

# Political Scientists Find Draft Chief's Replies Frustrating

## Kerner Panel Acted to Avoid Politics

By Jean M. White  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Kerner Commission rushed its report to the public in March partly to avoid publication during the heat of the summer's political campaigns. David Ginsburg, the Commission's executive director, revealed yesterday.

Ginsburg braved a panel of political scientists to help chair sessions that included papers on the riot report.

In one paper, "Report of the National Commission: The Analysis of Disorder or Disorderly Analysis?"—Gary T. Marx, of Harvard University, criticized the riot commission's report for its failure to "name institutions" after citing abstract white racism as one of the key causes behind racial disorders.

### 'Abstract and General'

"The concept of racism as used is too abstract and general," Marx said in his paper. "Because it accuses everyone, it accuses no one."

He also was critical of the report's failure to deal with different kinds of disorders, such as the "defensive riot" in Cambridge, Md., and the politically-oriented disturbance in Plainfield, N.J. Also, Marx faulted the report for its avoidance of the issue of the link between the Vietnam war and civil disorders.

In a later observation, James Q. Wilson, of Harvard, one of the discussants, observed that commissions "are like graduate students — desperately in need of a theory"

upon which to hang the facts that they collect.

"If you are going to use the phrase 'white racism,' you better be able to tell the American people what to do about it," he added.

In reply to a similar question from the floor, Ginsburg emphasized that such a question obviously was raised within the Commission but the feeling was that recommendations on "how one cures white racism" went beyond the competency of the staff and members. He also pointed out that the report did not single out white racism alone but also emphasized poverty and other factors.

### Complaint From Floor

As to a complaint from the floor that the riot commission had been lawyer-dominated, Ginsburg agreed that lawyers may have had too much to do with the report but asked:

"But where were the sociologists in August?"

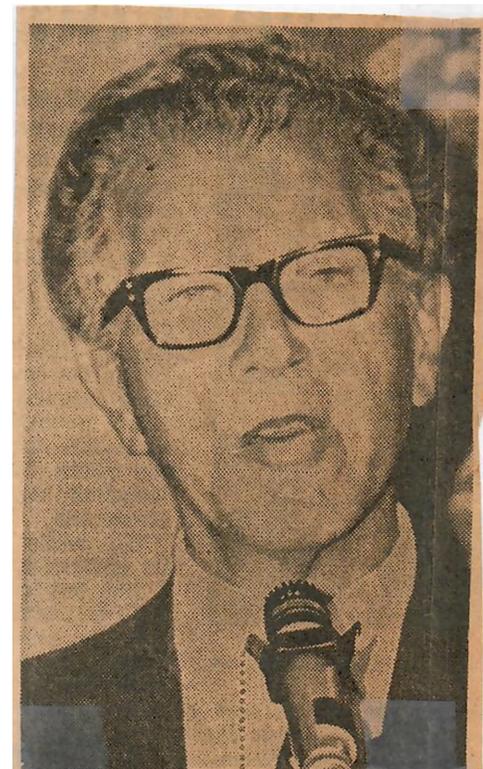
The Commission's director

pointed to the difficulty of recruiting professionals already committed to university posts and often too busy to do anything more than "do a paper."

Ginsburg wryly observed that he had not expected another commission to be appointed after the Kerner panel completed its lengthy report.

But, he added, the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence probably was established to "pre-empt the field" —to head off a Congressional investigation that "would not have led the country in the direction of prudence."

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David Ginsburg, executive director of the Kerner Commission, who appeared before political scientist panels.