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## "Listen white America" Commissioner Arricale speaks

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# "Listen white America"

## Commissioner Arricale speaks

"Listen White America, really listen for a change. You can go to war overnight, you can go to the moon almost overnight, and you'd better build a city overnight, because the ghetto Negroes are out on the streets now but I don't know where they will be tomorrow." Frank C. Arricale, New York City deputy housing commissioner, made this appeal during his lecture "The Long Hot Summer" Wednesday evening, May 1, in the Maine Lounge of the Memorial Union.

Mr. Arricale, deputy commissioner of the Department of Relocation and Management Services of the Housing and Development Administration of the City of New York, spoke at the request of the Interfaith Council of Chaplains, who wished to provide students with an insight into possible racial unrest in the cities this summer.

Most radicals and conservatives agree that the welfare system "stinks," said the commissioner. One problem is that we have a dependency cycle with third and fourth generations on welfare, but the scandal of welfare is that 80 per cent of the Negroes on relief are living on incomes below the poverty level. "These people don't even have second class citizenship, but second class humanity," said Arricale.

We should at least bring the black man up to the level of immigrant poverty, continued Arricale. Many immigrants did face physical poverty, but their soul was not destroyed and they always had their family to fall back on. But the Negro has no family—slavery destroyed it.

"We learned from Hitler that the worst result of discrimination is that the victim comes to believe the victimizer," Arricale said. To add to this, middle class Americans constantly reinforce this belief by giving the Negro inferior schools, inferior homes, inferior stores, and inferior jobs. Then, after his insides are destroyed, they ask "Why don't you get off your haunches and help yourself?" The physical, psychological, and spiritual deprivation of the Negro has destroyed his inner self—making self-motivation almost impossible.

As a result of this psychological rape of the Negro, a rape of the soul, they are "engulfed by frustration and despair for which death has no meaning because they are in a living death," said the commissioner. There are no longer causes for riots, but occasions for riots because a look, comment, or incident can easily change the anger

and frustration into violence.

"So what can be done?" asked Arricale. What can be done about the ghetto problems? What can be done about the 80,000 unemployed and unemployable Negroes in New York City? What can be done about the 100,000 ghetto families on the waiting list for public housing, although only 5000 new apartments will be available this year?

To answer these questions the commissioner outlined his own AID program: Awareness, Interaction, and Development. For a beginning he stated there is no substitute for awareness. Middle Class Americans must become aware of what Black Power and Negro problems are, because if they become aware and understand them, they have the beginning of a solution. Black Power is not apartheid, Arricale said, but a step toward integrity through a power base. It is a "repair of that rape of his ego," continued the commissioner, "a repair that comes through the Black Power consciousness that Black is beautiful, Black is good."

Interaction is the next phase of Mr. Arricale's AID program. Just don't come in and give services, he advised, but force black and white people together to ask for it through confrontations and interaction. The Negro needs the white man's social power and political power. Arricale stated, "not a bunch of condescending hippies who are working out their own psychological hang-ups."

Not only do the Negroes have difficulties, Arricale continued, but also many middle class Americans have problems—unrest, boredom, hippies, LSD, and affluence. He added that maybe in a spirit of humility Americans could recognize their own problems when they begin to work with Negroes. "Maybe middle class Americans could regain their own traditional values by applying them where they do not now exist, but are wanted," stated the commissioner.

This interaction between white middle class Americans and Negroes should take place fraternally not paternally, Arricale stated; one should approach the Negro as a brother, not as a son. To build up the community by togetherness, Arricale emphasized that it is important that Americans recognize that prejudices, racism, and scapegoatism are part of middle class America.

There are two catalytic forces to get the black man back into the mainstream of the democratic pro-

cess, Arricale stated. One catalytic is anger as used by the anti-poverty people. They make Negroes aware of the horror so that they will protest, motivate their anger into organization, and thus get into the mainstream of society. The other catalytic force is love. Commented Arricale, one person tried using love as a catalytic force but he was murdered a few weeks ago. He added that it is a shame that anger instead of love has to be the organizational force, because anger is a double-edged sword. If it is not vital enough to channel energies into organization or if it is frustrated in its objectives you have an unharnessed anger. "What happens then?" Arricale asked.

This unharnessed anger is the reason why there must be a step beyond awareness and interaction, Arricale stated. That step is development. The history of revolutions show that revolutionaries are those people who have seen the good life but couldn't obtain it because of artificial barriers. One method of further development, the poverty program, was a success, "but there wasn't a new deal to go along with it so people could see change as they reached out," Arricale said. "The result was compounded frustration."

Arricale recommended a national welfare program with dignity as a beginning step in development. "The poor shouldn't have to earn basic decencies to which we are born," said the commissioner, "they should at least receive welfare assistance up to the poverty level."

He urged that churches expand their work in the ghettos and that more fortunate Americans give some of their time and resources to the ghettos. Commissioner Arricale added that many jobs and training programs are needed—a massive New Deal, because unless you have housing and jobs then training and education will merely frustrate the Negro more.

We must reorder our priorities, emphasized the commissioner. We are teaching man to walk in outer space yet he can't walk safely in his own neighborhood. "Who's the hell cares who gets there first if we're living in hell holes on earth?" asked Arricale.

When asked what part the state might play in supporting his plans, he replied "the states are irrelevant to us—just another hurdle to overcome to get to Washington, and Washington had better come through because we've shot our load and we're waiting for an encore."