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“OCCUPIED TERRITORY”: POLICE REPRESSION AND BLACK RESISTANCE IN POSTWAR MILWAUKEE, 1950–1968

Simon Ezra Balto

On the night of 30 October 1956, two officers with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) rolled up on the intersection of Fourth and Galena Streets on Milwaukee’s predominantly black lower North Side. There at the corner, the officers found a growing crowd of fifty or sixty African American teenagers gathered near the front doors of the venerable Fourth Street School—an imposing, Romanesque building that served jointly as a school and a social center for many of the teenagers in the neighborhood. That night, the school had played host to a “recreation program” for teenagers, with the function ending around 9:00 p.m., roughly the same time the two police officers arrived at the intersection.¹

As attendees of the night’s program left the school, some stood on the corner chatting with friends, or waiting for others to come outside. The officers approached the crowd of teens, reportedly searching for a group of young men that had been harassing an 18-year-old named Richard McCarter, who had previously sought their help. The men the officers sought were apparently not at the scene but the police nonetheless waded in to try to disperse the crowd, which continued to grow as more people came out of the school and into the street. According to the officers, “no one would leave,” and they called for backup. Soon, forty police reinforcements were pouring into the intersection, seeking to stabilize what those initially on the scene described as an “uncontrollable” situation.²

Yet as more and more squad cars howled to the intersection, the scene became more tense, not less. Police officials would later claim that officers had uniformly acted appropriately and that their weapons had remained holstered throughout the ensuing chaos, although conflicting stories surrounding police officers’ use of their weapons were commonplace in moments of conflict between the police and the black community during the postwar era. To be sure, it is difficult to know what ignited the commotion that followed, and given the pervasive frustration and anger that many African Americans held toward the Milwaukee police, the spark could have been a small one indeed. This much, however, is clear: over the course of

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the next hour, two crowds of black teenagers—one estimated at four hundred, the other at one hundred—faced off with police officers with some teens allegedly throwing rocks and bottles at the police, rocking squad cars, and moving in to physically assist others when police officers tried to arrest one of them. By evening's end, two officers had been injured and six people had been arrested. Milwaukee's daily newspapers made no mention of injuries suffered by teenagers in the crowd, although given the local press's general antipathy toward black grievances, it would be a mistake to read theirs as the final word on whether or not any injuries were sustained.³

By that night in late October 1956, a long pattern of these types of group confrontations between police officers and African American citizens had already emerged in Milwaukee. A mayoral commission on human rights that year estimated the frequency of such incidents to be roughly three per year on average.⁴ Based upon contemporary research by social workers at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, the urgency with which city administrators commissioned the study on the issue, and news reports at the time, that rate would turn sharply upward by the end of the decade.⁵ Police officials and officers often wondered aloud at what caused them; influential members of the community condemned them; and the local media vilified and caricatured them. But given the size and ubiquity of the confrontations, it is clear that thousands of people took part in them, deeply undermining Police Chief John Polcyn's claims that October night, and in similar words at other times, that it was simply “a hard core of young hoodlums” that was to blame.⁶



**Confrontation between Milwaukee police officers and
NAACP protesters in the mid-1960s.**

*Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society,
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (image WHI-59547).*

In recent years historians have begun to unpack the complex dynamics of police/black community relations in the postwar United States. Collectively, their work has greatly expanded our understanding of how important urban police forces were in shaping the experiences of many African Americans during this period, especially poor and working-class African Americans. Everywhere historians have focused—Philadelphia, New Orleans, Detroit, and New York City—they have excavated deeply troubling histories of African American communities struggling for fair and equal treatment from and protection by the police.⁷ African Americans' tax dollars funded city services like the police department, and they consistently and roundly voiced their desires for fair treatment as citizens and taxpayers. What many of them often got instead for their tax money were police forces that operated less as agents of all the people and, in practice, more as racially partisan forces of control. These forces variously restricted black movement within the city in response to white racial fears, ignored calls for protection from crime and white violence, harassed law-abiding African Americans, and wielded an often brutally heavy hand against black citizens. As one historian summarizes it—all too often and in far too many contexts, especially as the rural-to-urban migration of African Americans in the decades after World War II reshaped the racial demography and geography of cities—urban police units “emerged as the protectors of white privilege and the opponents of black progress.”⁸

In a variety of ways and facing an array of threats to their personal security and physical well being, African Americans challenged this inequitable treatment by the police from very early in the postwar years. For example, focusing on how black Philadelphians mobilized around issues of police abuse and corruption, historian Karl Johnson has demonstrated the vibrancy of black community activism concerning the police during the 1940s and 1950s.⁹ Driven to action, especially by incidents of police brutality, African American leaders in Philadelphia challenged police violence and racism and organized groups such as the Subcommittee on Police-Community Relations to “defuse the rising tensions between black residents and the police.”¹⁰ In similar ways though slightly later, police misconduct impelled black Milwaukee's leadership to organize committees and organizations expressly to combat the police department's treatment of African American citizens. Additionally, issues of police repression and abuse forced their way onto the platforms of activists and organizations otherwise committed to battling racial injustice more broadly.

At the same time, recurring large-scale police/community confrontations, such as the one that October night in 1956 and others later explored in this essay, represent a rich layer of community resistance to the police that will be largely new to most historians. In Milwaukee, these forceful and collective rejections of police authority were the most frequent method by which the community challenged the police before the 1960s, and as such they deserve consideration as we

labor to expand our understanding of postwar U.S. urban history. Within the historiographies on the black freedom struggle and postwar urban America, the urban insurgencies (often called “riots”) that erupted in the 1960s appear as fundamental departures from the character of social conflict and police/community interactions in preceding decades. As one historian writes, what made the riots of the 1960s different from their earlier variants was that, by that decade, “black rioters confronted not the vicious white crowds of the Red Summer of 1919 . . . but rather the government in the form of armed law enforcement.”¹¹ This narrative holds if we use a definition of “riots” that requires certain thresholds of death and destruction. Yet Milwaukee police officials, on more than one occasion throughout the 1950s, used the idiom of riots to describe what was happening when they faced off with large crowds of citizens in the streets, and a number of black Milwaukeeans during the same period expressed their willingness to confront violently a police force that they saw as profoundly antagonistic to their interests and safety. Even if we consider these street confrontations not to have been rebellions or riots in the 1960s sense, their consistent presence on Milwaukee’s social landscape during the 1950s merits rethinking of the genesis of the police/community confrontations that *did* characterize those 1960s insurgencies.

POLICE REPRESSION IN POSTWAR MILWAUKEE

Throughout the 20th century and growing increasingly worse in the post–World War II years, repression and negligence were the constitutive features of police/black community dynamics. That pattern held in Milwaukee, where those issues were arguably made even more acute by the extraordinarily rapid and concentrated migration of black southerners to the city. Demographic changes in Milwaukee came late and fast, with only a small influx of African Americans arriving in the city during what historians consider the first Great Migration, but tens of thousands doing so during the migration’s second wave, stretching from the World War II era to roughly the close of the 1960s. An African American population that had numbered only around 10,000 at the end of the Second World War grew by more than 600 percent, to more than 62,000 by 1960.¹² Though the community was small on the eve of that postwar migration, black Milwaukee possessed vibrant cultural and social worlds and one of the sturdiest economic foundations in urban African America. But compared to members of the city’s white majority rather than to African Americans in other cities, black Milwaukeeans remained disproportionately poor, unemployed, and underemployed, and they lacked access to an array of rights and opportunities for social and economic mobility.¹³

Driven by their disproportionate poverty, exploitation by real estate agents, restrictive covenants, and white hostility and terror, African American migrants

were funneled into a handful of districts in the city, mostly on the lower North Side in the city's Sixth Ward.¹⁴ These new migrants, most of whom had rural roots in the South or lower Midwest, entered neighborhoods already facing emergent crises of overcrowding, congestion, and blight. Those areas held some of Milwaukee's oldest housing stock; urban renewal projects removed more housing than they produced; and infrastructural and institutional investment was rarely and only grudgingly routed toward them.¹⁵ By the early 1950s, some city officials estimated that the most congested residential districts in black Milwaukee—known as the city's "inner core"—were overpopulated by a factor of ten.¹⁶ In 1952, attempting to explain higher incidences of crime in that inner core area, Police Chief John Polcyn suggested that some housing units there meant for a family of four were in fact housing upwards of twenty people.¹⁷

Historians Joe William Trotter, Patrick Jones, and Jack Dougherty have documented these conditions and other social and structural inequalities that plagued Milwaukee's 20th-century landscape—inequities in access to housing, employment opportunities, and civil rights protections. These researchers, like those of urban communities elsewhere, have also done invaluable work in strengthening our understanding of the ways that black Milwaukeeans negotiated and challenged the city's terrain of inequality.¹⁸ At the same time, threading throughout the histories they tell are important but often hidden narratives of repression and resistance between the police and the African American community.

Throughout the postwar period, the police in black Milwaukee were an almost unavoidable presence for many of its residents. At the close of the 1950s, roughly four-and-a-half times as many police officers worked the beat (20 per square mile) in the Fifth Police District, which covered the "inner core" and most of the lower North Side, than in the Seventh District directly to the west (4.7 per square mile). Given that the Fifth District also cut eastward to include more affluent white neighborhoods near Lake Michigan, the police presence in the more congested core area was almost assuredly skewed even higher than these figures suggest.¹⁹ As the presence and power of the police department in the inner core grew, resentment toward the police did as well. In a 1952 training manual, the MPD styled itself as a "symbol of society's authority."²⁰ But the impression that many black Milwaukeeans gleaned from their own experiences was that the department's vision of that "society" was narrow and racially exclusive, and that those on its periphery were objects more or less of disdain—people who were, first and foremost, to be controlled rather than served. As one unidentified black resident described the situation in Milwaukee at a period of "unprecedented level[s]" of "anti-police feelings" in 1957, African Americans there, far from feeling served and protected by the police, were instead living "in fear of terror."²¹



Milwaukee police officials during a strategy session, 1956.
 Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society,
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (image WHI-10902).

The “terror” that resident described was multi-dimensional, flowing both from the racist attitudes and actions of individual police officers, as well as from choices made by city and police department officials that led to fundamentally different policing strategies in black Milwaukee than elsewhere in the city. On the one hand, evidence of racial prejudice among some police officers was ubiquitous, made manifest in the ways that they treated and talked to and about black citizens. The pervasive nature of this problem resulted in African Americans’ resentment and fears concerning violence, disrespect, and harassment—all of which were central to how they interpreted their relationships with local police officers. On the other hand, the flooding of black neighborhoods with officers engaged in tactics of “close surveillance,” as well as the practical, if not formal development of a policy in black neighborhoods that emphasized overzealous behavioral policing and control of public spaces, meant that overtly racist officers were far from the lone determinant in the evolution of racially prejudicial law enforcement practices.²²

To be sure, these issues did not operate independently of one another, and the effects of both were exacerbated by the prevailing structural conditions in Milwaukee’s black neighborhoods. One of the collateral effects of the inner core’s dramatic overcrowding, deteriorating housing stock, and limited job opportunities was the increased presence of black residents in the city’s public spaces. Black and white Milwaukeeans alike complained regularly about people loitering on street corners and sidewalks, with African Americans particularly lamenting the shortfall of jobs and the lack of recreational facilities in black neighborhoods that would give local residents someplace to go.²³ The gathering of people was partic-

ularly noteworthy on the sidewalks and corners of some of the Sixth Ward's busier thoroughfares such as on Walnut Street, where, as historian Jack Dougherty notes, "many underemployed black men spent their days and nights for lack of anywhere else to go."²⁴ A related effect was that the extreme concentration of people in those neighborhoods skewed indices of crime upward. Even Police Chief John Polcyn admitted that the overriding factor in the inner core's higher rates of crime was that it was home to a disproportionate percentage of the city's population that was underprivileged in almost every way.²⁵

Police Chief Polcyn's admissions aside, the police department had little control over the ways that the city or other public and private agencies invested in infrastructural and economic improvements in black neighborhoods. Lacking the ability to ameliorate the city's larger systemic inequalities, but facing pressure to curb criminal activity both real and perceived, the department flooded the inner core with large numbers of police personnel, a concentration not found elsewhere in the city. The vast majority of African Americans living in those neighborhoods were perfectly law-abiding. But the heavy police presence on the streets, and the tenacity with which those officers patrolled these districts, frequently made black residents feel as though they were living under a shroud of intense and unjust police scrutiny. Officers working the beat in black Milwaukee racked up significant numbers of arrests for vagrancy, public consumption of alcohol, and loitering—charges directly related to people's presence in and uses of public space.²⁶

Evidence of African Americans' resentment towards the MPD's massive footprint in the community was everywhere in contemporary studies of life in the inner core. Examples abound especially in investigations into police/community relations, such as the one commissioned by the city in late 1959 in response to repeated eruptions of violence between African Americans and the police. Conducted by Bernard Toliver and Joseph Himden, two graduate students in the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's School of Social Work and submitted in 1961, the study was culled from dozens of interviews with community members, police officers, and officials in 1959 and 1960. Among the central complaints of community members was the "close surveillance" by the police, the fact that officers often conducted "intensive questioning" of people on the street, and that on multiple occasions they arrested people with apparently little cause.²⁷ Toliver and Himden noted, "[T]he police are believed to be more prone here than elsewhere to question and arrest for minor infractions, such as jay-walking or loitering."²⁸ An African American tavern owner in the area complained of one police officer who "[made] it a practi[c]e to stop and question everyone with whom he [came] into contact who [was] walking on the street after the taverns close[d]." The officer reportedly harassed residents with such frequency that he "once stopped the same man coming home from work three times in one week."²⁹

Similar to findings in Toliver and Himden's report, other black Milwaukeeans complained of being stopped without cause by police officers who forced them to present identification.³⁰ Likewise, attendees at a community meeting in late 1957 cited "unfair and unjustified" police stops as a critical problem in the community.³¹ The general sense in black Milwaukee was, in Toliver and Himden's estimation in 1961, "that law enforcement . . . [was] more strictly carried out in the inner-core area than in other parts of the city. [Black informants] view[ed] this as a 'Double Standard' of enforcement and attribut[ed] it to the racial factor."³² Policing was different in black neighborhoods than it was elsewhere, and residents and researchers pointed to race as the central reason why.

The paucity of surviving records and internal correspondence from the Milwaukee police department during this period makes it unclear the extent to which that "double standard" was a combined consequence of the MPD's decision to flood black Milwaukee with officers and the prejudice of individual officers, or whether it was considered standard policy within the department. Throughout the immediate postwar decades, in order to deflect charges of bias, top city and police department officials publicly maintained that formal policing strategies were uniform, regardless of where in the city an officer was working. Officials continued to lobby for more resources and manpower so that they could increase the department's presence in high-crime, majority-black neighborhoods, but were careful to not talk in specific ways about more aggressive treatment of residents in those areas.³³

Yet if this was the case, the "double standard" in policing tells a story more or less of rampant insubordination across the ranks, with officers consistently violating formal department policy and formulating their own unique strategies of surveillance and patrol when working in black neighborhoods. Given the unlikelihood that low-ranking patrolmen would so consistently go against department policy and not face sanction for it, it appears far more likely that MPD officials were not only aware of that prevailing culture of intense surveillance of black Milwaukeeans, but that they gave it their approval.

This is especially the case in light of the aggressive criminal justice strategies implemented in black neighborhoods in urban police departments elsewhere. A useful comparative example is that of Chicago, ninety miles south of Milwaukee, where the city hired criminologist Orlando Wilson to take the reigns of the city's police department (CPD) in early 1960. Even before Wilson's tenure, African Americans in Chicago were complaining about police harassment, random searches, and the tendency of CPD task forces to, in the words of the *Chicago Defender*, "prey on racial districts."³⁴ By 1958 the *Chicago Crusader* was urging black Chicagoans to "sue the hell" out of the city in order to stop "police terrorism."³⁵

The hiring of Orlando Wilson, however, served only to escalate the intensity of the sorts of practices to which the *Crusader* and *Defender* so vociferously

objected. From the outset, a focal point of Wilson's approach to law enforcement was to implement an explicit policy of "aggressive, preventive patrol" in high-crime, majority-black areas. On the ground, this meant that officers were required to make "on view arrests," conduct intense field interrogations, and stop "suspicious persons" walking the streets.³⁶ Wilson and his department heads began measuring the efficiency of patrolmen in these districts directly by the number of stops and arrests they made.³⁷ Officers patrolling black neighborhoods recorded huge numbers of arrests for drunkenness and "quality-of-life-issues," which the department framed as necessary for getting ahead of more serious crime.³⁸ Summarizing the theory behind his approach and foreshadowing his repeated and eventually successful lobbying in the Illinois legislature for a "stop-and-frisk" law, Wilson explained to department heads, "[A]s the number of street stops increases, the number of good arrests will also increase."³⁹

If the extent to which the police department in Milwaukee similarly formalized these sorts of tactics remains slightly unclear, there is no doubt as to the devastating impact of the on-going street-level policing practices. From early in the postwar era, arrest records of black Milwaukeeans at the hands of the department piled higher and higher. In 1952, for instance, the MPD recorded a staggering one arrest of a black resident for every three African Americans in the city.⁴⁰ Over the course of the late 1940s and 1950s, the black inmate population at the Milwaukee County House of Corrections (MCHC), which housed offenders serving sentences of two years or less, swelled as the size of the city's African American population grew. African Americans constituted 4 percent of Milwaukee's population in 1948 and 8.5 percent in the early 1960s. The ratio of black inmates at the MCHC, meanwhile, grew from 14 to nearly 33 percent, or roughly four times the black representation in the city population, over the same period.⁴¹ The majority of inmates there had been picked up by the police on vague and petty charges such as vagrancy and public drunkenness, in a clear reflection of the aggressive policing underway in the inner core's public spaces.⁴² Even more striking were admittance rates at the Wisconsin State Prison, seventy miles northwest of Milwaukee in the town of Waupun. The numbers waxed and waned from year to year, but taking 1952 as a high point, the rate of African American admittance to Waupun was 19 percent of the total. At the time African Americans made up less than 1 percent of Wisconsin's total population.⁴³

Beyond statistics and questions of departmental policy, police repression and the agonizing dysfunction of police/community relations assumed more human and personal forms. Indeed, alongside the structural inequalities and departmental choices that led to a unique concentration of police power in black neighborhoods, the actions and attitudes of racially hostile police officers were crucial in shaping black Milwaukeeans' experiences with the MPD. What that unnamed black citi-

zen poignantly described in 1957 as black Milwaukeeans' "fear of terror" not only encompassed aggressive stop-and-question practices, a pervasive police presence, and the fear of being harassed or arrested simply for being black, it also meant dealing with the daily indignities, humiliations, and violations of basic civil rights at the hands of racist white police officers. Despite public pronouncements to the contrary, some police officers' racism remained a thinly veiled secret even within the police department. In 1952 an MPD training manual on race relations stated, "[T]he conduct of police officials in some localities has not always been above reproach," and that "some of us have the stereotype that a Negro is lazy, indolent, lustful, and carries a razor."⁴⁴

At a particularly tense moment between the police department and the African American community in 1954, Deputy Inspector (and future Police Chief) Howard O. Johnson tacitly acknowledged police racism, while trying to explain it away. Johnson argued that "it [was] impossible to wipe out overnight prejudices which [had] developed in some policemen from the time they were boys."⁴⁵ Likewise, the officers who served as informants in Toliver and Himden's 1961 study of police/community relations admitted that racial prejudice "did exist in some quarters" of the department, with the odd caveat that "carrying out official duties was a thing that could be done fairly and in line with official policy regardless of personal feelings."⁴⁶ Coming close to echoing Johnson's earlier cultural rationale for officer prejudice, Toliver and Himden observed that "there was an indication also of the persistence of racial attitudes common to American culture in some police officers."⁴⁷

Because they were the ones to feel with such frequency and force the impact of what Toliver and Himden somewhat euphemistically referred to as "racial attitudes," African Americans were far more cutting in their condemnations of police racism. As one black Milwaukeean put it, "[T]he police in this area have little or no respect for people that they approach regardless of their age or sex. They handle women the same as they do men. They handle misdemeanor offenders as though they were hardened criminals."⁴⁸ Toliver and Himden's research turned up ubiquitous accusations that "police were disrespectful and verbally abusive. The routine stopping of people on the street, the manner of approach and the method of interrogation" were all noted as particularly egregious affronts to the basic rights of African American citizens, as was racially offensive language used by police officers.⁴⁹

John Glanton, a black itinerant worker, described in 1958 his experiences with the Milwaukee police and courts as both an assault upon his own personal rights, as well as a threat to the democratic aspirations of the United States. Writing to the Milwaukee Urban League from the Wisconsin State Prison after being sentenced on charges apparently fabricated by police officers in retaliation for his fraterniza-

tion with white women, Glanton tied his personal experience with police prejudice into a larger narrative of American racial injustices. Discussing the lynching of Emmett Till in 1955 and the more recent turmoil surrounding the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, Glanton drew lines linking his unjust incarceration to the constellation of racist practices nationally, complaining about the “preeminent hypocrisy” of the Milwaukee legal system and worrying about the looming threat of “Old Glory fading away.”⁵⁰ Though Glanton was only semi-literate, his observations ably criticized the machinations of the Milwaukee law enforcement agencies in ways that reflected a broader sentiment surging through many sections of black Milwaukee—a sense that the Milwaukee Commission on Human Rights described as a “continued feeling in the Negro community that treatment accorded Negro citizens by police officers differ[ed] both in degree and in kind from that accorded white citizens.”⁵¹ Researchers Toliver and Himden summarized the feelings of black Milwaukeeans in even blunter fashion. Simply put, “[residents felt] that many of the officers [were] prejudiced against Negroes. We found that in many quarters this was felt to be the core of the ‘Inner-Core’ police-community problem.”⁵²

These prejudicial attitudes doubtlessly contributed significantly to the racially discordant arrest and incarceration statistics evident across the postwar years, but their most terrible manifestations were found in relentless and seemingly remorseless acts of violence by the police. Because of the inconsistency with which it was reported, it is difficult to quantify the police violence that pervaded black Milwaukee, but there is no doubt that both actual violence and rumors about it were important in shaping police/community dynamics. When John Glanton lamented his own predicament and the racial situation in the United States in his correspondence with the Urban League in 1958, he also mourned the police murder of a young man named Daniel Bell, who had been killed by MPD Officer Thomas Grady in February of that year.⁵³ The killing of the 22-year-old Bell—shot in the back at such close range that Grady’s gun literally touched his jacket—was the most historically significant police murder in midcentury Milwaukee. Indeed, as historian Patrick Jones has demonstrated, important pieces of the organizational and emotional foundations for the city’s later civil rights campaigns were rooted in the community’s mobilization in response to Bell’s killing, the ensuing cover-up by Grady and his partner (with Grady reportedly sneering that Bell was “just a damn nigger kid anyhow”), and police officials’ failure to conduct a meaningful investigation.⁵⁴

But if Daniel Bell’s murder was the most infamous incident of police violence during this period, it was far from the only one. In 1948, a police officer shot alleged thief Emeit Clemons twice in the back of the head after cornering him in a city alleyway.⁵⁵ Some African Americans went on record in praise of the officer and department; others vigorously condemned Clemons’s killing as unnecessary

and unjust.⁵⁶ Editorialists in the *Milwaukee Globe*, one of the city's short-lived black newspapers, captured the contradictory reactions from the community in sharp relief, both praising the conduct of the police, while trying to reject what they knew was a significant belief in black Milwaukee that "all cops are thieves."⁵⁷ The fury over the killing burned hotly enough that the accused officer testified to receiving death threats.⁵⁸ The 1950 killing of 22-year-old Murray Henry by Detective Sergeant Charles Huepper was shrouded in similarly suspicious circumstances, but was ruled a "justifiable homicide" by the department nonetheless.⁵⁹ The 1959 death of Roscoe Simpson, an alleged murderer killed in a hail of bullets on the city's northwest side, also elicited a sharp outcry from African Americans.⁶⁰ Simpson was accused of killing a white woman named Sylvia Fink, but community leader Pauline Cogg maintained that "most Milwaukee Negroes" had doubts that Simpson was really the murderer, and that there had to have been alternatives to him dying in a barrage of gunfire.⁶¹ Testifying to a mayoral special committee in the days after Simpson's death, Cogg deftly captured African Americans' perceptions that they were doomed to indiscriminate condemnation and abuse, as well as their fears about police violence: "Negroes feel that any Negro who had walked in the vicinity of the Fink home after Mrs. Fink was killed would have been shot by the police."⁶²

As Pauline Cogg's words suggest, it was not only well-documented killings of African Americans by the police that shaped attitudes toward the MPD, but those repeated acts of violent and abusive treatment that in turn cast a pall of fear that police violence could be unleashed on anyone at any time. In other words, the social impact of police violence lay not just in its awful reality, but also in its potentiality—in the pervasive fear of pistols, fists, and billy clubs that many residents harbored. Indeed, part of what generated the sorts of crowd resistance to the police in Milwaukee was the fear of physical abuse by the police during and after arrest. Providing their subjects anonymity, researchers Toliver and Himden secured interviews with a number of local residents who had actually participated in one such "demonstration." They concluded, "Many people fear what being arrested might entail. . . . Some are afraid that they will be submitted to physical abuse. Several interviewees explained that once a person is in the patrol wagon, the officers call them names and will sometimes hit them. This belief," they found, "is widely held."⁶³

COMMUNITY RESPONSE AND COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE

The totality of police repression, including harassment, the sense of constant surveillance, verbal abuses, petty arrests, and the culture of police violence, generated multifaceted and often intense opposition from within Milwaukee's African

American community. In some ways, city leaders themselves may have ensured that this opposition sometimes took unconventional forms. Adding insult to literal injury were antiquated restrictions on grievance procedures that the city maintained well into the 1960s. The most onerous of these was a statute known as the “freeholder clause,” which in practice revoked most lower-income Milwaukeeans’ right to bring complaints against police officers before the city’s Fire and Police Commission (FPC). Dating back to the earliest years of the 20th century, the freeholder clause limited access to a hearing by the commission to “reputable freeholders,” a euphemism for those city residents who owned property. The extreme poverty of many African American victims of police repression, most of them unable to buy property, thus compounded the frustration they felt with the police department. In the words of one 1960s ad hoc community organization, the freeholder clause “excluded [non-homeowners] from access to the judicial processes within the police structure and denied them equal protection of the laws.”⁶⁴ Despite the ongoing deterioration of police/community relations throughout the postwar period and the repeated criticisms of both the department and the freeholder clause, it was not until the late 1960s that the clause was struck down by the Milwaukee Common Council. And even then, it appears to have been done less out of a sense of the clause’s essential injustice than because of the pressures wrought by the explosion of urban rebellions across the country (including in Milwaukee) during the mid and late 1960s, which forced city governments to pay more attention to police/community tensions.⁶⁵

Although in this way many victims of police misconduct were denied access to the police review process, many black Milwaukeeans still tried to organize within the community to pressure the city for increased accountability and responsiveness from the police department. Most of these efforts failed to take shape until the 1960s, when the city’s budding civil rights insurgency provided better infrastructural and organizational frameworks upon which to build. Others, however, did begin earlier, particularly in the closing years of the 1950s. Among the most important of these was the Lapham-Garfield Neighborhood Council (LGNC). Established in 1957 under the auspices of the Milwaukee Urban League’s “community organization” department, the LGNC was a massive umbrella organization of neighborhood groups, whose membership numbered nearly 5,000. The LGNC’s goals and motivations were broad and far-reaching, with its leaders seeking to combat a host of inequalities facing Milwaukee’s African American community. Although programmatically the LGNC covered a huge terrain, its genesis demonstrates the importance of criminal justice within the larger array of social issues and economic inequalities facing black Milwaukee. Indeed, while the council retained a broad focus, it “was born out of a need that was made evident during and following the community unrest that accompanied

efforts of law enforcement agencies to apprehend lawless elements in the north side and adjacent areas.”⁶⁶ In other words, while its assessment of the community’s needs was far more capacious than a narrow focus on law enforcement issues, the LGNC developed directly out of the community’s on-going confrontations with the police throughout the 1950s. And at the council’s very first community meeting in October 1957, the participants placed “unfair and unjustified” police stops and other issues surrounding police practices at the center of their list of grievances.⁶⁷ Taking stock of the totality of African Americans’ circumstances in the city, the council declared harassment, abuse, and violence related to law enforcement to be among “the most pressing community problems.”⁶⁸



Lloyd Barbee (right) and NAACP member at the Milwaukee County Courthouse in 1966.
 Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society (image WHI-49044).

Similar assessments emerged from other quarters of Milwaukee’s civil rights leadership. In 1961 Lloyd Barbee, later a state assemblyman and president of the Wisconsin NAACP, outlined an assessment of “the situation in Wisconsin” concerning civil rights, on which matters of law enforcement featured prominently among the “difficulties.” Among the major areas of concern for Barbee, problems of law enforcement conspicuously included “hasty arrest” and “allegations of bru-

tality,” and lack of emphasis on crime prevention. In an apt metaphor for the particularly entrenched nature of problems with the police, Barbee pointed to improvements for African Americans in public accommodations, housing, and employment, but he identified no such advancements in law enforcement practices.⁶⁹ In a similar cataloging of the challenges African Americans confronted, drafted around the same time and simply titled “Grievances,” Barbee placed “police discourtesies and brutalities” at the very top of the list.⁷⁰

Pinpointing many of the sources of police/community tensions was the easy part for civil rights organizations and leaders such as the LGNC and Lloyd Barbee. But actually ameliorating those tensions and challenging racist police practices remained a difficult task, in large part because so many in the community continued to lack access to the Fire and Police Commission. Frustrated with an unresponsive and inaccessible grievance structure, some residents instead sought to engage the police department directly and seek out common ground between police and citizens from which to work. When an advisory committee of community leaders met with members of the MPD at the Urban League offices on the North Side in the summer of 1963, the goal was to establish better police/community relations and communications. The advisory committee, which included representatives from the Urban League, the NAACP, and other local organizations, recited again to police officials some of the reasons for African Americans’ hostility toward the police. Aggressive field interrogations, officers’ assumptions of black criminality, the questioning of African Americans who happened to be in white neighborhoods were mentioned, as well as police “subterfuge” in not revealing to individuals the reasons for stopping and questioning them, and so forth. However, the series of meetings produced few results, and in the end, vague talk of “a crash program at all levels” in police/community relations was the most substantive solution for an easing of tensions.⁷¹

While those meetings in 1963 failed to secure any practical solutions to police/community tensions, a changing of the guard at the top of the police department in 1964 virtually ensured that even the limited conversations held with officials would no longer continue. Under the leadership of Police Chief Harold Breier, who earned every bit of his reputation as being antagonistic toward the city’s civil rights insurgency, police officials became increasingly hostile toward any outside criticism of the department. Chief Breier cut off most meaningful contact between police officials and the African American leaders, and questioned the need for a “community relations unit” within the department.⁷² Activists in the city’s surging civil rights campaigns condemned Breier and the department for creating a sentiment among African Americans that they were under siege. For example, Father James Groppi, the most recognized leader of the local movement, repeatedly talked about the “police state” in which black Milwaukeeans lived,

before and during Milwaukee's own urban insurgency in the summer of 1967 when black Milwaukee exploded again.⁷³

Although Father Groppi gravitated toward the local freedom movement's more militant wings, other activists expressed similar sentiments to make clear to city officials why changes to the MPD's traditional ways of operating were so desperately needed. Marveling at the profound unwillingness of Breier's department to respond to community grievances and needs, community members formed in 1968 the "Ad Hoc Committee on Police Administration in Milwaukee" (AHCPAM) to fight the "alienation," fear, and indignation many people felt toward the police.⁷⁴ Among a host of issues, the AHCPAM emphasized the findings of University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee researchers who found that three out of five African Americans interviewed "felt that the police were too brutal in handling black people," and that more than half "felt that police communicated insults and lack of respect to black citizens."⁷⁵ Led by a coalition of activists that included civil rights leader Father Patrick Flood, the AHCPAM raised especially issues concerning what the National Advisory Committee on Urban Disorders, or Kerner Commission, had described as "the almost total lack of effective channels for redress of complaints against police conduct."⁷⁶

The AHCPAM sought a number of changes in the ways that "justice" was administered in the city and demanded that elected officials be held accountable for police behavior. Their main goals included judicial review of decisions made by the Fire and Police Commission and democratization of the selection process for its members; the introduction of an effective "Police-Community Relations Program" within the MPD; the reduction in aggressive police pat downs on the street; and the hiring of more black police officers on a force that remained 2 percent black in a city that was more than 15 percent African American.⁷⁷ But even in the aftermath of Milwaukee's 1967 insurgency, ignited as in so many other locations by police abuse and brutality, the efforts floundered due to the FPC and MPD's deep opposition.

The rebellion of 1967 exposed issues of police misconduct to a larger public and heightened the sense of urgency among AHCPAM activists and others for improved police/community relations. Some leaders with a sense of the community's pulse had seen an explosion coming for years given the building tensions between black Milwaukeeans and the police. Two and a half years before the uprising, the Citizen's Anti-Police Brutality Committee (CAPBC), an interracial group made up of religious leaders and civil rights and labor activists, warned the FPC that unchecked police abuses in Milwaukee would result in collective violence just as they had in other cities across the country. Rev. B. S. Gregg, speaking on behalf of the CAPBC about "the double standard constantly used to meas-

ure citizens in [the North Side community],” issued a stern warning to the FPC in January 1965:

[M]ake no mistake about it, we have some law officers in this city who consistently insult, harass, and brutalize Milwaukee Negroes. We have law officers who act on the assumption that every Negro is a second class citizen, a person to be treated with contempt, a person without rights before the law. Incidents which exemplify these attitudes range in seriousness from what one censures as poor human relations to what one condemns as inhumanity. Furthermore, such incidents are widely experienced, witnessed, and discussed in the [North Side] community where, we repeat, tensions are rising to the point of explosion.⁷⁸

Rev. Gregg’s assessment was rejected out of hand by FPC officials.⁷⁹

The pastor’s comments were prescient, to be sure, but they also obscured a longer history of community resistance and bold challenges to police authority in Milwaukee. Well before the 1967 insurgency, if at a comparatively lower intensity, conflict had *already* exploded on the North Side. Confrontations between the police and crowds of black residents, like the one mentioned at the outset at the Fourth Street School in October 1956, erupted in that neighborhood three times a year during the mid-1950s, and even more frequently by the close of the decade. The almost daily acts of police repression and deadly violence that black Milwaukeeans faced in the 1950s led to widespread rejection of the legitimacy of police officers’ authority.

The report on these police/community incidents submitted in 1961 to the Mayor’s Study Committee on Social Problems by social workers Bernard Toliver and Joseph Himden revealed the absence of trust between the police and the African American community, as well as the unfortunate consequences. In the midst of Toliver and Himden’s research, a “near riot” erupted similar to the one at the Fourth Street School, with black teenagers emptying into the street at the conclusion of a dance on the lower North Side. The narrow sidewalks forced the crowd into the street as a police squad car was passing by the scene, and the officers later claimed the teenagers were disrupting traffic. One officer left his squad car and tried to disperse the crowd. He reportedly asked one teenage boy to vacate the area three different times, and when the teenager failed to do so, the officer tried to place him under arrest. What happened next is a matter of contention. Police officers claimed that the teenager tried to fight off their attempts to arrest him and that the teen’s sister came to his aid by aggressively trying to free him from the officers. The sister’s boyfriend stated that the two of them had been in his car and were about to leave when she noticed her brother being placed under arrest. She went over to ask what was going on, was turned back by police, and was about to return to her boyfriend’s car when police officers pulled her back into their car. The girl suffered a head wound that she claimed was from a

police billy club across the skull; the officers said she tripped and hit her head while getting into a police car when they arrested her. Police at the scene said that they never drew weapons, but members of the crowd testified to Toliver and Himden that it was the abusive treatment of the girl and officers' brandishing of weapons that so "incensed" the crowd. As the on-lookers grew increasingly angry about the officers' actions, they began to try to forcibly free both brother and sister from the policemen's grasp with a sea of people surrounding the police, just as backup officers arrived at the scene. The people tried repeatedly to prevent officers from making the arrests. With the situation almost out of control, police reinforcements moved in to quell the disturbance. Soon a sizeable number of officers were "indiscriminately" arresting people, eventually gaining control, and finally clearing the streets.⁸⁰

The 1956 confrontation at the Fourth Street School, this incident, and Toliver and Himden's interviews surrounding it, provide windows into the many issues that disturbed black residents and provoked them into using violence to challenge the police. In both instances, it is highly questionable whether the police officers had any real reason to approach the teenagers at all, let alone to use force and threaten them with arrest. After the 1956 melee, local attorney George Brawley testified that there was little cause for the police to become involved in the first place, especially in such an abusive manner.⁸¹ The major issue, however, was the use and threat of violence on the part of police toward African American residents. The context of 1950s police violence and abuse in Milwaukee—the killings, the aggressive pat downs, the worry over being beaten in squad cars, and so forth—led some people to become furious at the sight of police with weapons physically manhandling citizens, particularly women. Toliver and Himden summarized the attitudes of a number of teens at the scene of the incident: "It is the general feeling of the young people who frequent this establishment that they do not care for the police and with provocation would resort to the use of violence to settle differences."⁸²

The frequency with which young people acted upon these sentiments should be noted. Far from isolated eruptions, dozens of incidents like the ones described above exploded across Milwaukee in the 1950s, so frequently that by the close of the decade there was at least one occasion when multiple such eruptions occurred *on the same day*.⁸³ Though they varied in the size of the crowd and precipitating events, these confrontations reflected a spirit of community defense in the face of harassment and the violence by the police. There was an incident on a cold winter day in January 1955 when two African American women, Irene Haynes, age 28, and Essie White, age 22, allegedly got into a fight on the corner of 8th and North Avenues. Police officers passing the scene reportedly stopped their cruiser and waded in to break up the fight and arrest the women. Yet as they did so, a crowd

estimated at two hundred people surrounded the officers and apparently tried to prevent them from making the arrests. Although the women later testified that they had seen no one assault the officers, the police alleged that Haynes had hit one officer with her fist, that White (who had supposedly been fighting with Haynes just moments earlier) then tried to free Haynes, and that a third woman “tried to incite the crowd of 200 to action against the police.”⁸⁴

At the subsequent hearing, charged with unlawful assembly and rioting, Haynes and White laughed together loudly while seated at the defendants’ table as the arresting officers delivered their testimony. When reprimanded by the judge for their lack of decorum, the women apologized but explained that the officers’ version of what had transpired was completely out of line with their recollections. The judge dropped the charge of rioting, citing lack of adequate proof, but he still sentenced both women to seven months in the county jail for disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. As he did so, he issued a stern warning to the defendants and others in the courtroom, admonishing them that it was their obligation to respect and obey city police officers.⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to know the precise contours of what *did* take place that day at 8th and North. Haynes and White’s cavalier response to the setting and officers’ testimony—their literal laughter at policemen’s authority—provides an apt, though bitter comment about the ways many black Milwaukeeans viewed police officers and officials in the postwar years. Circumstances forced Irene Haynes and Essie White to face off side-by-side with the Milwaukee police and eventually, the city’s courts. If the officers were telling the truth and the two women had been fighting with one another until the moment of police intervention, White’s attempts to protect Haynes *from* the police are striking. And even if the police reports were false and the officers were lying in court, the incident that day provides one more potent example of forceful, collective action by African Americans in response to police actions perceived as unjust.

The story of the arrest and trial of Irene Haynes and Essie White sheds light on the way that African Americans, many of them recent migrants from the South with expectations of improved police behavior in Milwaukee, frequently stood up with their neighbors and challenged police officers who were violent, abusive, and disrespectful. What these spontaneous confrontations represented were not simply the chaotic actions of “drunken” or “reckless” mobs (as contemporary newspaper accounts and police and city officials suggested). Rather, they were part of an organic politics of collective community defense—the response of people living under “fear of terror” within what novelist and social critic James Baldwin

referred to as “occupied territory.”⁸⁶ For many African Americans in postwar Milwaukee, their relationship with the men (and the few women) who policed their community was not one of simple dislike or mistrust, but one that descended to the point of being physically violent and adversarial. African Americans’ treatment at the hands of the police compelled them to act.

Historian Leonard Moore has accurately concluded that police officers in African American communities in the postwar years all too often adopted a mentality of “us versus them” toward black residents.⁸⁷ That attitude produced consequences that were varied and multiple, as documented in this essay. But perhaps the most enduring development was that among many of “them” in that equation—the thousands of African Americans who consistently felt the weight of a repressive and abusive police force—an alternate “us versus them” mentality emerged. Black Milwaukeeans participated in the forceful rejection of police authority years before the establishment of the Milwaukee chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966 and the rise of Black Power politics in the city.⁸⁸

Mayor Frank Zeidler often pleaded with black Milwaukeeans to view police officers as their “protectors” rather than their “enemies.”⁸⁹ But those feelings of antagonism between police and community were mutual, and African Americans responded collectively when police officers engaged in violent and repressive actions.

NOTES

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¹*Milwaukee Journal*, 30 October 1956.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴Milwaukee Commission on Human Rights, Annual Report: 1956, Local History Collection, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI (hereafter, MCHR Records); John Teter et al., “Report on a Survey of Social Characteristics of the Lower Northside Community,” located in the appendix of the Milwaukee Commission on Human Rights, Annual Report: 1956, MCHR Records.

⁵In addition to their recurrent mention in the Milwaukee press, the city commissioned two separate studies closely related to these issues. See Teter et al., “Report on a Survey of Social Characteristics”; and Bernard Toliver and Joseph Himden, “Research in Police-Community Relations in Inner-Core Area, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1959–1960,” master’s thesis, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, 1961.

⁶*Milwaukee Journal*, 30 October 1956.

⁷Historical studies with significant focus on relationships between African Americans and the police include Karl E. Johnson, “Police-Black Community Relations in Postwar Philadelphia: Race and Criminalization in Urban

Social Spaces, 1945–1960,” *The Journal of African American History* 89, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 118–34; Leonard Moore, *Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism from World War II to Hurricane Katrina* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2010); Gail O’Brien, *The Color of the Law: Race, Violence, and Justice in the Post–World War II South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999); Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit?: Race, Labor, and Politics in Postwar Detroit* (Ithaca, NY, 2003); Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” *Journal of American History* 97, no. 3 (December 2010): 703–34; and, covering an earlier period, Kali Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880–1910* (Durham, NC, 2006). Recent books by Khalil Muhammad and Donna Murch on racial criminalization in the northern United States during the Progressive Era, the rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, and the politics and appeal of the Panthers also offer important insights onto this history. See Khalil Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010).

⁸Moore, *Black Rage*, 1.

⁹Johnson, “Police-Black Community Relations.”

¹⁰Ibid., 127. A note on the term “police brutality”: there is some inconsistency among historians as to what sorts of police behavior fall under the rubric of “brutality.” In his study of postwar New Orleans, Leonard Moore writes that “the term *police brutality* was all encompassing to African Americans during the postwar period. It included police homicides; unlawful arrests; assaults; threatening and abusive language; the use of racial slurs; sexual exploitation of black women; the beating of prisoners in police custody; racial profiling; police complicity in drug-dealing, prostitution, burglaries, protection schemes, and gun-smuggling; and the lack of justice available to black defendants in the courts.” This may have been the case in New Orleans, but it was not so in places like Milwaukee and Chicago, where citizens talking about “brutality” were almost always specifically talking about *physical violence* by the police. For the sake of clarity, in my own discussion here, I use the more explicit term “police violence” in lieu of “police brutality.” See Moore, *Black Rage*, 1–2.

¹¹Kevin Mumford, “Harvesting the Crisis: The Newark Uprising, the Kerner Commission, and Writing on Riots,” in *African American Urban History Since World War II*, ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter (Chicago, IL, 2009), 204. The literature on the 1960s urban insurgencies and their precipitants is voluminous. Among many others, see Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York, 2007); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ, 1996); Raul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington, IN, 1996); and Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (New York, 1997). Heather Ann Thompson in an essay in 2000 identifies many of the questions that remain unanswered in the “riot studies” historiography concerning both the 1992 Los Angeles riot and its 1960s antecedents. One of the most provocative for our purposes is why historians have tended to look at insurgencies/uprisings/riots with such a “decade- or event-specific lens.” Though she compares the uprisings of the 1960s and 1990s, the ubiquitous 1950s small-scale insurgencies in Milwaukee in which African American residents forcibly resisted police power may provide further nuance to the discussion as well. African Americans in these cases may not have “rioted” on the scale of those at other periods, but they certainly resisted and rebelled. Heather Ann Thompson, “Understanding Rioting in Postwar Urban America,” *Journal of Urban History*, 26, no. 3 (March 2000): 391–402.

¹²Joe William Trotter, *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45*, Second Edition (Urbana, IL, 2007 [1985]), 285.

¹³The most succinct capturing of these issues may be found in the epilogue to the updated second edition of Joe Trotter’s classic *Black Milwaukee*. See Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 283–98.

¹⁴On the economic and social world of prewar and wartime Milwaukee, see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*. Also see the early chapters of Patrick Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

¹⁵On urban renewal and patterns of infrastructure investment in early postwar Milwaukee, see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 283–90; John Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, WI, 1999), Chapter 8; Charles O’Reilly, “The Inner Core North: A Study of Milwaukee’s Negro Community,” M.S.W. Thesis, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, 1963, 10; Jack Norman, “Congenial Milwaukee: A Segregated City,” in *Unequal Partnerships: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment in Postwar America*, ed. Gregory D. Squires (New Brunswick, NJ, 1989), 178–201.

¹⁶Minutes of the Meeting of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Crime Prevention Commission, 25 November 1952, Local History Collection, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI (hereafter, MMPC Minutes); Joel D.

Hunter, "Summary of the Reports of the Milwaukee County Survey of Social Welfare and Health Services, Inc.," Milwaukee County Survey of Social Welfare and Health Services Files, Local History Collection, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI. Also see Frank Zeidler, *A Liberal in City Government: My Experiences as Mayor of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, WI, 2005), as well as Joel Rast, "Governing the Regime-less City: The Frank Zeidler Administration in Milwaukee, 1948–1960," *Urban Affairs Review* 42, no. 1 (September 2006).

¹⁷MMCPC Minutes, 25 November 1952.

¹⁸On inequality and black responses to it in Milwaukee, see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*; Patrick Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge, MA, 2009); Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004); and Yohuru Williams, "'Give Them a Cause to Die For': The Black Panther Party in Milwaukee, 1969–77," in *Liberated Territory: Untold Local Perspectives on the Black Panther Party*, ed. Yohuru Williams and Jama Lazerow (Durham, NC, 2009), 232–64. The historiography on social and structural inequalities, and black challenges to them, in postwar urban America more broadly is immense. For a small sampling of some relatively recent local studies, see Murch, *Living for the City*; Thompson, *Whose Detroit?*; Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ, 2005); Matthew Countrymen, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA, 2005); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA, 2003); and Laurie Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality: Memphis and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007). See also the essays in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980*, ed. Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York, 2003), and Komozi Woodard, Charles Payne, and Jeanne Theoharis, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York, 2000). For an overview of these issues across the country, see Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York, 2008).

¹⁹Milwaukee Police Department, Annual Report: 1959, Local History Collection, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI (hereafter, MPD Annual Report).

²⁰Milwaukee Police Department, "A Guide to Understanding Race and Human Relations," 1952, Local History Collection, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI.

²¹Milwaukee Commission on Human Rights, Annual Report: 1957, MCHR Records.

²²Toliver and Himden, "Research in Police–Community Relations," 16.

²³Discussion of these issues is evident in a number of sources, ranging from documents in the organizational records of groups like the NAACP and Lapham-Garfield Neighborhood Council, to the articles and editorials in the city's major daily newspapers.

²⁴Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle*, 56.

²⁵MMCPC Minutes, 25 November 1952.

²⁶See MPD Annual Reports from throughout the postwar era, especially in the 1950s.

²⁷Toliver and Himden, "Research in Police–Community Relations," 32.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 15.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 22.

³⁰Milwaukee Commission on Community Relations, Annual Report: 1960.

³¹Lapham-Garfield Neighborhood Council, Organizational Meeting Minutes, 24 October 1957, box 10, folder 15, Lapham-Garfield Neighborhood Council Papers, located in the Milwaukee Urban League Records (hereafter, MUL Records), Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI (hereafter, LGNC Papers).

³²Toliver and Himden, "Research in Police–Community Relations," 20.

³³See, for example, Police Chief John Polcyn's testimony before the Milwaukee Metropolitan Crime Prevention Commission in November 1952. Facing questioning from the MMCPC about what more the MPD could be doing to curb crime in the inner core especially, Polcyn noted that "In my humble opinion, from a law enforcement point of view, the Police Department need only do one thing and that is what we have done—placed more man power in this area." MMCPC Minutes, 25 November 1952.

³⁴*Chicago Defender*, 26 April 1958. See also the report of the Illinois Division of the American Civil Liberties Union, "Police Practice in the City of Chicago of Stopping Drivers of Automobiles for Traffic Offenses Followed by Sear of Their Person and Property," box 571, folder 3, American Civil Liberties Union, Illinois Division, Records, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, IL.

³⁵*Chicago Crusader*, 19 May 1958.

³⁶Minutes of the Chicago Police Department Staff Meeting, 15 March 1963 and 19 April 1963, Chicago Police Department collection (hereafter, CPD collection), Chicago History Museum, Chicago, IL.

³⁷Chicago Police Department, “A Review of Foot Patrol Utilization and Distribution in the Chicago Police Department,” 10 May 1961, Municipal Records Collection, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, IL; Minutes of the Chicago Police Department Staff Meeting, 21 February 1964, CPD collection.

³⁸CPD, “A Review of Foot Patrol Utilization.”

³⁹Minutes of the Chicago Police Department Staff Meeting, 20 March 1964, CPD collection. On the formalization of stop-and-frisk policies elsewhere in the 1960s, see Loren G. Stern, “Stop and Frisk: An Historical Answer to a Modern Problem,” *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 58, no. 4 (December 1967): 532–42.

⁴⁰MPD Annual Report: 1952. Police records show 9,352 arrests of African Americans, from a population of roughly 30,000. These figures include traffic arrests, which skew the number upward. Nevertheless, the black arrest rate was four times higher than that of whites in Milwaukee.

⁴¹Milwaukee County House of Corrections Records: 1948 to 1960, Local History Collection, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI (records for 1945, 1946, and 1947 are unavailable).

⁴²MPD Annual Reports: 1945 to 1960. By 1960, for example, black Milwaukeeans were arrested by the MPD on alcohol-related charges at a rate roughly two-and-a-half times their representation in the city population.

⁴³The vast majority of Wisconsin’s black population—around 80 percent—resided in Milwaukee. State of Wisconsin Department of Public Welfare, Division of Corrections, “Criminal Offenders Placed Under the Supervision and Control of the Wisconsin Department of Public Welfare, Division of Corrections, during 1952,” Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI.

⁴⁴Milwaukee Police Department, “A Guide to Understanding Race and Human Relations.”

⁴⁵*Milwaukee Sentinel*, 13 March 1954.

⁴⁶Toliver and Himden, “Research in Police-Community Relations,” 27–28.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰John Glanton to James McDonald, 27 April 1958, MUL Records, box 2, folder 1, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI.

⁵¹Milwaukee Commission on Community Relations, Annual Report: 1960.

⁵²Toliver and Himden, “Research in Police-Community Relations,” 22–3.

⁵³Glanton to McDonald, 27 April 1958, MUL Records.

⁵⁴See Jones, *Selma of the North*, 32–35.

⁵⁵MPD Annual Report: 1948; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 23 May 1948.

⁵⁶*Milwaukee Sentinel*, 23 May 1948.

⁵⁷*Milwaukee Globe*, 5 June 1948.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹MPD Annual Report: 1950.

⁶⁰*Milwaukee Journal*, 23 September 1959.

⁶¹*Milwaukee Sentinel*, 26 September 1959.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³Toliver and Himden, “Research in Police-Community Relations,” 20.

⁶⁴Ad Hoc Committee on Police Administration in Milwaukee, “The Problem of Police-Community Relations in Milwaukee,” ca. 1968, Ad Hoc Committee on Police Administration in Milwaukee Records, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI (hereafter, AHCPAM Records).

⁶⁵AHCPAM, “The Problem of Police-Community Relations,” ca. 1968, AHCPAM Records; AHCPAM, “A Report to the Priest’s Senate: Police Community Relations,” 6 June 1968, AHCPAM Records.

⁶⁶Milwaukee Commission on Human Rights, Annual Report: 1957.

⁶⁷Lapham-Garfield Neighborhood Council, Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 24 October 1957, box 10, folder 15, LGNC Papers.

⁶⁸Lapham-Garfield Neighborhood Council, Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 13 November 1957, box 10, folder 15, LGNC Papers.

⁶⁹Lloyd Barbee, “Civil Rights ’61: The Situation in Wisconsin,” box 21, folder 14, Lloyd Barbee Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI (hereafter, Barbee Papers). For more on the Milwaukee school desegregation effort and Barbee’s role in it, see Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle*.

⁷⁰Lloyd Barbee, “Grievances,” box 21, folder 14, Barbee Papers.

⁷¹Lucinda J. Gordon, "Information Received from Conferences with Representatives of the Milwaukee Police Department," box 16, folder 17, MUL Records.

⁷²AHCPAM, "The Problem of Police-Community Relations," ca. 1968, AHCPAM Records.

⁷³On Chief Breier and his tumultuous relationship with civil rights activists, see Jones, *The Selma of the North*, 143–68.

⁷⁴AHCPAM, "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Administration in Milwaukee," ca. 1968, AHCPAM Records; AHCPAM, Organizational Meeting, 8 November 1968, AHCPAM Records; AHCPAM, "A Report to the Priest's Senate: Police Community Relations," 6 June 1968, AHCPAM Records.

⁷⁵AHCPAM, "The Problem of Police-Community Relations," ca. 1968, AHCPAM Records.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

⁷⁷AHCPAM, "The Problem of Police-Community Relations," ca. 1968, AHCPAM Records.

⁷⁸Pastor B. S. Gregg, "Statement of the Citizens' Anti-Police Brutality Committee before the Milwaukee Police and Fire Commission," 21 January 1965, box 21, folder 9, Citizens' Anti-Police Brutality Committee Records (hereafter, CAPBC Records), in Barbee Papers.

⁷⁹For the FPC's response to the CAPBC, see Board of Fire and Police Commissioners, "Response to the Statement of the Citizens' Anti-Police Brutality Committee, as presented by the Reverend B. S. Gregg," 18 March 1965, box 21, folder 9, CAPBC Records.

⁸⁰Toliver and Himden, "Research in Police-Community Relations," 23–26.

⁸¹*Milwaukee Journal*, 3 November 1956.

⁸²Toliver and Himden, "Research in Police-Community Relations," 26.

⁸³For example, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported on 27 August 1959 that there had been two such incidents the day before—one of them witnessed firsthand by Mayor Frank Zeidler.

⁸⁴*Milwaukee Journal*, 4 January 1959.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶James Baldwin, "A Report from Occupied Territory," *The Nation*, 11 July 1966.

⁸⁷Moore, *Black Rage*, 1.

⁸⁸Andrew Witt, *Black Power in the Midwest: The Community Programs and Services of the Black Panther Party in Milwaukee* (New York, 2007); and Williams, "Give Them a Cause."

⁸⁹*Milwaukee Journal*, 3 November 1956.