



Bruce Davidson, MAGNUM

POLITICAL BROKERS

In light of recent events in Newark and in the nation it may be difficult to recall how little political power black communities in America had 12 years ago. In the remote days of the early sixties Martin Luther King, Jr. was just gaining national recognition, integration was still a controversial concept, and blacks relied heavily on white support and resources to fuel the civil rights movement.

Ten years later Newark was to become the first large eastern city to elect a black mayor. This feat dramatically brought to the nation's attention a process that had been evolving for years which involved the gradual shifting of power from the Irish-Americans to the Italian-Americans and then to the blacks. The

media, seeing it as a heart-warming American success story, soon inflated the Kenneth Gibson story to Lincolnnesque dimensions.

It would be easy to let the drama of the event distort its actual political impact. A look at Newark's political history over the past decade puts the rise of Kenneth Gibson into a more telling perspective.

Although comprising 34 percent of the population in 1960, blacks were conspicuous by their absence from many facets of the city's life. Black political power consisted of councilman Irvine Turner's organization in the Central Ward. It was built on the misery of the inhabitants who placed less value on their votes than on the things the Irvine Turner Association could offer in

exchange, thus repeating a pattern experienced by the poor immigrants in other cities. In 1953, the year Turner was elected, blacks had no evidence that their votes directed elsewhere would result in improving their living conditions, while Turner's inducements were real.

John O'Shea, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, characterized the councilman as follows:

Turner, who controls about 17,000 votes, practices a personal, bread-and-butter kind of politics in the classic tradition of the American ward boss of the nineteenth century. He boasts that he feeds more Negroes every week than the Newark welfare department—each morning the lines of supplicants queue outside his High Street home, and few are turned away without something, even if only a promise. Turner also controls dozens of patronage jobs paying thousands of dollars annually.

Although this is an exaggerated account of Turner's power it is characteristic of his style. The councilman also used negative inducements to restrain potential rivals and other possible sources of trouble in his constituency. Ron Porambo, author of *No Cause for Indictment*, writes that as a former reporter for a Negro weekly, Turner copied names from the police blotter of persons involved in unsavory incidents for possible later use against them. The fact that he was most concerned about his own advancement and rewards should not negate the fact that his ability to organize the black vote—and use it effectively when the balance of power in the city began to change—allowed the blacks to receive a share of the spoils. Without organization, they could have been ignored by all political interests.

In the 1962 elections Turner supported Hugh J. Addonizio against the incumbent Mayor Leo P. Carlin. Turner's chief criticism of Carlin was that he had not acted on his choices for patronage appointments. At that time the mayor was as insensitive as most other white politicians in the city (and the nation) to the needs of the black community.

Italian-Americans shared political power with the Irish-Americans and had elected several councilmen under the new charter and commissioners under the old. Italian power could become the dominant force in Newark politics if an anti-city-hall coalition could be forged and blacks were the likely candidates to join.

When Hugh Addonizio decided to run for mayor, he was completing his fourteenth year in Congress and was 48 years of age. He was not a stranger to the black voters since part of his congressional district included Irvine Turner's Central Ward. While in Congress, Addonizio had supported the moderate to liberal programs of the national Democratic Party and was thereby considered a progressive legislator and a "friend" of the Negro. While some political influentials like Turner joined Addonizio in hopes of enhancing their own positions at city hall, others genuinely welcomed him as a liberal reformist concerned about the poor, the

blacks and the deteriorating conditions in the city.

Addonizio's strategy was to exploit the tensions among the groups in the city while appearing to take the high road. His slogan, "A Man For All The People" was contradicted by his behavior. He appealed to the Italians' resentment of the Irish domination of the city's politics by charging that Carlin ran a machine that dominated city hall for 20 years. He expanded on this theme by denouncing Essex County Democratic Chairman Dennis Carey's (another Irishman) endorsement of Carlin as another example of the mayor's indebtedness to a sinister political organization.

For Newark's blacks, Addonizio promised better schools, more housing and a decrease in crime. While not appealing to them directly for fear of alienating his major supporters, he left the impression that their days of exclusion from city hall would come to an end. So black voters gave Addonizio a large vote—they simply could not identify with the Carlin administration.

Addonizio attacked the *Newark Evening News* and the big business interests in the city, both strong supporters of Carlin. He charged that the *News* and the Public Service Electric and Gas Company had their property assessments reduced while homeowners were caught in a spiral of increasing taxes—a particularly sore point with the large number of Italian-American small homeowners. Carlin was pictured as the "darling of big business" while Addonizio was the "man for all the people."

Carlin was on the defensive. After eight years as mayor and a stint as a city commissioner before that, it was irrelevant to voters whether he was the cause of the city's problems or simply doing the best job possible under the circumstances. Newark was changing and Carlin failed to take notice.

Carlin could do little more than defend his record in office, which proved to be an ineffective strategy. As the campaign became heated and joint appearances of the candidates became unruly, Carlin charged Addonizio with appealing to ethnic interests and dividing the city. He continued by linking his opponent's campaign with the Mafia and probably alienated what little support he had in the Italian-American sections of the city. Addonizio charged Carlin with slandering all Italians and refused to shake his hand following the debate.

Addonizio did have friends who were publicly linked with organized crime but some of these associations dated back to childhood friendships and in many ways resembled relationships among businessmen (honest and corrupt) who attended the same schools, Ivy League colleges and worked their way up through the corporate structure. Ron Porambo reports that Addonizio received campaign contributions from Anthony Caponigro (\$5,000), Anthony Boiardo (\$10,000), Ham Dolasio (\$5,000) and Angelo De Carlo (\$5,000), but there is no direct evidence that he was beholden to or controlled by organized crime figures when he first ran for office. Those who controlled gambling, drugs, numbers and prostitution were influential in the city and

state for years before Addonizio's election. A distinction between bribery and the corruption normally associated with the operation of government and organized crime should be made if a distorted view of the power of organized crime to influence decisions made in the city is to be avoided.

Addonizio carried every ward in his victory, besting Carlin by 24,000 votes and avoiding a runoff by garnering more than a majority of the total vote cast. These were the Kennedy years, filled with new faces and high expectations. Addonizio's broad support in part could be interpreted as a desire for new leadership to tackle old problems. Subsequent events were to obscure the fact that Addonizio was a very popular man in 1962.

Coalitions are fragile arrangements. At best they resemble well-organized political machines; at their worst they disintegrate shortly after the election. Groups that are historically competitive but who come together due to a lack of acceptable alternatives soon revert to their former patterns of behavior unless a new accommodation among the groups is achieved. Addonizio strengthened the alliance that elected him and thereby was able to govern quite successfully until shortly before the 1967 civil disorders.

Addonizio governed in the traditional manner, utilizing the legal authority invested in his office and the opportunities for patronage. He cleaned house at city hall and moved in aggressively to control all governmental agencies including semi-autonomous agencies like the Newark Housing Authority established by reformers in an attempt to deny politicians direct control over their operations. As Harold Kaplan describes it, the election was followed by one of the most radical changeovers in government personnel Newark had witnessed in many years. Almost all of the leading city hall officials (including civil servants with tenure) resigned, and their positions were filled with a crop of new men.

Addonizio Patronage

At city hall 532 new jobs were created, many of them in the "temporary" category thereby skirting the civil service reforms designed to discourage such activities. The increase was due in part to expansion of governmental services, but most jobs were patronage positions—some were even of the "no show" variety. Blacks were seen at city hall, the housing authority and the board of education in increasing numbers. Italian-Americans tended to head departments and hold other influential positions. Addonizio could be generous and he truly believed that he had well served all factions in his alliance when he said: "I don't care if a Negro sat here as mayor, he couldn't do anything more for the Negro than I've done." It was apparent that many Negroes felt that way too.

But the changes in the national, state and city political environments were placing items on agendas at all levels of government that few politicians had any experience in handling—items concerning the relationship between the races. To the civil rights activists,

white and black, the Addonizio administration represented all that was evil in society. The lines were clearly drawn; this group could not be bought. It had to be fought.

1966 Election: Addonizio vs. Carlin Again

Addonizio's first term in office ended without a serious challenge to his control of the city. But as the 1966 elections neared, the mood of the city was tense. Years of demonstrations and clashes between blacks and city officials had taken their toll. Memories of a defeated police review board campaign in Newark and the civil disorder in Watts were fresh in the minds of the populace. The question remained—why didn't it happen in Newark? The answer often heard was that Addonizio must be responsible. The *Newark Evening News*' editorial endorsement of Addonizio best describes the position of most of the white residents and businessmen in the city:

No single accomplishment of Mr. Addonizio's administration has been more important than the city's work in the field of interracial relations. Newark has been fortunate in escaping the violent eruptions which have been visited upon so many American cities, and this must be ascribed in large part to his efforts and the efforts of leaders of the Negro community who have collaborated in a wise policy that has brought mutual understanding in a troubled area.

Few candidates are ever prepared to take on a popular mayor and although six eventually ran, most were considered participants in a scheme organized by former Mayor Leo Carlin to split the Addonizio vote and deny him a berth in the runoff election. Kenneth Gibson entered the race six weeks before the election at the urging of George Richardson who was running against Councilman Turner in the Central Ward. It was clear that the blacks were not prepared to make a serious challenge, but many reasoned that it was time to test the black voting strength in the city. Gibson was an engineer in the housing authority at the time and was beginning to make a small reputation for himself as a black leader and a moderate on racial matters. With approximately \$2,000 he launched his campaign.

Carlin held onto the support of the Teamsters but little else as the Building Trades Council backed Addonizio this time around. City employees were "asked" to contribute to the campaign.

The candidates were not able to get the interest of the people or the media. Charges and countercharges were made in the traditional manner but the overriding issue was "peace in the city." There was no desire to change the leadership in times that were so uncertain. Gibson's candidacy brought some celebrities to town—Dick Gregory, Carl Stokes, Floyd McKissick—and thereby prevented total boredom. There were 153,573 registered voters, a slight increase over 1962, but only 97,456 voted, a lower turnout than in the previous election.

Addonizio polled an impressive vote although some 15,000 votes fewer than in 1962. He fell only 1,072 votes short of a first ballot victory. The biggest surprise was in the total polled by **Kenneth Gibson, 16,246** votes. The final tally was:

Addonizio	45,922	Castellano	9,819
Carlin	18,917	Bontempo	2,001
Gibson	16,246	King	1,081

Addonizio announced that he would not campaign and would devote all of his energies to governing the city. Carlin realized the futility of continuing the race and withdrew in a tearful address to his supporters three weeks before the June 14 runoff. Despite his withdrawal Carlin received 19,629 votes to 47,834 for Addonizio.

There were no surprises in the council races. Richardson was soundly defeated in his bid to unseat Turner, but the strong showing by Gibson added to his prestige. Oddly enough, everyone expected Gibson to return to his slide rule and drafting board. Addonizio did outpoll him almost three to one and beat him in every ward. If there was a moral victory it belonged to Richardson, not Gibson.

In the summer of 1966, the mayor was at the height of his power. He had scored impressive victories and many believed he had mastered the technique of maintaining racial peace. His staff and supporters began to speak of the state house. Their scenario saw the mayor win control of the Essex County Democratic Party after Carey stepped down while maintaining control of city hall. The Democrats had virtually no candidates with a state-wide reputation who were interested in the post except former Governor Robert Meyner. Addonizio, as mayor of the largest city in the state, would fill the vacuum. But the summer of 1966 was followed by the summer of 1967 and the plans and ambitions of many city residents went up in flames along with the rest of the city.

Great Society in Newark

President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs were launched in the expectation that the ills of the cities would be addressed. The urban bias of the programs—anti-poverty, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, New Careers, Concentrated Employment Program, Model Cities—was evident and Newark participated in all of them. New opportunities for patronage were suddenly available at a time when local resources had reached their limit. But blacks perceived these programs to be theirs—a direct result of their protest efforts. The struggle between anti-city-hall factions and the Addonizio administration over control of these programs signalled the beginning of the formation of a counterforce in the city that could rival the mayor's power. Prior to this time anti-Addonizio groups conducted brief skirmishes, but now

their efforts could be supported with millions of dollars and thousands of jobs. The new factor in the struggle was the federal bureaucrat who had, and often used, his control over the purse to favor one side or the other.

Addonizio saw these developments taking place but could do little about them. He publicly supported the United Community Corporation not wishing to appear to be against aid for the city, but he had no intention of losing all those opportunities for patronage. He could not approach the corporation's president who was the dean of Rutgers Law School, a leader in the Presbyterian church and a man with a statewide reputation of liberalism and integrity. Instead, he had his aid, a black woman, meet with the newly appointed black executive director to inform him of the procedures she would establish to fill the jobs created by the program. The director, a veteran of similar warfare in Harlem (where he worked with Kenneth Clark in establishing the HARYOU program) would not capitulate. However, he was astute enough to know that he could not freeze out city hall entirely and negotiated a settlement.

The UCC served as a central funding source for approximately 20 new services established under the program. Scattered throughout the poverty areas in the city, they provided stability and employment for those who interpreted community action to mean agitation against city hall. This was not a conspiracy in the traditional sense. While it is true that anti-administration personnel held many positions in the program, it is also true that those in office have traditionally been held responsible for the ills of the city—and in some cases they were responsible. A more accurate description however would disclose that there were a fair share of individual entrepreneurs who were hustling the system as well as ideologically oriented groups. Although the aggregated activities of all the participants had anti-city-hall overtones, the operational norm was one of inefficiency and incompetence rather than thoughtfulness, planning or conspiracy.

Black Power Surfaces 1969-1972

As 1968 came to a close, black political power was less evident than could be expected from the proportion of blacks in Newark's population. Although they were the numerical majority, blacks only succeeded in electing two councilmen, both beholden to Mayor Addonizio. There are two explanations for this phenomenon: 1) non-partisan elections favored the better-educated electorate and 2) many blacks in Newark were either ineligible to vote or unregistered.

The non-partisan election is biased against the poorly educated voter. Its rationale is based on the assumption that all voters can discriminate among the candidates—a most difficult chore, even for the educated, especially where the candidates may number over 50 in city council elections. Most voters don't even know the candidates' names, let alone their policy position. In the absence of political party identification, voters

are left to choose at random, to not vote at all for that office or to base their decisions on the ethnicity of one or another of the candidates' names.

It is therefore not surprising that a survey conducted among the black citizenry of Newark revealed that 31 percent did not know the race of Kenneth Gibson or thought that he was white. In the special councilmanic election held at the time of the 1968 presidential election, less than 50 percent of Central Ward voters and less than 60 percent of South Ward voters (the strongest black voting districts in the city) bothered to vote at all for local officials, thus depriving at least one and possibly two black candidates of a victory.

The second explanation for the lack of black political power was that a highly disproportionate number of blacks (52 percent) were under 21 years of age; only 32 percent of whites fell into this age group in 1967. Among the potential voting population, whites still outnumbered blacks by 47 percent to 45 percent, while Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other Spanish speaking groups constituted 8 percent of the voting-age population.

There were only 133,000 registered voters in the 1970 election, approximately 20,000 fewer than in 1966. Between the 1966 and 1968 elections, the Central and South Wards lost almost 10,000 voters, while the predominately white wards lost under 6,000. Part of the decrease in registered voters could be attributed to the continual exodus of whites to the suburbs, but an equally important explanation was the mobility of poor blacks constantly in search of better housing and often forced to move due to urban renewal projects. Blacks charged the Addonizio administration with deliberately clearing large sections of the Central Ward and leaving the land vacant, which resulted in the loss of one-fifth of the registered voters during that two-year period. Albert Black, chairman of the Newark Human Rights Commission, estimated that if 30,000 blacks were registered in a voting drive, 10,000 of them would be unregistered three years later because they had moved.

The Black and Puerto Rican Convention

When political activists began to try to break Addonizio's stranglehold over Newark's electoral politics, the evidence strongly indicated that blacks could not win city-wide elections without the support of white and/or Spanish-speaking voters. There was no white liberal vote left to speak of and the sentiments of Spanish-speaking voters were unknown. If blacks were to have a chance of winning any of the city-wide seats, black voter discipline was essential. A convention similar to that of 1968 was held to select a slate of candidates that all blacks would support.

The 1968 convention was seen as a good first effort but too narrowly based to rally many of the more conservative black voters. Imamu Baraka now headed the Committee for a Unified Newark in keeping with his

new moderate image, but his leadership was not acceptable to many segments of the black community. The convention organizers turned to Robert Curvin, perhaps the only person in the city who could unify the diverse interests. Curvin established his credentials as an activist early in the 1960s before Baraka returned to Newark and Gibson and others became involved in the civil rights movement and struggle against the Addonizio administration. He also gained the respect of moderate blacks, white liberals, some businessmen and political leaders outside the city because of his ability to articulate concerns and programmatically work toward solutions. It was known that he did not covet political office and therefore was not a threat to the aspiring politicians attempting to launch their careers with the help of the convention. Baraka played an important role but it was Curvin who made the coalescing of the different factions possible.

Approximately 700 blacks and Puerto Ricans attended the three-day convention. They were addressed by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Mayor Richard Hatcher, Julian Bond, Ossie Davis and Dick Gregory, but the real business was conducted in the planning committees responsible for deciding the criteria for delegate selection, voting procedures and all of the other considerations that had to be addressed to give the gathering respectability in the eyes of the public. The convention's credibility was put in jeopardy when only Gibson among the three announced black mayoral candidates agreed to attend. George Richardson refused on the grounds that his political rivals controlled the convention and that an all black and Puerto Rican gathering would alienate whites whose support was necessary for victory.

By the process of elimination, Kenneth Gibson was the unanimous choice of the convention delegates. It was a popular choice because he was a popular man, but many wished they had had a more viable alternative. Gibson was not impressive as a campaigner or organizer. Four years after his last election, he had only the skeletal Kenneth A. Gibson Association which had few workers and virtually no financial resources. But it did not matter—few expected him to win. In effect, he was being asked to play the same role he played in 1966—to test the strength and discipline of the black vote.

There was more competition for the councilmanic endorsements. Seven candidates received the conventions nod, four at-large and one each for the East, Central and South Wards. It was clear that blacks would win in the Central and South Wards, but the East Ward race was a long shot. The Puerto Ricans elected to run their candidate at-large since their voters were scattered throughout the city. The endorsements did not deter other blacks from running, nor did it immediately mobilize a large number of workers and contributors in support of the slate. There were just six months of organizing time before the May election and only the chosen candidates felt a sense of urgency.



Arthur Tress

Politicians have been known to win elections while serving time in prison, but Hugh Addonizio may be the only one who attended his own trial by day and campaigned for office in the evening. His problems really began following the civil disorders and the release of the riot commission report which stated that there was a widely held belief that Newark's government was corrupt. Addonizio responded angrily: "I am tired of innuendo, tired of whisperings, and tired of rumor I want facts. I want names. I want places. If there are corrupt men in government, let's find them, those who do the corrupting."

By December 17, 1969, after a year of work by a federal strike force, Addonizio had received the details he requested. A federal grand jury indicted Mayor Addonizio and Councilmen Turner, West and Frank Addonizio; former Councilmen Bernstein, Callaghan, Gordon (now corporation counsel), and Giuliano (now a municipal judge); former corporation counsel Norman Schiff; Anthony La Morte, the Municipal Utilities Authority director; Benjamin Krusch, public works director; Mario Gallo, a contractor; and Anthony Boiardo. They were all charged with one count of conspiracy to commit extortion, and 65 counts of actual extor-

tion from the Constrad Construction Company over a four year period (September 1965-February 1969).

The investigation was publicized long before the indictment; Addonizio was vulnerable and white aspirants began to jockey for position. Councilman Anthony Imperiale and Fire Director John P. Caufield emerged as the leading contenders.

Gibson supporters were angered by the lack of assistance their candidate received from all sectors of the business community. They argued that Gibson was the kind of moderate black candidate they could endorse. Gibson did meet with some businessmen but without results. He knew that they placed great value on honest government, but they placed greater value on backing a winner. In their eyes Gibson did not fill the bill.

Alexander Maturri, a resident of the North Ward and a state senator, became the candidate of the Italian bourgeoisie and downtown businessmen. Maturri was a Republican and had been appointed United States conciliator in postwar Italy by President Eisenhower. He had a reputation for honesty, but spent too many years abroad. A business-sponsored poll in late February discovered that he was favored by only 2 percent of the voters while Gibson led with 34 percent. Caufield was honest and white, but he was Irish. So Maturri received the Italians' and businessmen's support.

The campaign was ugly, but not atypical considering the vying forces involved and the stakes. All of the candidates took shots at Addonizio. The corruption was the talk of the nation and lest anyone forget, the local press juxtaposed stories of the trial and campaign on page one throughout the campaign.

Addonizio pulled his organization together and proved that it was still effective—in fact, the most effective in the campaign. Supporters on the city council ran with the mayor on the "Peace and Progress" slate. They cooperated in a scheme to raise the salaries of 3,600 city workers by \$1,000 over a two-year period. Teachers were given a \$4.3 million pay hike as part of their strike settlement. The tax rate was manipulated to stabilize property taxes. The police director announced that Newark's crime rate was decreasing while on the rise in the rest of the nation. Thirty-six policemen and firemen were promoted and 30 new fire-fighting

positions were created. And all the while, 44 black clergymen were reminding their congregations that a man is innocent until proven guilty.

Addonizio's strategy was to turn his personal indictment into an indictment of all Italians, playing on the resentment Italians were building up against the media. He pictured himself as the middle man in a race of extremists with Gibson the puppet of Le Roi Jones on the left and Tony Imperiale on the right.

Gibson maintained his image as a moderate. He refrained from making any statements that could be interpreted as inflammatory. He had no need to develop programs or raise issues—the issues appeared on the front page of the press daily. Baraka maintained a low profile, devoting his energies to raising funds. He was successful in attracting show business talent who donated their services. However, the money went into the account of the Committee for a Unified Newark. Baraka released the funds only after he and Gibson reached an agreement.

Richardson and Wheeler were asked to drop out of the race by a number of national black leaders, including Representative Chisholm and Mayor Hatcher, but they refused. Militants, allegedly associated with Baraka, began to increase the pressure by heckling them at public appearances, defacing political posters, breaking windows and smearing them in anonymous leaflets. Although Richardson ran the best "issues" campaign, preparing well-thought-out position papers on curing Newark's ills, he lacked an interested electorate. And within a short period of time he had the dubious distinction of being under attack by black supporters of both Turner and Baraka, hardly political bedfellows.

As Table 1 indicates, Gibson led the field with 37,859 votes, winning in all wards except the North. The white candidates divided their votes while black voters virtually shut Richardson out with only 2,038 votes. Imperiale finished third, Caufield fourth and Maturri fifth with only 4,734 votes.

Sixty-three candidates, the largest field in 16 years, ran for the nine council seats. Six of the seven Black and Puerto Rican Convention endorsed candidates made the runoffs and Turner was badly defeated in his race, thus ending a long political career.

The results of the first race assured Gibson that

Table 1 — Gibson Received Strong Black Support in Newark's 1970 Mayoral Primary

Ward	Addonizio	Imperiale	Caufield	Gibson	Richardson	Wheeler	Maturri
North	6,638	7,656	2,996	4,265	214	20	2,066
East	3,506	3,201	3,181	3,711	211	18	977
West	4,960	2,676	4,854	6,438	308	32	1,441
South	1,173	291	588	15,254	817	41	173
Central	1,264	122	227	8,134	476	35	41
Absentee	131	32	104	57	12	0	36
Total	18,212	13,978	11,950	37,859	2,038	146	4,734



Stephen Shames

blacks would support him overwhelmingly. Therefore, he made no appeal for black solidarity and continued to address himself to all the voters. Though personal endorsements by losing candidates are usually of dubious value in attracting voters, both Addonizio and Gibson sought them. Caufield's endorsement was the prize since the moderates would decide the final race. He backed and campaigned for Gibson. At several appearances before racially mixed groups, Gibson was baited by Addonizio supporters and at a joint appearance with Caufield, the former fire director and his wife were pushed and shoved by an angry crowd. But blacks kept their cool and would not respond in kind. They were fearful that Gibson supporters would become overconfident and therefore concentrated their efforts in getting the vote out.

In the runoff election Kenneth Gibson became the first black mayor of a major eastern city by capturing 56.1 percent of the vote. As indicated in Table 2, the large vote Gibson received in the Central and South Wards more than compensated for his losses in the other wards.

In the councilmanic contests none of the indicted incumbents were returned to office, but Italians still controlled six of the nine seats. Blacks won the Central and South Ward seats as expected and one of the at-

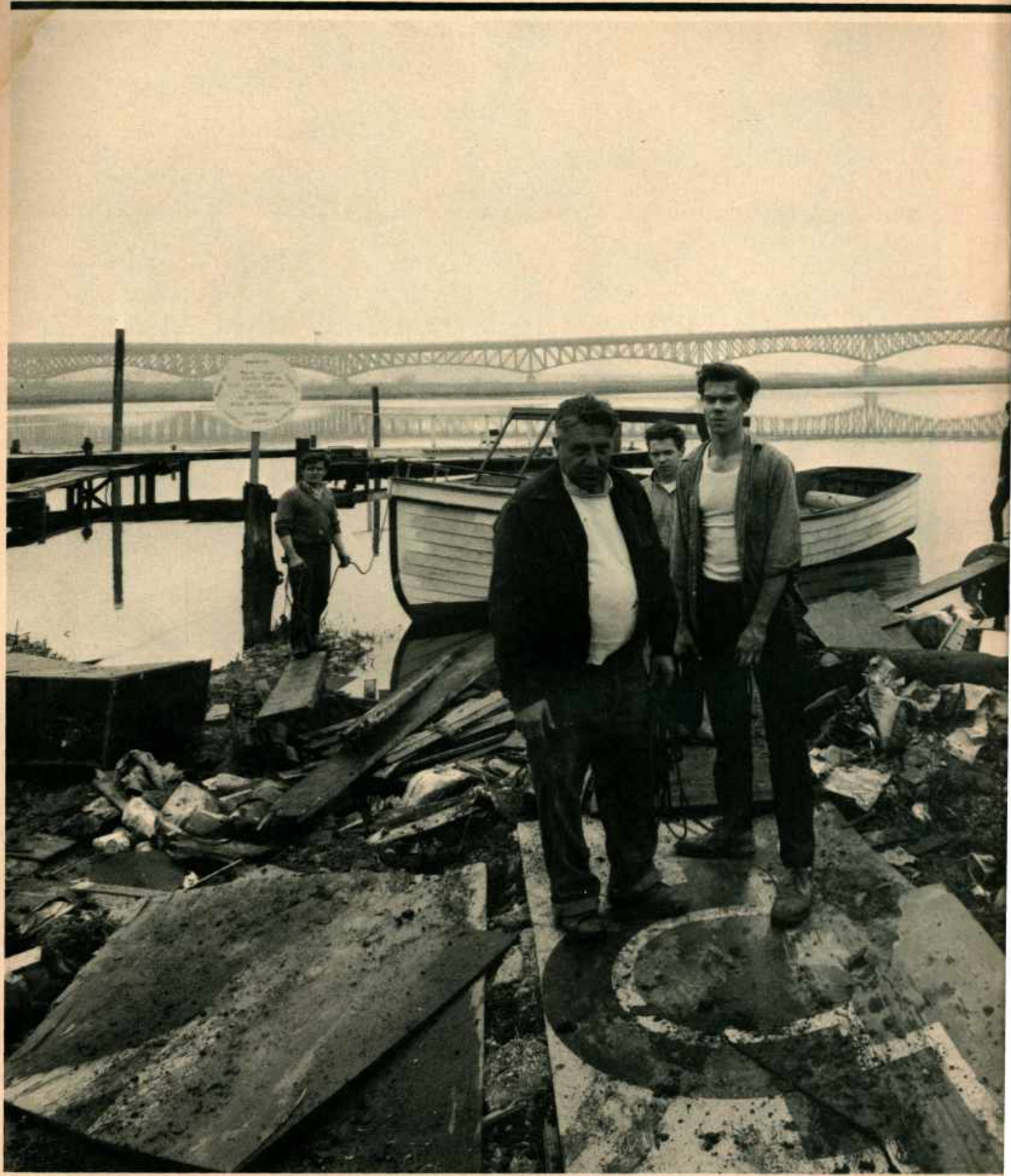
large posts.

Blacks literally danced in the streets on election night, while Addonizio supporters turned on the media at his headquarters, smashing television cameras and abusing newsmen. But a cool analysis of the results on the following day revealed that Italians were still the major political force in the city in that they controlled three wards and the city council. Besides the new mayor, the only black who won city-wide office was Earl Harris and his success could be attributed, at least in part, to the fact he was well known in political circles, having served as county freeholder. Prelimin-

Table 2

Gibson Became Newark's First Black Mayor, 1970

Ward	Gibson	Addonizio
North	7,405	18,737
East	6,603	10,243
West	10,329	11,616
South	19,927	1,535
Central	11,286	619
Absentee	134	336
Total	55,097	43,086





Bruce Davidson, MAGNUM

ary analysis indicated that white moderates made the difference. They did not want to return Addonizio to office, but they were not prepared to turn the city over completely to black leadership. The fact remained that 43,000 people had chosen Addonizio despite the scandals.

The New Administration

Being the mayor of a large city is a difficult job even in the best of times; it can be a severe burden the rest of the time. Success becomes a relative term in evaluating an administration. Most mayors would settle for maintaining the same reputations they held at the time of their election. But many lose ground. The office has ended more careers than it has launched.

Gibson experienced most of the strains of the office. He had a limited staff, decreasing resources and increasing expenditures, independent bureaucracies, no control over the state legislators whose decisions affected Newark directly, and a series of conflicting demands and expectations by the populace. The years of neglect had taken their toll in a city considered to be among the most seriously troubled cities in the nation.

The new mayor was immediately faced with a fiscal crisis that had been building for years. Before his first year in office was completed, Newark experienced the longest teachers' strike in the history of a major American city, a strike which threatened to erupt into racial warfare. But these critical incidents often cloud the routine problems that ultimately determine the effectiveness of a mayor.

It is clear that the manner in which Gibson rose to office had a bearing on his ability to govern. The election resulted more from uncontrollable variables than from planned activity on the part of the candidate. He had none of the assets usually associated with victory at the polls—charisma, knowledge, experience, labor support, business support, strong organization, party support, strong media support, large sums of money. The new mayor could take comfort in the cliché that “nobody loved him but the people,” but the political pros had been correct when they said Gibson could not win the election. Addonizio and the other candidates lost it.

The Black and Puerto Rican Convention had served a useful purpose in focusing black attention on a single mayoral candidate, but it was a temporary coalition. The campaign's most notable characteristic was the number of amateurs involved. Even the campaign manager had little practical experience. Following the election, the individuals and groups reverted back to past behavior patterns. The absence of a political party or substitute organization denied Gibson the support that other mayors had in attempting to run their cities. Its absence also denied him a pool of experienced supporters to draw from in filling posts in his administration.

Gibson had few political debts to pay so he was

relatively free to make good appointments to counter his own inexperience in politics and government. Addonizio was especially astute in this area, appointing capable aides to run the machinery of government while he pursued other interests. These men enjoyed working near the centers of power and had no personal ambitions that would be viewed as a threat to the mayor. Gibson, however, compounded his problems by making some questionable appointments. He was under severe pressure to appoint blacks to top posts in his administration but the salaries were so low that experienced blacks could not be enticed to leave their positions elsewhere. Several talented blacks who supported him in the campaign were not asked to join the administration for fear that he would be promoting potential rivals. Therefore, Gibson's personal staff tended to be predominately composed of young, devoted, intelligent but inexperienced white aides whom the mayor described as the best staff available for the money. The crucial deputy mayor positions went to the losing Puerto Rican candidate and a former co-workers with few contacts in the Italian-American community. Although long on loyalty, they too were short on experience.

Mayor Gibson was fond of boasting that he was not a politician and that his administration would be free of corruption, as if one could not achieve the latter if involved in the former. In referring to the city council, he said:

I think the majority . . . would like to do business as usual, as it had been done in Newark for many, many years . . . It has to be corrupt . . . So the question is whether or not I get *any* judges unless I appoint their friends to judgeships or whether or not I make their friends detectives.

At the same time he tried to hold the nine-member Newark city council to its legislative role as defined in the city charter. When the charter was revised, Newark citizens voted to adopt a reorganization plan providing for a strong mayor, strong business administrator and a weak city council that was denied the power to initiate action or to create standing committees. But the councilmen refused to accept the limitations imposed on their activities and consider themselves an administrative and a legislative body. Councilmen wanted to deal directly with department heads, involve themselves in the daily routine of government and receive a share of the patronage. But Gibson would have none of that. When he refused to consult with the councilmen before submitting new proposals, he succeeded in alienating even the black councilmen.

Gibson must be credited for restoring some dignity to the city. There is a tendency to dismiss this aspect of his administration in the absence of any tangible changes. But is honesty enough? For the average Newarker experiencing higher taxes and poorer services does it matter that Gibson and not Addonizio sits in the big chair at city hall? Perhaps nothing can be done. Blacks have inherited a city with all the prob-

lems and few of the resources needed to deal with them.

But even the cynics among the voters who elected him don't expect their mayor to take the position that nothing can be done. They expect leadership from an urban mayor. To say that the city has a strong mayor type of government and a weak city council is to define the minimum legal authority invested in each office. It establishes a framework within which one bargains with other political actors in a city where power is diffuse. Councilmen are not restricted by the legal restraints imposed on them. They are politicians. Gibson has demonstrated his courage and tenacity against overwhelming odds. He too can become a politician without joining his predecessor at Leavenworth.

What about the future? It had been clear for some time that the resources were located in Washington and Trenton. Early in his administration Gibson recognized this fact and devoted much of his time seeking funds from state and federal legislators. He has not made these journeys alone; he has often been accompanied by mayors from other cities in New Jersey and other states. But there was a price to be paid—an increase of control by governmental agencies outside the city and a corresponding decrease in the city's autonomy.

Cities have no legal standing in the United States constitution. They are creatures of the state and can be legally dissolved as readily as they were created; their functions can be legislated away and placed in the hands of county or state governmental agencies. Reapportionment has put the power to accomplish this exchange in the hands of suburban legislators. Among the factors that have prevented this step from being taken is the counterpressure created by political interests in the cities and the belief that cities are viable governmental units.

But more and more the opinion is being expressed that cities are not governable. When a city like Newark, with one of the nation's highest property taxes, seeks outside resources to avert a crisis because it cannot increase its taxes again, there may be a sympathetic hearing at the state house. But when Newark has a three-month teachers' strike that threatens to engulf the city in a new wave of civil disorders and money is not the issue, there is less patience and understanding.

Gibson's reception in Trenton and Washington will be based on the record he achieves at home. That record includes the voters he can influence and the stability of the city. For a man with less than one term of governmental experience, the tasks before him represent an enormous responsibility. Gibson has no choice but to make the all-out effort. Even if he makes the effort he may not succeed and there is a long line of aspiring politicians ready to relieve him of the burden if he fails to provide the needed leadership in the city. □