization are not related power to over our lives second in scope only the number of policemen in a community to the potential of the military forces. or in the way in which they carry Even out though Sir Robert Peel, England's their function. If we look at police Home forces Secretary, back in 1822 recognized as complex social organizations and that know the police could not eliminate crime, that organizations, in general, seek we have to nonetheless been deluded into perpetuate themselves by continually believing that more policemen, with more justifying their existence, then we gadgets get a and increased powers, could some- sense of another aspect of the police how rela- reduce crime. tionship to the black community.

It is somewhat frightening to note, but the police officer has an enormous publicly focusing their attention amount on

of discretionary authority over the "criminality" of blacks, the the lives of the citizenry. Niederhoffer police give white society a convenient

makes the point clearly when he states: scapegoat, and at the same time lay the groundwork budgets. for bigger and These police budgets bigger are police then When violation he must an arrest. of officer law, But his clearly the discretion average observes is crime limited;

a serious

is not used to control those (mainly blacks) committed who in full view of the policeman. are left outside the main socio-economic He must make a preliminary investigation

structure of society. Since employment, which rinth, places following him in conflicting the middle reports of a laby- of or at least the hope of it, is an important witnesses into blind alleys ... It is the element of late regulating the population, those who the behavior how else are not employed? do we of A regu- most job, plied individual decide . if . ,53 policeman's responsibility and how the law should to be ap- even welfare benefits, ensures that the In concrete terms this "discretion" often majority of the population will at least translates to freedom or jail and in some externally adapt the values, mores, laws cases of life or death.

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Notes From a social viewpoint it becomes an issue of how do we reduce the discretion- ary reducing authority his ability of the to policeman enforce without the law.

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paying com-

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