

Without question "the urban problem" confronting the United States today is the problem indicated by "the Negro Revolt." It has been indicated above that within half a century the Negro American has become more urbanized than the white American and heavily concentrated in metropolitan areas, and especially in the central cities of metropolitan areas. Hence the Negro is being called upon to make an even more rapid transition from rural to urban living than has been required of the white population; and he has much less adequately than the white been prepared for the changes he must undergo. For example, as recently as 1960, 22 per cent of all adult Negroes, those 25 and over, were "functionally illiterate"; that is, had not completed fifth grade; and 78 per cent had not completed high school.

One consequence of the pathetic share of the American way of life which the Negro has had available to him is evident in the high incidence of poverty in the Negro community. In 1963, 42 per cent of all nonwhite families in the United States were poor, by official designation, as contrasted with 12 per cent of white families. The 2.0 million poor nonwhite families made up 28 per cent of all poor families in the nation, more than two and a half times the proportion (11 per cent) which nonwhite families constituted of the total.

Other categories of the population are confronted with a similar situation. Appalachian whites ("hillbillies"), American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and recent immigrants, in general, have also experienced and created many acute problems, for much the same reasons presented above—rapid population increase or concentration, together with inadequate preparation for urban living. Most of these newcomers, like the Negro, are characterized by insufficient education and poverty. They along with other elements of "the poor," who in total number some 7.2 million families with 34.6 million persons including unrelated individuals, constitute a special category requiring special consideration.

Although other minority groups are also badly disadvantaged, it is the Negro community which, in its deep frustration and alienation generated by the combination of poverty and three and one-half centuries subjection to racist doctrine and bigotry, is giving increasing manifestations of approaching open rebellion. In consequence, the United States today is at a crossroads. It is necessary to choose between (a) greatly increased investment in human resources that would enable Negro Americans, and the members of other disadvantaged groups, to assume the obligations and responsibilities as well as the rights of American citizenship, and (b) greatly increased investment in security measures, police, national guard, the army, and concentration camps that would rebuild America into a repressive caste society in the image of the Union of South Africa.

If the American people are to remain true to the American heritage of democracy and equality of opportunity it is necessary to choose the first of these alternatives. To do this a prerequisite is the establishment of national goals.

NATIONAL GOALS

It is within the framework of the above perspectives that national goals in contemporary USA must be set forth. By reason of the changed character of our society the time has come for the formulation of a comprehensive policy in respect of the development of our physical and human resources and a coordinated and integrated series of programs to achieve these goals. In stating this position it must be recognized that, in effect, it is being assumed that the United States is no longer an agrarian society characterized by a laissez-faire economic outlook and the conception that "that government is best which governs least." On the contrary, it is being assumed that the United States as an urbanized and metropolitanized society has come to understand that the personal, social, economic and political freedoms enjoyed by its populace can and must be enhanced by positive government interventionism as necessary for the welfare of the American people. In brief, it is assumed here that the United States is a welfare state and that such a designation is neither pejorative nor dangerous. It is rather a badge of maturity—explicit recognition of the changed character of American society and the new requirements by reason of the change.

By reason of the above considerations the time has come to declare that:

It is the general social goal of the United States to provide each inhabitant of this nation with the opportunity, freedom and security to enable him to achieve optimal development of the human potential; and to contribute, as far as feasible, to attainment of this goal for all humanity.