

Police Problems in Detroit - March 22, 1968

The Citizens Committee for Equal Opportunity

I. The Police Commissioner:

The status of the position of Police Commissioner must be clarified as soon as possible, either by immediate appointment of a successor to Commissioner Girardin, or the extension of his term of service.

II. Police Procedure:

A. The Mayor and command officers of the police department should make it absolutely clear to the members of the department, and to the public, that, while they will vigorously support the officers in the proper execution of their duties, the abuse and mistreatment of citizens will not be tolerated; further, that wherever necessary the Mayor use all of his public authority and private influence to end these abuses that so senselessly incite members of our community. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES.

B. Immediate steps must be taken to provide every member of the department with an outline of procedures for the use of fatal weapons during any future civil disorders. This procedure must stipulate, without equivocation, that weapons are to be used only in self-defense or the defense of life unless an order to the contrary has been given by an officer of Inspector level or above who is directly responsible and accountable to the highest levels of command and administration.

III. Police Recruitment:

In the vital area of police recruitment, we see that the problem is not now solely that of encouraging a greater number of Negro applicants. Over 46% of all walk-in applications during 1967 were Negro. The primary problem rather lies in the area of the whole screening process

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*term not to be extended  
Plans to assign new  
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no  
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to study  
whole process  
starts soon*

through which applicants must pass: of all officers hired during 1967, approximately 22% were Negro. We, therefore, seek a thorough re-evaluation and revision of this screening process, to include:

- A. A complete study of the written examination, by an independent organization, to determine its relevancy to its use, with careful attention given to the question of possible cultural bias.
- B. Replacing the random and subjective nature of the questions that are asked during the oral examination by a more objective procedure, such as that used by Civil Service.
- C. Establishing a core group of qualified officers from which members of the oral examination board will always be drawn in order to give continuity to these examinations.
- D. Immediate integration of the oral examination board for all applicants.
- E. A thorough analysis, by competent medical authorities, of the relevancy of the criteria on the physical examination.

IV. The Assignment of Officers:

- A. The majority of additional police officers should be Negro, primarily to achieve a greater complement of Negro officers in the ghetto precincts.
- B. Where at all possible the major ghetto precincts should be under the command of Negro officers.
- C. Immediate steps should be taken to place Negroes in the very highest levels of police command.
- D. Officers removed from street duty due to their incompetence should not be re-assigned to functions, such as personnel and recruiting, requiring critical human relations capabilities.

*W. Miller*

*W. Johnson*

*Not Discussed*

*Johnson*

*W. Miller*

*Not Discussed*

V. Police-Community Relations, Specifically:

*reported  
enters  
referred*

- A. We urge the Mayor to continue with all efforts directed at the establishment of at least 12 neighborhood store-fronts, to be manned by civilian, community-service officers in the employ of the police department.
- B. Each precinct should have its own police advisory group of local citizens to consider problems, programs and policies for that precinct.
- C. The Citizens Complaint Bureau should have a sufficient complement of personnel, and enough independence to enable it to conduct vigorous investigations of its complaints and to engage in its own observations of how police are working and responding to calls in the ghetto. Findings of incompetence or malpractice must not be whitewashed but must be disciplined with severity commensurate with the offense.