

The subcommittee's hearings have been closed to the public and the press. Chairman Thompson said yesterday his subcommittee would consider on Wednesday whether to make the hearings open.

OPEN LETTER

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA POLICE WIVES ASSOCIATION, INC.,
Clinton, Md., July 30, 1968.

Chief of Police JOHN B. LAYTON,
Metropolitan Police Department,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CHIEF LAYTON: On behalf of every member of the District of Columbia Police Wives Association we want you to know you have our unanimous and whole hearted support in your difficult post as the head of one of the most outstanding police departments in the nation. We know that this is the feeling of the 4300 members of the Policeman's Association of the District of Columbia.

As recently as July 3, 1968, President Johnson said "Washington's Policemen are among the Nation's finest. In the critical hours of unrest and violence which gripped the city they performed most difficult missions . . . the backbone of law enforcement in each of our communities is the policeman on the beat. In no city of America is this more true than in the District of Columbia." Mayor Walter E. Washington and Public Safety Director Patrick V. Murphy, have been unstinting in the praise of the Metropolitan Police Department and your leadership of it.

The Metropolitan Police Department is one of the finest in the nation. It has been unmarked by the scandals which have racked the police departments in other cities. This is to your credit.

You have broken new ground in race relations. 10 years ago 10 percent of the police force were Negroes. Today the figure is 23 percent. Police Captains Owen Davis, Robert N. Hough have been made Inspectors, the first time that Negroes have been given this high rank. Acting Captain Herbert S. Taylor, a Negro has been appointed head of the community relations division and will shortly be given the permanent rank of captain in the police force. Police Captain Tilmon B. O'Bryant was raised from the rank of Detective and made head of the 13th police precinct.

In the face of the brilliant leadership you have given the Metropolitan Police Department, the attacks upon you by the members of the Democratic Central Committee of the District of Columbia, elected May 7, 1968, have reached incredible heights, culminating in (one) the resolution written by the Reverend Channing E. Phillips, that the killing of white policemen is "justifiable homicide" and (two) the call by Bruce Terris, the chairman of the District of Columbia Democratic Central Committee yesterday for your dismissal.

We are astounded that at no time has Bruce Terris and the Reverend Channing Phillips praised you or mentioned one word about your leadership of the finest police force in the nation.

The Negro Community as well as the White community did not vote the members of the Democratic Central Committee into office on May 7, 1968 to wage a campaign of harassment, intimidation and hysteria against the Metropolitan Police Department of which our husbands are members.

The D.C. Police Wives Association hereby publicly announces that we will raise with the credential and platform committees at the Democratic National Convention, basic questions regarding the qualifications of the members of the Democratic Central Committee and their campaign of harassment, intimidation, and hysteria against the Metropolitan Police Department and you personally.

President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey, Senator Eugene McCarthy, and the Democratic party have always stood for law and order, and for support of the police.

On October 22, 1967, the Communist Party, U.S.A., issued a position paper which laid down the line that Negroes should "police their own communities." As reported in the New York Times from the Daily Worker, the position of the Communist Party was "we support the demand that black people police their own community . . . there can be no question of the right of black people in the United States to use violence to achieve change." (see Letters column, *Sunday Star*, July 28, 1968).