

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL D.C. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 5, 1966.

The Honorable JOHN W. HECHINGER,
Chairman,
D. C. City Council,
14th & E. Streets,
Washington, D. C. 20004.

DEAR MR. HECHINGER: We charge that the D.C. City Council has made a major contribution to the deterioration of police-community relations. This is proved by a little-noticed report in the *Washington Post* of September 2, 1968, (page B 4) in a 2-column article titled "Columbia U. Rebel Is D.C. Researcher." The *Post* reported, in part, as follows: "Jonathan D. Schiller, 21, connects the Columbia University riots of last spring with Washington's police-community relations crisis of this summer. A 6-foot, 5-inch exponent of the New Left, Schiller threw his considerable bulk between the police and the Columbia demonstrators, an experience he brought to bear recently when, as a research assistant for the D.C. City Council, he helped prepare its report on police-community relations . . . Now a \$100-a-week summer intern for the City Council, Schiller has tucked his knees under a low desk and helped turn out the 43-page report on police-community relations that is still being considered by the Council. For two weeks, with his Columbia experience still fresh in mind, Schiller plowed through reports of various crime commissions, called police and law enforcement officials and conferred with specialists from the Justice Department. 'The Columbia riots taught me a lot about power,' he said. 'And working here has enabled me to get a perspective on the art of power and that a real citizen influence is necessary. It gives me an awareness of when and under what conditions it will be feasible.' The image of a 'Columbia rebel' may clash with that of the municipal Bureaucrat hunched over a desk shuffling papers into oblivion, but Schiller, articulate as usual, has an answer. 'A radical or extremist probably considers summertime work in city government an exercise in futility,' he conceded. 'But my job with the Council has been educational and productive. I've learned something.'"

We thought, and certainly we, as well as the rest of the community were led to believe from earlier newspaper and radio-TV reports, that the City Council's study on police-community relations has been prepared by the members of the Council's Public Safety Committee. These members are William S. Thompson Chairman, Margaret A. Haywood, Polly Shackleton, Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, John A. Nevius, and yourself as an *ex officio* member. Whatever Mr. Schiller may consider he has learned about the "art of power," we think this *Washington Post* article, shocking and revealing as it is, clearly calls for decisive action by the City Council.

We are demanding that you (1) publicly identify the sections of the City Council's 43-page report on police-community relations on which Mr. Schiller worked, and those he contributed to; and (2) issue a completely frank and open report on the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the hiring of this "Columbia U. Rebel." Please bear in mind that this 43-page report is not a mere student's thesis on "the art of power" and citizen control of the police.

Mr. Schiller, an avowed "radical or extremist", has successfully included some novel proposals clearly acceptable to the Black United Front, but not to Public Safety Director, Patrick V. Murphy who has totally rejected a number of recommendations in the report. The City Council should have consulted experts personally in preparing its report. Its use of a self-admitted "radical or extremist" such as Mr. Schiller to do its work seems to vitiate this 43-page report.

In the *Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton called for a "check upon a spirit of favoritism" which would "prevent the appointment of unfit characters from state prejudice, from family connection, from personal attachments, or from a view to popularity." Clearly, such a check is desperately needed in the City Council. May we hear from you?

Sincerely yours,

D. C. POLICE WIVES' ASSOCIATION, INC.

Mrs. NEWMAN. We feel that the appointment of a Commissioner could eliminate appointment of such unqualified persons to a position of such importance where the Police Department is concerned. This was one of the points I wished to bring out by the letter.