

Chapter 3

Organized Activity

The President directed the Commission to investigate "to what extent, if any, there has been planning or organization in any of the riots."

The President further directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation to provide investigative information and assistance to the Commission and authorized the Commission to request from any other executive department or agency any information and assistance which the Commission deemed necessary to carry out its functions.

The Commission obtained documents, numbering in the thousands, from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, the Post Office Department, the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress, and the Central Intelligence Agency. The Commission established a special investigating staff supplementing the Commission's field teams and related staff that made the general examination of the riots in 23 cities. The special investigating staff examined the data supplied by the field teams, by the several Federal agencies, and by congressional investigating units, and maintained continuous liaison with these organizations throughout its investigation.

In addition to examining and evaluating intelligence and information from Federal sources, the special investigating staff gathered information from local and state law enforcement agencies and officials. It also conducted its own field investigations in 15 cities with special emphasis on five that had experienced major disorders in 1967—Cincinnati, Newark, Detroit, Milwaukee, and New Haven. Special staff investigators employed by the Commission interviewed over 400 persons, including police officials, black militants, and ghetto residents.

The Commission studied the role of foreign and domestic organizations, and individuals dedicated to the incitement or encouragement of violence. It considered the organizational affiliations of those who called for violence, their contacts, sources of financial support, travel schedules and, so far as possible, their effect on audiences.

The Commission considered the incidents that had triggered the disorders and the patterns of damage

during disorders, particularly in Newark and Detroit. The Commission analyzed the extent of sniper activity and the use of fire bombs.

The Commission collected and investigated hundreds of rumors relating to possible organized activity. These included reports of arms caches, sniper gangs, guerrilla training camps, selection of targets for destruction, movement of armed individuals from one riot area to another, and preriort planning.

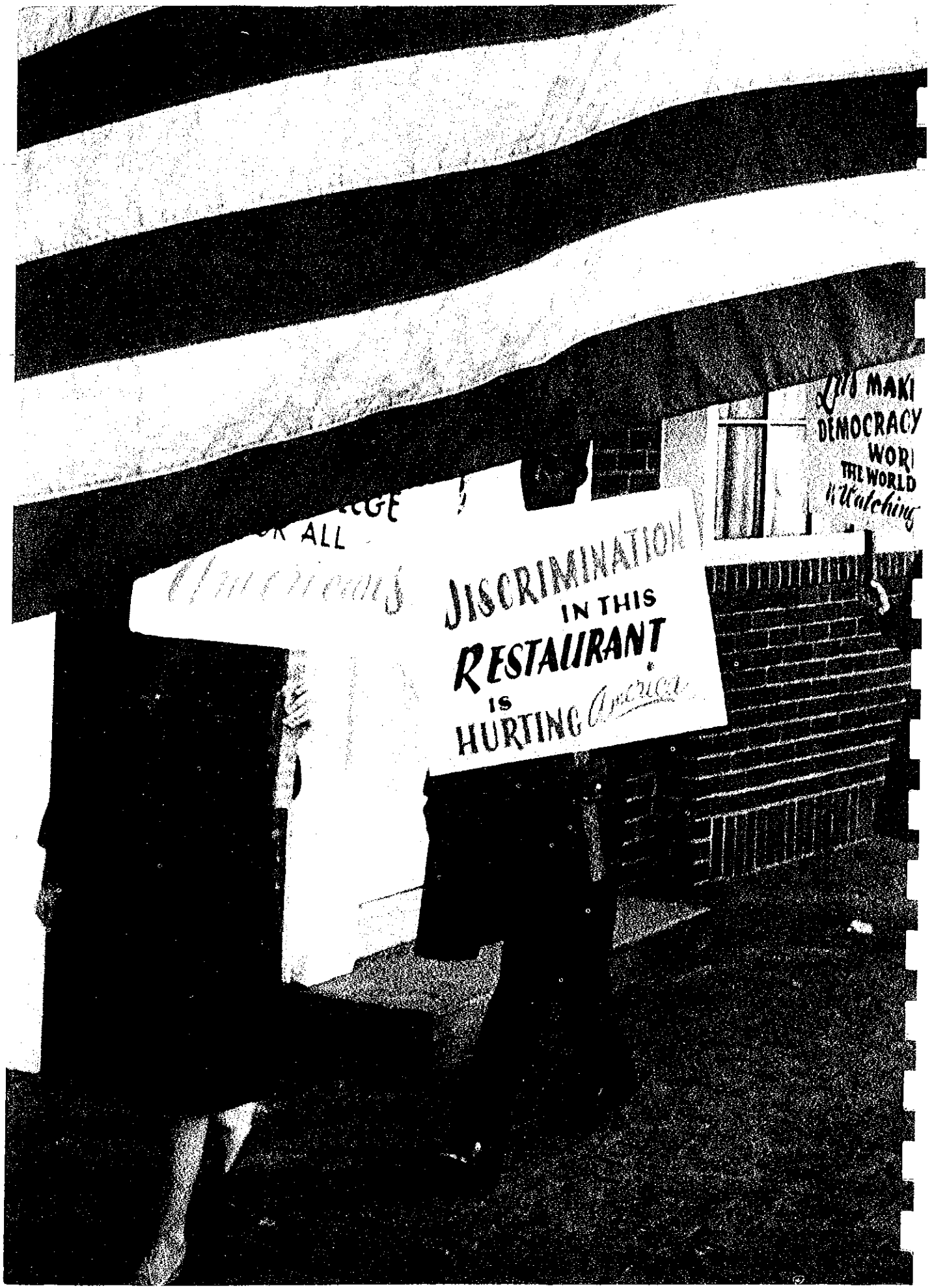
On the basis of all the information collected, the Commission concludes that the urban disorders of the summer of 1967 were not caused by, nor were they the consequence of, any organized plan or "conspiracy." Specifically, the Commission has found no evidence that all or any of the disorders or the incidents that led to them were planned or directed by any organization or group—international, national, or local.

Militant organizations, local and national, and individual agitators, who repeatedly forecast and called for violence, were active in the spring and summer of 1967. We believe that they deliberately sought to encourage violence, and that they did have an effect in creating an atmosphere that contributed to the outbreak of disorder.

We recognize that the continuation of disorders and the polarization of the races would provide fertile ground for organized exploitation in the future.

Since the disorders, intensive investigations have been conducted not only by this Commission but also by local police departments, grand juries, city and state committees, Federal departments and agencies, and congressional committees. None thus far has identified any organized groups as having initiated riots during the summer of 1967. The Commission appointed by Gov. Richard J. Hughes to examine the disorders in New Jersey was unable to find evidence supporting a conclusion that there was a conspiracy or plan to organize the Newark or Plainfield riots.

Investigations are continuing at all levels of government, including committees of Congress. These investigations relate not only to the disorders of 1967 but also to the actions of groups and individuals, particularly in schools and colleges, during this last fall and winter. The Commission has cooperated in these investigations. They should continue.



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