

1 DOCTOR NATHAN WRIGHT, JR.,

sworn.

2 MR. FORTUNATO: I would like to read
3 a biography regarding Doctor Nathan Wright.

4 Doctor Wright served as Chairman of
5 the 1967 National Conference on Black Power
6 held in Newark, New Jersey. An educator
7 and urbanization consultant, he is currently
8 Executive Director of the Department of
9 Urban Work of the Episcopal Diocese of
10 Newark, New Jersey. He is the author of
11 the award winning "Black Power and Urban Unrest;
12 Creative Possibilities," (Hawthorn Books,
13 New York 1967). His new book, "Ready To
14 Riot," (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York)
15 will be published in early spring of 1968.

16 George Harris, senior editor of Look
17 Magazine, wrote of Doctor Wright: "Doctor
18 Wright has a better grasp of the implication
19 of black power and of the present direction
20 of the freedom movement than any other
21 intellectual I have been able to find." A
22 native of Shreveport, Louisiana, Doctor
23 Wright holds five college degrees, including
24 a Bachelor of Divinity from the Episcopal
25 Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

1 and a Doctorate in Education from Harvard
2 University. Before going to Newark, he
3 served on the staff of the Massachusetts
4 Education Commission, which produced the
5 renowned Massachusetts Education Report.
6 While in Massachusetts, he was a member of
7 the Governor's Advisory Committee on Civil
8 Rights, Boston's Mayor's Committee on Housing,
9 and the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts
10 Civil Liberties Union. Doctor Wright has

11 He organized and was the first field
12 representative of New England's Congress of
13 Racial Equality, and participated in their
14 first freedom ride in 1948. He also founded
15 and ran Massachusetts' first non-profit
16 school for remedial education and supplementary
17 cultural enrichment.

18 Doctor Wright is lecturer in urban
19 sociology at New York City Community College,
20 and has written several books on religious
21 and social subjects, including the award
22 winning "One Bread, One Body." He is married
23 and has five children.

24 I would also like to read excerpts from
25 a review of Black Power and Urban Unrest.

"The subject of his book is the number one social problem of our day. It seems almost a miracle to find a book written with such perception and objectivity on an issue so clouded by misunderstanding and demagoguery. It is doubly so because it is written by a man of Doctor Wright's stature, a man who is a Negro. America needs to be introduced to this man. Black Power and Unrest is a sociological classic. Doctor Wright has given us a Magna Carta for human dignity. For this, I am grateful." That was Nelson W. Trout who wrote the book review.

It is also my understanding that Senator Percy stated, in connection with Doctor Wright's testimony at hearings on Proposed Home and Ownership Finding Act, that during his six months, Senator Percy's six months, Senator Percy had not found a witness of greater competency than Doctor Wright.

BY MR. FORTUNATO:

Q Doctor Wright, I wonder if you could fill in that background by giving us your name, age and occupation?

A Nathan Wright, Jr., ageis-forty-four and

1 I am an urbanist and educator.

2 Q What kind of activities have you been in-
3 volved in?

4 A In conjunction with my work or a lot of
5 my extracurricular things?

6 Q Supposing we were to take a two week
7 segment of your time, the last two weeks or the next
8 two weeks, what kind of things would you be doing?

9 A Aside from trying to devise ways whereby
10 resources of civic, religious, governmental and other
11 agencies may be brought to bear upon the whole issue of
12 urban regeneration, which is a general thing that I
13 have addressed myself to. Of course you know what
14 my feeling is on this particular score. The reason
15 why our cities are in trouble and the reason why we
16 are going to have more trouble in our cities is because
17 of the fact that people have not defined the problems
18 of our cities properly. In my own work, a typical
19 day involves a thousand and one things, dealing with
20 agencies, dealing with people from the religious
21 community, helping them to assess programs and new
22 approaches to problems. Over the past several weeks
23 or more I have spent as much time out of the city as
24 I have spent in the city. And some of the extra-
25 curricular things I do may be of interest to you.

1 Two weeks ago I think today an aid of Senator
2 Percy's came to see me requesting my help with various
3 problems. He asked if I would do a background paper
4 for use by the Republican Party indicating the common
5 interests of the white suburban middle and upper class
6 community and the black masses in our cities. This
7 is one particular thing that would take up my time.

8 The week before that I spent out in North
9 Dakota and in Minnesota serving as a visiting scholar
10 at Concordia College. I visited with political and
11 business leaders in the Dakota-Minnesota area because
12 I am firmly convinced that the greatest amount of
13 power in the United States flows out from there where
14 we have the largest concentration of senatorial
15 strength per capita. Also these people are looked
16 upon in Washington and throughout the nation
17 generally as more typical of America than anywhere else.
18 Their silence gives assent to things that are done
19 and that are not done. I spent six days out there
20 trying to convince these people that if our cities
21 are going to be saved they will have to be saved on
22 a different basis than people running around like
23 rats in a cage and not giving real thoughtful con-
24 cern to over-all problems. I said only crazy people
25 behave in this way. If we are going to have a

1 thoughtful consideration given to save our cities,
2 I feel that people who are solid, substantial people
3 like those in our middle west and who have the power,
4 are going to have to speak up for our cities. Well,
5 I don't know how much of a job of convincing that
6 I did but I got a very good press. They gave me
7 three long columns in the daily paper and put a
8 half hour documentary program featuring me on
9 television, plus gave me a good deal of other
10 television coverage. This is the kind of thing
11 I am doing.

12 This week I am off to Boston for real joy.
13 The Boston Society of Architects is having one of
14 its anniversaries this week, Thursday, Friday and
15 Saturday, and on Thursday I am to speak before them
16 and Thursday evening they will have a dress-up
17 dinner at which I will be among the honored guests.
18 The Mayor of Boston and his wife, the Vice President
19 of Boston College, the Dean of Architecture at
20 Princeton and his wife and my wife and myself will be there.

21 Q Why are you being so honored?

22 A One of the things was because I had
23 spoken, supposedly, far more eloquently about the
24 fact that cities are people and they were impressed
25 with the kind of thing I had been trying to say in my

1 book, "Black Power and Urban Unrest." It's the only
2 book published that deals with the problem of urban
3 life in terms of the dynamics of power with the
4 assumption that cities are people. This is the
5 kind of thesis that has impressed some of the
6 leaders of the centennial and for that reason I am
7 told they have asked that I come and help them to
8 give shape to some of the things that the architects
9 will be doing for our cities in the future.

0 Q I take it you are also interested in the
1 Tri-City Citizens Union for Progress?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Can you tell us what that is and in
4 particular the community organization for development?

5 A Surely. Throughout the country principally
6 religious organizations and our colleges have been
7 interested in organizing the poor for power. There
8 are several things that have been wrong with their
9 approach. The principal churches involved--Roman
10 Catholic, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian and
11 Episcopal--have done considerable real harm and
12 effective evil in this regard. They have put money
13 in organizations in good faith but which has had
14 an opposite effect in terms of not organizing people
15 for power but of disorganizing and fragmentizing communities.

1 Doctor Saul Alinsky, who has been the greatest
2 professional in this whole area of organization, has
3 done a very good job in devising tools for organization.
4 Unfortunately, however, his technique employs an
5 agenda which has been a devastating one in terms of
6 disorganising the poor and disorganizing black people.

7 MR. LEUCHTER: That's because of con-
8 centration on the neighborhood concept?

9 THE WITNESS: Sure. What you do is
10 to build up decisive power blocks. If you
11 take people who are powerless and give them
12 suddenly a "sense of power" on a neighbor-
13 hood basis, what happens is that this sense
14 of power is used like in the Congo. This
15 is unfortunate. Organizing black people on
16 the basis of poverty is a gross distortion
17 of the basic issue facing black people.
18 I feel that the anti- **poverty** program,
19 for instance, has done more than any single
20 endeavor to cause the current unrest in
21 our cities. Black people are not in a poor
22 box. They are in a box that is colored black.
23 It is foolhardy to look at a condition where
24 less than twenty-nine percent of the dis-
25 parity in income between black and non-black

1 people has anything remotely to do with
2 education, training and the like, (things
3 which the anti-poverty program deals
4 with), and define the condition as one calling
5 for education and job training programs.

6 If such a program of education and training
7 were one hundred percent successful it
8 would deal with less than thirty percent
9 of the problem. Are black people in a
0 poor box? Clearly no. The other seventy
1 percent of the cause relates to the
2 particularly powerless state of black
3 people to the perception of the community
4 as a whole of black people in terms of
5 their relationship with the community as
6 a whole.

7 What we have to do is to deal with
8 the power relation of black people and
9 deal also with the problem of identity on
0 the part of black people. Then we might
1 address ourselves to the issue of black
2 poverty. The anti-poverty program has
3 raised people's hopes and has the seeds for
4 all kinds of frustrations built into it.
5 All you have to do is start in with one

grand fictitious assumption build grandly
on that basis. The result will be that
you will go in a grand way in a wrong direction.

What we need in our cities is
thoughtful critiques and analyzes and
continuing reappraisals of our problems.

In a changing society we do not need
basically a specific program. What you
need is mechanisms by which the day to day
and week by week and year to year situation
may be reappraised and new definitions
of our particular difficulties analyzed.

Q Is it the function of your Tri-City
Citizens Union for Progress and community organization
and development to make this come about?

A This is for the purpose of doing two things.
One is that if black people in Newark were organized
on a neighborhood basis they would not have power.
There were 22,000 people involved in the protest
over the medical school site here in Newark this
July. As a result of all of their efforts the
Republicans joined with the Democrats in Trenton to
defeat the cause of these black people. You cannot
have power, real significant power, on a neighborhood
basis. In Newark or almost any of our major cities

1 today, with advanced urban problems, even if all
2 of the black people were organized, these cities
3 do not have the resources to deal with their mounting
4 problems. So we have to organize on a large enough
5 basis to have power to influence Trenton. If you
6 organize on a large enough basis to influence Trenton,
7 you also can influence Washington.

8 What we are developing is an organization or
9 a network of interlocking organizations between the
10 Paterson area, the greater Newark area and the
11 greater Jersey City area. In this way black people
12 may have authentic power.

13 Q Is this Tri-City Citizens Union for Progress
14 operating and functioning?

15 A Yes, it is, in a rudimentary way, and it
16 is being funded.

17 Q How is it being funded, privately?

18 A Privately, yes.

19 Q My understanding of this is that you have
20 a budget prepared and you have a thought as to
21 exactly where the money is coming from.

22 A Yes. There is money that is set aside
23 for it as soon as the final i's get dotted and the
24 t's get crossed.

25 Q This plan that you speak of is not in

1 the outline stage, it is more definitive than that,
2 isn't it?

3 A Yes. The thing is that one of the key
4 aspects of it is the fact that never in any community
5 throughout the nation has the black community as
6 a whole been brought together, or representatives
7 of it, so that the black community as a whole may do
8 what any sane businessman or family head would do
9 whenever they have a problem. That is to assess
10 their over-all needs and then as a whole in light
11 of their over-all needs to set their own priorities
12 to pledge initially their own resources and then ask,
13 if need be, for aid. It does not seem reasonable
14 for people to go into a black community like the
15 government often does and like business often does
16 and get together a group of local citizens and say,
17 "Gee, I've got a bright idea. Let's get up a nice
18 proposal and see what we can do with it." Who said
19 that there was going to be any kind of critical
20 appraisal of the proposal at all? This seems
21 ludicrous on its face.

22 MR. GIBBONS: Who said they wanted a
23 medical school?

24 THE WITNESS: Well, at any rate, what
25 we are doing is pulling together the most

1 widely diverse and representative segments
2 of the black community. This is the sort
3 of thing that I was concerned with in
4 pulling together the people who came to
5 the National Conference on Black Power.

6 Q This is marked tentatively that I am holding
7 up, "A proposal to further implement Tri-City
8 organizations for development utilizing whites,
9 integrated resources in Newark, Paterson and Jersey
10 City." Is this a reasonably accurate reflection
11 of what we are talking about when we say Tri-City
12 Associations?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Is this a political organization, would you
15 say?

16 A I imagine that anything that it does will
17 have a political implication but it is not a political
18 organization for tax purposes.

19 Q How long have you been in Newark?

20 A Three years. I was in Boston for seventeen.
21 I grew up in Ohio where our family had lived for one
22 hundred years.

23 Q That was Cincinnati?

24 A Yes, Cincinnati.

25 Q I am going to ask you some general concepts

1 now. *oh means integration plan? but not integration*

2 *as* What is the meaning of black power, what is the
3 concept as you see it and why is the term misunder-
4 stood? *attracting to white people. desegregation*

5 *mean* A It is actually the most creative social
6 concept that has been advanced in our present
7 century. One of the reasons why it is having
8 difficulty in being understood is because of the
9 fact that it breaks through a whole lot of the
10 incrustation in social, political and theological
11 thought. It speaks also to the most pervasive
12 problems in our society. They are the problem of
13 identity and the problem of the empowerment of life
14 for fulfillment. All throughout our lives we are
15 faced with these two pervasive problems of identity
16 and empowerment for fulfillment. Black people need
17 identity and power. Black power is simply the capacity
18 for black people to be able to become themselves.

19 *given* Q Were you ever an integrationist?

20 *real* A Well, let me say this: There is no rising
21 ethnic group in this nation, and I see them all here,
22 no rising ethnic group which has ever asked for any-
23 thing like integration as an end in itself under its
24 own leadership. Such groups have always asked for
25 something that was equivalent to desegregation

(which means integration plus), but not integration as an end in itself. The way so-called integration has worked out has been demeaning to black people and frustrating to white people. Desegregation means a clearing of the slate and the giving of people access to opportunity in such a way that other people's rights are not negated and all may find fulfillment. When you take forced integration as an end in itself, this involves a compromise of black people. It suggests that unless black people are in the presence of white people they have no worth. If the white man never saw a black man, that white man would not be diminished. If no black man ever saw a white man he wouldn't be diminished either except perhaps in a cosmic sense; and none of us but the Bishop here knows much about the cosmos.

The idea of forced integration as an end in itself is demeaning. The whole business of the government getting on this bandwagon clouds the racial issue in the schools. Black children do not need the presence of white children to learn. It is only when they are in the presence of upper enrichment of the life of the nation. It is not a white children that black children fare better in school. Why? Because they are in the presence of children who have a sense of their own identity and

1 who have a sense of power or control over their
2 destinies. Black children may clearly get that in
3 simpler ways.

4 black people. MR. LEUCHTER: In your view the term
5 a notion "integration" would merely be an end to
6 enforce segregation?

7 the black man. THE WITNESS: Yes. I would say that
8 what they ought to be talking about is de-
9 is. That segregation. Ever since the well known
10 the fact rejection in 1776 of King George's land
11 resources for colonial development, every ethnic
12 talents of group in this nation has executed its own
13 different plan for self-development. Other people
14 affirmatively should not define black people's goals.

15 Q Can you tell us the difference between the
16 civil rights movement and the impetus toward black
17 power? in this nation's life. I feel that is black

18 A The civil rights movement however good
19 and necessary has had a negative orientation. It
20 focused upon what black people were due. The impetus
21 toward black power is an entirely different thing.

22 Its emphasis is on using the latent power for the
23 enrichment of the life of the nation. It is not a
24 self-centered "give-me-something" endeavor.

25 The idea again of people asking for equality

1 is a demeaning thing. The Jews, for instance, have
2 not asked for equality. They emphasize excellence.
3 Who is against that? The whole business of having
4 black people make a request for equality reinforces
5 a notion or assumption of inferiority from the start.

6 Q Do you think there is a difference between
7 the black man and the white man?

8 A I think historically and culturally there
9 is. That our nation is in trouble today stems from
10 the fact that we haven't used all our nation's
11 resources. We have overlooked the rich, unused
12 talents of the black people. Their experiences are
13 different. If black people simply will look in an
14 affirmative way at the rich experience that has been
15 occasioned by their common blackness and consequent
16 oppression, they can become the most rich and ready
17 assets in this nation's life. I feel that if black
18 people simply realize their inheritance they can be
19 worth much more and add something that is unique and
20 saving in this nation's life. The Jews, for instance,
21 have served throughout history the sort of role that
22 they exercised in the old testament days. A people
23 who are in a society although not of it may always
24 serve a creative, rehabilitating and fulfilling
25 purpose. We speak of the concept of marginal man.

1 He is a person who in a real sense is a cast out to
2 the periphery of life. Here he gains a kind of
3 dramatic distance and can understand life down on
4 the center of the stage better than the people
5 who are there, who are the actors. This generates
6 what we call marginal insight and dramatic distance.
7 Marginal people may continually serve as creators,
8 as redeemers, as fulfillers in a society.

9 The Jews at their best have served this purpose
10 throughout history far more than almost any continuing
11 historical group. The black people today have
12 marginal insight but their lives are so marked by
13 self hate that they don't realize that they have in
14 their possession pots of gold.

15 Q What do you mean by this self hate?

16 A Our society negates anything that is
17 associated with blackness. Black people who have
18 sought harder than any other group in this nation's
19 life to enter into the main stream of American life
20 and to be like all others are cast as outsiders.
21 Black people are outsiders and they want to be on
22 the inside. One of the things that the insiders
23 do is to have a mild distain for blackness. So
24 black people have a more than mild distain for black-
25 ness. So there have been rising crimes of violence

1 and rising crimes that are marks of self hate since
2 the impetus towards integration.

3 The kind of distorted emphasis which we have
4 placed on so-called integration is doubtless behind
5 the rising sense of worthlessness among black people.
6 This alone could have been a pre-disposing factor
7 for the kind of general unrest that we are having.
8 It is mounting and will probably continue to mount
9 up through the early 1970's.

10 The tendency toward narcotics addiction is
11 related to a negative identity. A good many of the
12 other problems which have been increasing among
13 black people also are related to growing signs of
14 self hate. There was a brief article which I thought
15 I had with me by a psychiatrist at Tufts University
16 that indicated this trend.

17 MR. LEUCHTER: What you are saying is
18 not that it is inherent, but this is
19 created by the society?

20 THE WITNESS: Yes, certainly. But
21 black people should be thoughtful enough
22 to do something about it. One of the real
23 binds that we are in is the fact that black
24 people, in order to survive and not be in
25 a position of committing suicide over the

1 years, have had to be ostrich-headed and
2 to bury their heads in the sand. Black
3 people also because of limitation of
4 professions open to them have not been
5 encouraged to think. In fact, they tend
6 not to go in any profession where thinking
7 has been required. We do not have black
8 people who are thinkers; and today we need
9 it. Our able lawyers are men who are able
10 barristers but not people who have
11 creativity, for example, in the basic art
12 of jurisprudence. In fact, they could
13 not have survived if this had been their
14 orientation.

15 There was a celebrated study done on
16 Roman Catholics by a professor at the
17 Catholic University of America a decade
18 ago demonstrating where even when they
19 went into higher education Roman Catholics
20 picked out specialties and sub-specialties
21 where memorization counted.

22 The same thing is true among black
23 people. We need thoughtful black people
24 and yet we do not have them. Our leaders
25 are not basically thinkers. They are

1 have been practitioners. Thus they will often un-
2 us have be critically buy into and administer anti-
3 refuse to poverty programs that are calculated to
4 and say, devastate black people and which do not
5 me in the even define the basic problems of black
6 people.

7 black people I have done this very same thing and
8 do over the have been a part of all of this self-
9 of success defeating process. It was only very hard
10 thoughtful realities which have made me begin to raise
11 the task of hard questions. Perhaps also some small
12 part is played by the fact that our family,
13 which comes from a tradition of four
14 where we generations of college trained black people,
15 various has tended to always raise questions.

16 is this what The so-called decade of progress
17 and will between 1955 and 1965 was perhaps the
18 greatest decade of relative retrogression
19 fact is of black people in relation to America as
20 black people a whole in this present century. That it
21 It is the was a decade of relative retrogression can
22 States the be documented from government statistics.

23 Q And, Doctor Wright, those statistics are
24 contained in your book?

25 A Yes, some of them are and some of them

1 have been updated. The efforts on the part of all of
2 us have been done in good faith. Only an old man will
3 refuse to look back on what he has done with openness
4 and say, 'Well, I did that in good faith but it took
5 me in the wrong direction. Let us reassess.'

6 Yet the failure to reassess is prevalent and
7 black people cannot afford it. What I have tried to
8 do over the past few years with some limited measure
9 of success is to bring together some of the most
10 thoughtful, creative black people in the nation for
11 the task of black reassessment.

12 (Discussion off the record.)

13 Q We have reached a point, Doctor Wright,
14 where we were discussing your thoughts of bringing
15 various groups of Negro leadership together. Now
16 is this what prompted the Black Power Conference
17 and will you tell us about that?

18 A Yes. As I had mentioned earlier, the
19 fact is that black people are not in a poor box but
20 black people are in a box that is colored black.
21 It is the general status of black people in the United
22 States that gives the basic shape to our particular
23 condition. We have felt that this idea of organizing
24 the so-called black poor was distorting our problem
25 because all black people are relatively poor in

1 relation to white Americans.

2 I had a judge recently drive this point home
3 to me, and I think the good Mr. Brown here can
4 affirm this. This particular judge was from the
5 Federal Court in Detroit. He said, "If I let a
6 white prisoner out of jail and give him a suit of
7 clothes and \$5 and I followed that prisoner around
8 town, that prisoner's \$5 would go farther than mine."

9 Who is poor? Who is better off? Our basic condition
10 is one of blackness. So what we have tried to do is
11 get black people as a whole together to pool their
12 talents and to pool their resources and insights.

13 Also there is a growing awareness of the so-
14 called militant young black people, that they cannot
15 achieve their goals unless they have people like the
16 Loftons, the Browns, the Bishop Taylors and others
17 who are not only close to and sensitive to their
18 experience but also have the training to articulate
19 them. If you have training so that you can articulate,
20 you are to that extent middle class.

21 This whole business of class raises some
22 interesting problems. For instance, our anti-
23 poverty boards chiefly are made up of people who
24 have control of existing resources.

25 When we talk about the problems of the poor,

1 what does this do? It divides the black community
2 because of the fact that you have people who represent
3 the city government and white controlled social
4 agencies; and these people are related to largely
5 untutored black people. Even though an Attorney
6 Brown or Lofton may get on an anti-poverty board,
7 there is generally a minority of trained articulate
8 black people. We need all of the competencies of
9 all segments of the black community to deal with
10 problems of black people from the inside. The clear
11 need is for all segments of the black community to
12 get together on the agenda of the militants who
13 rightly define our problem as one of blackness.
14 There has been an emotional over-reaction for the
15 need to black people to get together to develop
16 needed power and identity.

17 I was asked to serve as chairman of the
18 Planning Committee for the National Conference on
19 Black Power after Representative Adam Clayton Powell
20 had withdrawn as chairman of the Planning Committee.
21 In early December of last year members of the
22 committee met and after much lively discussion and
23 which I was the center of much criticism as being
24 the middle class type, I was chosen as chairman.

25 Q Can you tell me in general terms what groups

1 were pulled together and came to the conference?

2 A Yes. Actually it was the most widely
3 representative assembly of black people ever pulled
4 together for any such substantial purpose in the
5 nation's history. One unfortunate thing was that
6 it was held in the metropolitan area. This meant
7 that the conference attracted some people who
8 possibly simply came out of curiosity. Some of these
9 were not able to pay their conference cost. Since
10 we did not want these people to have nothing to do
11 in Newark so close on the heels of the recent
12 disturbances, we incurred a substantial deficit by
13 admitting everyone who sought admission. We feel
14 that this was a service to the citizens of Newark
15 and of the state. We are still in the process of
16 clearing up some of this unexpected expense.

17 The conference itself had representatives of
18 one hundred ninety organizations. We had a large
19 number of executives of local branches of the NAACP
20 and other national organizations present.

21 The NAACP gave us ten minutes at a session of
22 their July annual convention in Boston to explain the
23 workings of the National Conference on Black Power
24 and to ask for registrants and to pass out registration
25 forms. When Committee in New Jersey and he detailed

1 As Mr. Roy Wilkins has indicated to me, we do
2 need dialogue on power for black people. At our
3 conference we had the most widely representative
4 range of thinking within the black community itself.
5 This was an historic occurrence because the black
6 people have indicated that they want to move away
7 from the business of demanding rights to the business
8 of devising ways whereby their potential, their
9 power may be used not only for their own fulfillment
10 but also for enrichment of the life of the whole
11 nation.

12 Q What did you do behind the closed doors?

13 A We held a study symposium. We had fourteen
14 parallel work shops where we had over one hundred
15 papers dealing analytically with specific problems
16 in the life of the black people. This was the most
17 substantial symposium held on power for the powerless
18 in the history of this nation.

19 It was interesting that on the Saturday of our
20 conference the New York Times editorialized that the
21 most significant thing for the internal peace and
22 fulfillment of the nation that was going on was the
23 National Conference on Black Power. It was suggested
24 that this was far more important than the Governor's
25 Blue Ribbon Committee in New Jersey and he detailed

1 the things that we were doing.

2 Then, as a result of two things of which did
3 not happen or which were distorted, the Times
4 changed its stand on Monday and said that the
5 conference was a racist affair.

6 It was said that the conference passed a racist
7 resolution calling for a separate state. This is
8 not true. No such thing happened. There was a
9 resolution entertained which, in effect, developed
10 the thesis of Michael Harrington, that white America
11 was creating two Americas, one of mounting want, one
12 of mounting affluence, one of unchecked power and
13 one of gross powerlessness. It recommended that this
14 conference explore the possibility of dialogue about
15 these two Americas. What could be more gracious than
16 that?

17 Black people today realize that there is no
18 profit in being anti anything and the conference
19 was not anti-white.

20 It was also reported that we threw out the press
21 men, which we did not. A number of newspapers beginning
22 four, five days after the conference printed news
23 stories indicating the fact that this was not true.
24 A week or more after the conference I spoke with one
25 of the reporters from The Christian Science Monitor.

1 He asked me would I do him a favor.

2 I said, "I would do a favor even for the devil."

3 He said, "Why would you say that to me?"

4 I indicated this was because his paper acted
5 effectively in a diabolical way with regard to the
6 National Conference on Black Power.

7 He said, "What do you mean? I covered the
8 conference as it was."

9 I said, "No, you didn't." I told him about the
10 fellows who broke into that press conference.
11 Allegedly these five fellows have broken up meetings
12 all over the east coast from Boston down to Washington,
13 and I said, "Did you say that in the paper?"

14 He said, "No. But that so-called racist
15 resolution, I know that was true."

16 I asked, "Was it?"

17 The upshot was that the reporter said, "Let me
18 speak with my superiors and see what we can do be-
19 cause our paper always wants to be fair."

20 Mr. Fortunato, do you want to hold up that sheet?

21 Q I have this article dated Monday,
22 September 18, 1967, from The Christian Science Monitor
23 with questions asked by that reporter of you and your
24 answers, and you covered such things there as "Who
25 were the young Negroes that broke into the press

1 conference at the Black Power Conference?"

2 in a Yes. They gave me four-fifths of a page
3 because they said they could not afford to be a
4 party to the distortion of something which they
5 felt in retrospect was a very significant experience
6 in the life of this nation.

7 whites as well. MR. GIBBONS: Who is this Kendall
8 Holt, Rine Smith?

9 make my book. THE WITNESS: I don't know.

10 who is he? MR. LEUCHTER: But he is one of these
11 one proper people that broke into this press conference?

12 heard of one. THE WITNESS: I am told that he is.
13 basis and I am told also that he is one of those that
14 life. He caused the Mayor of New York to leave a
15 within the celebration on 125th Street.

16 to Q Why riots? And what can the concept of
17 black power do right now to avert further rioting?

18 A Let me answer the two questions separately.

19 One is that the thesis of my present book, "Ready to
20 Riot," is that if we look at our problems in our
21 cities candidly it is pretty clear that according to
22 our present resources and present patterns of be-
23 havior our problems are mounting faster than our
24 resources. It is also clear that we haven't even
25 defined our problems properly. Hence it is

1 understandable why our teachers often have a tendency
2 in our urban schools to go into an escapism and to
3 bury their heads in the sand. It is also understand-
4 able why police and other officials often appear to
5 be repressive. They have impossible tasks to perform.

6 In light of this there is small wonder that the
7 whites as well as the black are not ready to riot.
8 Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Publishers, asked me to
9 make my book a minimum of eighty pages.

10 ~~these~~ It is amazing to me that I have not seen any
11 one proposal for the regeneration of our cities or
12 heard of one that takes into consideration the most
13 basic and elementary fact in the dynamics of urban
14 life. The problems in our cities are not generated
15 within the environment of cities; problems come on
16 to cities by accretion, that is from without. When
17 a suburban or rural community has problem people it
18 deports these people to the city. The bulk of our
19 problems come from the outside. Hence to deal with
20 problems in our cities through the environment of
21 children is fictitious. Problems come on to cities
22 through an adult environment.

23 ~~No~~ The head start program or pre-school council
24 in a city may serve many good purposes but it is
25 not going to solve the basic problem of the city.

1 I went up to Hartford Seminary Foundation to
2 speak to a group there. While there I went to the
3 home of one of the professors and talked with his
4 twelve year old son about the dynamics of urban
5 life.

6 I shared with him this general proposition:
7 "The cities have people who are generally dumber
8 than the people who live in the suburbs, they are
9 less self-directed and are more irresponsible than
10 those in the suburbs."

11 I explained that you can state things in the
12 social sciences as generalizations without saying
13 "generally this is true," because social science
14 statements are generalizations.

15 Hence, one can say: "dumber people live in
16 the cities; irresponsible people live in the cities
17 and the non-self-directed people live in the cities."

18 Little Michael Duffy asked, "Is this really
19 true?"

20 I said, "These are true statements. Now see if
21 you can tell me why".

22 With a little probing, Michael began explaining.
23 He first said, "Now if somebody lived out in one of
24 the small towns outside of Hartford and was born
25 blind, that person would move to downtown Hartford."

1 "Why", I asked.

2 Michael said, "The blind person wouldn't have
3 to memorize as many walking patterns to go to the
4 doctor and to go to the store."

5 I said, "There you go, you are on the right
6 track."

7 People whose lives are marked by all kinds of
8 blemishes and blotches can blend in with the landscape
9 in our cities. Cities are ports of entry for the
10 diseased, for the disabled and for the dispossessed.
11 Our cities are the cesspools of human life. They
12 are the refuse heaps of our society and they should
13 never have to pay their own way. Society as a whole
14 should pay for the cities.

15 For instance, here in Newark it is absolutely
16 foolhardy for black people to ask Newark to pay for
17 better schools. The city cannot afford it. Every
18 dollar invested for better education is a dollar
19 lost to the city of Newark because as soon as a
20 person reaches the twelfth grade in education, if
21 they have a good education they will tend to move
22 over the line, into East Orange or beyond.

23 Who should pay for this? Even the whole concept
24 of local boards of education may be brought into
25 question in a society where few grow up and spend their

1 adult life in the same community in which they were
2 educated.

3 We deeply need a thoughtful re-examination of
4 broad issues affecting every aspect of our urban life.
5 My feeling is that we should pull together some of
6 the most thoughtful people in the most hard pressed
7 communities in our nation. We should pull them to-
8 gether to serve like the Jews of old as creative
9 remnants in our society today. In this way we build
10 new and much needed resources to deal with survival
11 concerns and the perilous plight in our nation's
12 cities.

13 Q I asked the question before of why riots
14 and I was interrupted from the answer that you gave,
15 part of it, that in effect you were saying the
16 problem of riots is nothing more or less than a
17 reflection of the problems of the cities.

18 A Yes. There is no such thing as integration

19 Q And the second question which I asked, there
20 and it seems to me you started to explain how or
21 what black power can do to avert riots, and you started
22 to elaborate on that.

23 A Yes. The powerlessness in the life of the
24 black communities in our cities is reflected far more
25 critical in many ways than the white community as a whole.

1 This is compounded with the pervasive problem of
2 self hate in black people.

3 Our psychiatrists, and particularly our black
4 psychiatrists, have really been doing a tremendous
5 job this past year in documenting the rise in self
6 hate among black people during the period in which
7 the black institution has been de-valued. When we
8 talk about desegregation we mean integration but
9 integration the way it has been unfolded has been a
10 partial concept that has negated the black people.
11 It needs to be put into a much larger framework.
12 This must be done in a way that does not compromise
13 and demean the worth of black people, in particular
14 the black professional. The black professional has
15 been more compromised than any other segment of the
16 black people. So black people must get together and
17 reassess the kind of compromise that is being made
18 of black people. There is no such thing as integration
19 between unequals. This can take place only when there
20 are equitable power relations.

21 Q Well, how will the black power concept be
22 applied? And let's take that in general terms and
23 specifically.

24 A I can tell you in general terms. My feeling
25 is that the race problem in this nation will never be

1 solved. It can be resolved or bypassed by two things.
2 One is that black power, as we said, speaks to the
3 pervasive problem of identity and empowerment for
4 fulfillment. When black people first learn to
5 respect their blackness several things will happen.
6 One is that a person who respects himself, how another
7 feels about him means proportionately less. Nobody
8 is going to respect anyone who doesn't respect him-
9 self. When black people come to have a sense of
10 wholesome pride in their condition that has been
11 defined in our culture as blackness, then white people
12 and the culture of the whole will have a different
13 thing to deal with. You will not be dealing with
14 people who loathe themselves but with people who have
15 an aggressive sense of their own identity and worth.
16
17 The other thing is that when black people get
18 together and build a sense of pride, just the fact
19 that they have gotten together also builds power.
20 Power and identity are related. Black people will
21 then become a force to be reckoned with.

22 It was interesting after the esteemed Governor
23 of New Jersey, upon some very bad and partial advice,
24 downgraded the National Conference on Black Power.
25 The very day that the conference began the Governor
of New Jersey was off in Florida at a meeting with a

1 labor union, the longshoremen. He quoted DeTocqueville
2 who spoke of the American trait of seeking out people
3 who agreed with one's opinions or whose condition had
4 things in common. DeTocqueville said that such
5 people no longer were isolated men but, after combining
6 their interests, became an effective "power seen from
7 afar."

8 The Governor was speaking before the longshoremen,
9 praising them for developing power and for coming to-
10 gether to develop self esteem. He was praising them,
11 at the same time that he had been expressing a great
12 deal of fear, apprehension, hostility and in part
13 contempt in relation to black people who were seeking
14 to get together.

15 For the peace of this nation as well as for the
16 fulfillment of all of us, black people must get to-
17 gether. They must get together so that they may see
18 and sense their own worth and add their unused power
19 and potential for national fulfillment.

20 MR. GIBBONS: Doctor Wright, assuming
21 that this Commission which is charged with
22 recommending possible legislation, assuming
23 that we agree with your general thesis that
24 the power is one of identity and empower-
25 ment for fulfillment or self awareness on

1 the part of the black people--

2 THE WITNESS: May I just say one thing
3 before you finish?

4 These are pervasive problems in the
5 life of the nation. People who go to jail
6 go there because of a false identity problem.

7 Ninety-nine percent of the automobile
8 accident cases are made up of people with
9 false identity problems. This is a pervasive
10 problem.

11 MR. GIBBONS: But specifically with
12 the problem that you are concerned with,
13 the identity and self awareness of black
14 people, what could this Commission recommend
15 in the way of legislature to engender the
16 development of that self identity? The
17 reason I put it in those terms is that you
18 mentioned the Governor's reaction to a
19 labor union and legislature certainly in
20 the 1930's went far toward developing a
21 sense of self awareness among members of
22 the labor unions.

23 THE WITNESS: Sure. Well, let me say
24 this: That I have detailed a number of
25 approaches in my book "Black Power and Urban Unrest

1 and I would detail others, but what we need
2 most basically is to have some kind of
3 mechanism made up of creative minds, people
4 related to our situation, who can help our
5 Governor, who can help the legislature in
6 terms of adequate problem definition. Now
7 I would say this is the most basic thing.

8 Also important is a mechanism by which
9 the pervasive needs in the black community
10 in particular may be reassessed, utilizing
11 the most widely diverse insights and
12 competencies of black people. So that I
13 would say that some kind of mechanism for coming
14 to grips with these problems is much more
15 basic than specific solutions. I set forth
16 this proposition before you now. And yet I
17 seem to say that the specific solutions set
18 forth in the book are the best. But I say
19 this is the belief that these mechanisms
20 are basic. People, however, are not
21 satisfied with systems or principles. They
22 want even in a self defeating way to be
23 confronted with programs. I have constructed
24 the system by which programs may be gauged
25 as to their ameliorative nature or their

1 basic recreative potential; whether these
2 things certainly ameliorate or whether
3 they bring general rehabilitation. This
4 is the only contribution that is apparently
5 unique in my book, "Black Power and Urban
6 Unrest; Creative Possibilities."

7 I know I am going beyond your specific
8 question to indicate something which is
9 far more basic. But that I think needs to
10 be done. And I am just appalled when I
11 see the state government, for instance,
12 set up a Department of Community Affairs
13 and have it headed by a Paul Ylisaker out
14 of the Ford Foundation, however fine a
15 person he may be, instead of having it
16 headed by the man who can use his own
17 cultural experience, and deal in the most
18 creative and sensitive way with the kind
19 of basic problems that our cities are going
20 to face. This obviously is no personal
21 criticism of a truly great person. What
22 is suggested here is that the crucial
23 problems of black people which are the root
24 of our current urban distress may be used in
25 a felicitous way for the benefit of all.

1 If you deal with the problems of black
2 people in the most substantial thoughtful
3 ways and in ready terms, what you have done
4 is to have built in resources for gaining
5 a hold on the harder to grasp problems in
6 the life of the white community or of the
7 community as a whole. We are not making
8 use of competent black people to the extent
9 that we should. In this state, here in
10 New Jersey, we are not making use of the
11 really creative minds of our black people.
12 I would say that is far more basic than
13 anything else.

14 I would say that one of the most basic
15 ways of dealing with this problem of
16 identity in black people is to do two
17 things: One is to try to slant problems
18 that deal with your approaches to urban
19 rebuilding in such a way that a pre-requisite
20 for any kind of rebuilding is that of the
21 most widely representative consensus in the
22 total black community.

23 People may immediately suggest that
24 this is race preference. Yet these same
25 people may not say that it is separatists

1 if you get together as poor people.

2 If the nation wants a particular
3 problem solved it has to get those people
4 together who represent that particular
5 problem and we have got to say this in the
6 most unashamed way.

7 I think that with the number of clever
8 legal statesmen here we could devise some
9 legislation. In deed in my book on "Black
10 Power and Urban Unrest," the chapter entitled
11 Public Education Battleground offers
12 suggestions in this regard. Then again you
13 have a very sophisticated legal mind here
14 in Mr. Fortunato who arranged against many
15 difficulties to get me to come down here
16 today.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN BROWN: That's white
18 power.

19 THE WITNESS: No. Black power
20 utilizing white resources. We don't want
21 a white agenda.

22 MR. GIBBONS: Do you envision some
23 sort of on-coming program with government
24 growing out of this Tri-City Citizens
25 Conference?

1 THE WITNESS: What we do actually is
2 set up a mechanism by which the representatives
3 of the black community as a whole and not
4 segments of the black community may make
5 an assessment of our over-all needs.

6 The black community as a whole must
7 also state its over-all priorities. Black
8 people need to be far more mutually than
9 they are even as within other ethnic groups.
10 For instance, if you get together unemployed
11 poor people and ask them to pledge resources,
12 they may not have much. But Ray Brown and
13 Oliver Lofton have plenty and I have a few
14 cents. The important thing is that we have
15 to get together representatives of the black
16 community as a whole to deal with our
17 unique problems.

18 I have set forth a design in my book
19 for continuing planning instruments in our
20 society. If these kinds of planning in-
21 struments were devised, organizations of
22 black people would fit in the most unself-
23 conscious way so that the people wouldn't
24 think of their getting together as primarily
25 an organization of black people but as an

1 organization of discrete entities within
2 an over-all community.

3 I shall be working several evenings
4 a month in New Haven, Connecticut, where
5 I shall be pulling together leadership
6 from across the black community. I shall
7 be doing the same thing with white decision
8 makers there, having them meet as white
9 people to respond to the agenda set up by
10 the black community as a whole.

11 MR. GIBBONS: Do you think specifically
12 in terms of New Jersey you can accomplish
13 the same thing?

14 THE WITNESS: Yes, certainly. Under
15 an over-all planning instrument where this
16 isn't the surface thing that is seen but
17 where you see a broad planning mechanism
18 whereby all kinds of discrete elements are
19 brought together, this is possible. For
20 instance, where regional agencies would be
21 brought together to deal with certain
22 problems, where county agencies will be
23 brought together, where agencies that would
24 deal with problems in the academic community
25 would be brought together, black people also

1 could be brought together in a total plan
2 of organization.

3 In the context of organizing many
4 discrete elements, the pulling together
5 of black people does take on a seemingly
6 ominous look.

7 MR. GIBBONS: I don't think of it in
8 terms of ominous. I am thinking in terms
9 of who you deal with in government. What
10 mechanism is there on the state level that
11 this Tri-City group can deal with?

12 MR. FORTUNATO: I have indicated to
13 Doctor Wright that he would be finished by
14 11 o'clock.

15 THE WITNESS: Let me say this to you:
16 I am willing at any time to sit down in
17 a serious, thoughtful, reflective dialogue
18 with anyone and I am willing to do it here
19 and if there is anyone that is seriously
20 interested in exploring things, I would be
21 glad to do it. If it's serious enough I
22 would be glad to share in preparing tentative
23 designs indicating how these things can be
24 done.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN BROWN: Doctor Wright,

1 JAMES P. you only have about five minutes. When you
2 BY MR. P. saw me going around the table I suggested
3 Q something to the Chairman that we want to
4 us, please talk to you about which would be in this
5 and just area. So rather than cramp you, you only
6 have five minutes, we would like to talk
7 Newark. to you off the record.

8 THE WITNESS: Certainly.

9 Q And MR. LEUCHTER: Is there any possibility,
10 that. Doctor Wright, of your schedule permitting
11 you to meet again with us in this kind of
12 County very reflective discussion which you have
13 of absence just talked about?

14 (Discussion off the record.)

15 Department three and a half years.
16 Q Could you very briefly check for us the
17 organization of your fire department?
18 A Yes. We have a total of 1,000 people in
19 our department. Outside of the small administrative
20 staff of ten people, the rest of the department is
21 divided into four divisions--Fire Prevention, Fire-
22 Fighting, Communications and Special Services. Under
23 our Fire Fighting of course is our twenty-five engine
24 companies, twelve ladder companies, two salvage units,
25 rescue unit and a fire boat.