

# **Myrdal Warns U.S. To Aid Poor Whites As Well as Negroes**

**By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE**

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**WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 —**  
Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish social philosopher, said today that America must attend to its white as well as its Negro poor or run the risk of a policy of racism comparable to South Africa's.

Negroes, he said, are only one part of the impoverished American "underclass" that forms the urban and rural slums.

Professor Myrdal, who foresaw the present racial crisis in the United States nearly 25 years ago, declared in an address before the American Institute of Planners' 50th anniversary convention:

"The planning of policy measures cannot be restricted rationally to what can be done for the Negroes. I am assuming that America is not prepared to go the way of a South African type of apartheid policy which would be in blunt contradiction to American ideals."

"The poverty-stricken Ne-

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# MYRDAL CAUTIONS U.S. ON AID TO POOR

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groes are only a third or a quarter of all the desperately poor in America," he said. He included in the group "Indians, Mexicans, Asians, less completely integrated white immigrant groups, particularly from Eastern and Southern Europe, and also a large number of the old Americans who have remained, or become, poor whites or white trash."

Professor Myrdal defines this "underclass," a widely accepted term of his own coinage, as the disadvantaged group below the lower class where inequities of education, income and environment have created conditions so bad that even motivation for betterment has been lost.

## Says Affluence Is Mortgaged

"The common idea that America is an immensely rich and affluent country is very much an exaggeration," he said. "American affluence is heavily mortgaged. America carries a tremendous burden of debt to its poor people. Not paying the debt implies risks for the social order and for democracy as we have known it."

He made a tentative personal estimate that any proper answer would take "trillions of dollars and at least one generation."

Professor Myrdal, a middle-sized man in a neutral gray suit, spoke in a slightly accented, neutral voice.

He also made comprehensive criticisms of national foreign policy planning and economic planning, including the "spurious" war on poverty.

"No matter how anyone stands on the Vietnam war," he said, "everyone agrees that it has developed in a completely unplanned way — as a destiny in the sense of the classic drama."

"No one expected it to take the turn or have the results it had," he said. "The Vietnam war has played havoc with national planning."

He called it "shocking to see how much easier it is to get appropriations for war and war preparations than to make a modest start on the development of a more wholesome urban life."

Professor Myrdal cited advances in national economic planning, but scored the fact that the war campaign against

poverty had never been a part of it.

"Policy actions rapidly improvised for the poverty program were spurious, not always well administered, and not planned as the inauguration of a long-term national effort to realize the demands of national ideals," he said.

"It is difficult to see much successful planning on a national scale in the United States," he concluded. "I have seen no detailed plans for what needs to be done to salvage American cities."

He suggested the need for major fiscal and administrative reforms, including larger Federal contributions and unified and enforced standards of schooling. All innovations, he said, would be opposed by "broadly based, powerful vested interests."

Asked afterward by the audience of planners about the "pessimism" of his talk, he replied:

"To believe that you need optimism to have courage to do the job is a weak and shameful view. You must have the courage of desperation."

The convention, attended by 2,400 planners and allied professionals, will continue at the Shoreham Hotel through Friday.