

# ERAP NEWSLETTER

February 5, 1965

1100 E. Washington. Ann Arbor

## CHESTER      REPORT

Present activities of The New Independent Committee for Jobs (NIC) Homes and Schools cover a number of areas. At present efforts are being centered around voter registration, a proposed anti-poverty program and, other efforts to continue the Freedom Movement in Chester. However, work against the Negro removal and in block organization is being maintained.

NIC recently decided to sponsor the nomination of several members of the Freedom Movement for the school board. The names of Reggie Freeman, block organizer and leader and NIC treasurer, and Mrs. Pauline Bryant, block organizer, were submitted to a screening committee of the city Democratic party. If these names or other members of the Freedom Movement are accepted by the Democrats for the forthcoming school board and city council elections, NIC has pledged its support for the Democratic Party efforts. However, if the Democratic Party refuses to sponsor the nomination of Freedom Movement candidates, NIC will probably run its own candidates under an independent party label.

Plans are underway to put the voter registration drive into high gear when the roving registrars come to Chester in

Plan  
NIC

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three weeks. Normally, potential new registrants or change overs must go to the county seat at Media, five miles from Chester as there is no permanent registrar in Chester. Prior to the day when the registrars arrive in each neighborhood and on the day of registration, leafletting and door-to-door work will be done in each area. In this effort, we hope to have the cooperation of block and other members of NIC, Swarthmore students, other friends in the Chester Freedom Movement, and members of the Democratic party. However, if the Democratic party refuses to endorse any Freedom Movement candidates, plans for this operation will be reexamined in view of our probable campaign for an independent party.

For a long period of time, members of NIC decided to refrain from submitting an anti-poverty program. Some felt that the national anti-poverty program could never meet the need, and thus it was our duty to fight for major social change which could significantly affect the lot of the poor. Others felt that other members and groups from the Freedom Movement could develop an adequate anti-poverty program or pressure others into developing such a program. Recent developments have indicated that this is not going to happen. People keep asking us, "Well, if you don't like the proposed programs, why don't you make up one? They're going to give the money out anyway. So, why don't we see that it's put to good use." Thus, we recently decided to formulate our own program. Don Jackson, NIC chairman and other NIC members have developed a program which combines many of the past NIC demands (see previous ERAP Newsletter for these demands) and recent block demands plus a general proposal for CORE funding of the NIC program in Chester. We don't seriously expect them to fund a social revolution in Chester, but who knows? A copy of our proposal will be sent to the ERAP mailing list.

The enclosed news release was given out at a recent picket and sit-in at the Chester Municipal Building by NIC members. The sit-in and picket was carried on all last week and will be continued this week. As of yet there have been no arrests, but Don Jackson and Dwight Campbell of Phila. CORE were bodily removed one day when they refused to leave the City Council chambers. We demand immediate negotiation of these demands. We will stay and fight until we receive satisfaction.

We're preparing to continue the anti-Negro removal fight when the first public hearings on the city's proposed program is held in April in the Smedley area. The Smedley area is one of the so-called relocation areas where the city says poor whites and Negroes will be able to love when their homes are torndown in the waterfront, industrial area. We know this is a lie because the city government hasn't said anything about an end to discrimination in housing in this area, rent control to lower the sky-high rents of the slumlords or low interest, insured long term loans so that poor people can buy houses. Even if the city government did answer all these issues, they still haven't told us how they can put over 900 families in an area which is already full without making another slum. They showed us how much they cared about the poor man before when they flatly refused

to construct any more low-cost public housing. We know they can't afford it because it would ruin the real estate market which is controlled by the slumlords who also control City Hall. We'll gather our research information and bring as many people as possible from the areas affected to protest the city's Negro removal program.

Since the time of our last report to ERAP, we've added two new staff members and lost one staff member. Peter Freedman has gone to Chicago to join the project there. Everybody in Chester misses him very much and wishes him the best of luck in Chicago. Thanks for all your good work in Chester, Peter. Val Chambers, long time member of the Freedom Movement in Chester, and coordinator of a successful voter registration drive in Chester this summer has joined the staff on a part time basis. He'll be working on voter registration mainly and possibly some block work. Dwight Campbell from Philadelphia CORE has joined us on a temporary basis to work in a number of areas. He's no stranger to people in Chester, who remember him as one of Branche's lieutenants during the demonstrations in Chester last year.

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New Independent Committee Stages Sit-in at City Hall

We are angered and shocked by the refusal of Mayor Gorbey to meet with members of the Negro community, specifically the New Independent Committee. The Mayor's refusal is a complete injustice to the Negro Community.

Yesterday, the Mayor stated that he would not meet with NIC representatives on any of the four (4) major issues. The Mayor has shown us his unwillingness to be concerned for the welfare of the Negro people of our city. We cannot permit the injustices of the Chester police to continue, we must not fail to accept our responsibility to get rid of police brutality.

We cannot permit the Mayor or any of his henchment to pose as champions of civil rights and human dignity, and yet, let Mississippi-type tactics continue.

The deplorable conditions that are now present in the Chester School System must be changed. If the school board is sincerely concerned with the future success of all of our children and their education, then it must act in good faith to remove the school boards' suit out of the Dauphin County Court, in a demonstrated effort to demonstrate their concern.

The Mayor knows what our demands are:

1. We demand an immediate dismissal of all charges against persons arrested for demonstrating.
2. That the school board take immediate and forthright action to desegregate the school system, and to remove the present suit out of the Dauphin County Court.
3. That appropriate and immediate action be taken to dismiss those policemen who were cited in the report of the Governor's Commission.
4. That the city enforce the Housing Code, completely and forcefully.

These are our demands, we will not shrink from our responsibility in the interest of our people.

Neither will we be swayed by empty exhortations and meaningless murmurs from the "Human Renewal" Director, Mr. W. Norman Watts, or any other professional go-between. We appreciate Mr. Watts' sincerity, but sincerity or not, Mr. Watts' function is that of a political panderer of false peace to the Negro Community.

DUDLEY STREET ACTION CENTER NEWSLETTER

This will be a newsletter written by neighborhood people working at the Dudley St. Action Center (536a Dudley Street, Roxbury, Mass., tel. no.: 427-8140). The Action Center at Dudley St. is part of a Community Union composed of Boston Action Group, Dudley St. Action Center, and Washington St. Action Center.

Our long-range goal at Dudley St. Action Center is to get neighborhood people together so that we can be organized enough to affect the political decisions made in Boston or Washington about our neighborhood. Since October, 1964, we have been organizing black groups to work on local complaints such as abandoned cars, vacant houses, and the need for playgrounds. So far, there have been two major issues that have drawn together many people from different block groups and other parts of the neighborhood: a drive for surplus food in Boston, and the threat of urban renewal that would tear down houses without building new ones we can afford.

This first newsletter will be mainly about surplus food since we have news that we want to tell everyone who signed the petitions asking for the food. But our next newsletter will contain a fact-sheet about what urban renewal has done so far--and more important, what we want it to do in the future in this neighborhood.

MORE FOOD FOR PEOPLE UNDER WELFARE

by Barbara and Dick Skillen

The people of the Roxbury Community Union who are receiving welfare brought their demand for surplus food in Boston to City Hall on Monday, Jan. 11. The Surplus Food program would provide about eighty-six pounds of food per month for a family of four. It is now in effect in eleven other cities in Massachusetts, and it has been available since 1936. The people in the Community Union want to ask Mayor Collins why Boston doesn't have this program.

We had collected over 1500 names on our petitions asking for the food. With these petitions, we want to ask Collins that we have food within a month and that low-income people be hired to distribute the food. The Mayor said that he has asked ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) to get surplus food for Boston as part of the War on Poverty program. He told us to go to ABCD with our demands and get them moving. When we asked him why the Welfare Dept. can't distribute the food in Boston like it does in the other cities that already have the food, he said he has no power over the Welfare Dept.

We have an appointment to see ABCD on Monday, Jan. 18. The Mayor says he is behind our demands. ABCD says it will bring the surplus food to Boston at least by March 1, 1965. Let them keep their promises!

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On Wed., Jan. 13, 1965 a press conference was held at 282A Blue Hill Ave, which is the office of the Boston Action Group. Various representatives and senators and members of the clergy attended this meeting.

They made important statements supporting surplus food, and emphasized they were for the rights of welfare women. They also said that they did not think that the surplus food would interfere with the cost of living increase.

#### FACT SHEET: URBAN RENEWAL IN BOSTON

There are 400,000 people in substandard, overcrowded housing in the metropolitan area. Most of them can pay at most \$50 rent a month, because they earn only \$4,500 or less a year.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority states that the six major renewal projects in the city: will destroy 8,444 units, with average rents of \$52 a month, (most of these have been torn down already), and will build only 4,918 units, with average rents of \$175 to \$200 a month.

The whole city of Boston is going to be "renewed" within ten years. Our neighborhood around Dudley St. Action Center is slated for early renewal--perhaps in a year, perhaps in two years.

We must start asking what we want of urban renewal now, because it is too late when the bulldozers come.

If renewal comes here, where will you go in a city that isn't building low-income housing?

Can you afford the new housing, where a one-bedroom apartment costs \$85 a month?

Would you like to fix up your own homes? What prevents you? There are federal funds available.

Do you want a mixture of low- and middle-income housing?

What do you want done in the neighborhood?

Are there enough schools in good locations?

What kind of stores do you want? How many? Where?

Are there enough playgrounds? Parking lots?

Bill Shaffer, a local pharmacist, wants to bring a shopping center to our neighborhood. He is asking the BRA to "renew" the area around his shopping center. What does this mean for you? Should you have a say in what will happen to our neighborhood?

## CLEVELAND COMMUNITY PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

These are the minutes of the meeting Thursday, Jan. 28th, at Fidelity Baptist, to plan the Cleveland Community People's Conference.

Reports: letters were read, which were answers concerning the conference which will be held here (Cleveland) the weekend of Feb. 19. One was from Freedom House A-2 organization center, San Francisco. They can help run the session concerning urban renewal. There was also a letter from Newark. They are sending two carloads.

Boots Neal gave the food committee report: meal planning and accommodations for our visitors were discussed.

The agenda was discussed. A social gathering will be provided for the guests, Feb. 20 (at night) at St. Paul's church. The people planning that are Iva Pearce and Gloria Ranson.

The program committee said Alonzo Brown from Chicago will give a talk Sat. morning on organizations of poor people. Mabel will be the emcee for the conference.

A "poverty" march was discussed which would be held during the 3-day conference, pointing out the inadequate relief to the poor throughout the nation. Also concerning housing, food, clothing, education, so on. We talked of having signs saying inadequate everything, against all cities.

We talked about a welcoming committee to be at St. Paul's when people arrive Fri. night. We decided to have 4, 2 from the West side, 2 from the East side. They are Ruby Shields, Boots Neal, Iva Pearce, Annie Spates. The SDS staff will be the second shift for the welcoming committee for those who arrive very late.

It was agreed to write a letter explaining who can come to the conference, only welfare and low-income community persons. Lillian and Mabel will write the letter.

The next meeting to plan the conference is Friday, Feb. 5, at 7:30 p.m. at the SDS house, 2908 Jay Avenue.  
SEE YOU THEN.

Gloria Ranson

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8908 Jay Avenue  
Cleveland 13, Ohio  
February 4, 1965

# CHICAGO REPORT

Dear Friend,

Since the Cleveland Community People's Conference of February 19-21, 1965, is for welfare and low-income community persons from many cities in which the poor have organized, we cannot invite persons who are not directly involved in organizations that are striving to better the lives of the poor, both black and white, by the poor themselves. We cannot invite those who are not welfare and low-income community persons. We appreciate your interest and hope there will be another time that you can be with us to express your interest.

Sincerely,

Lillian Craig and Mabel Swanson  
for the  
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Chicago ERAP now has a JOIN executive meeting every Sunday afternoon. It includes the JOIN staff and the community people who are starting to organize. This Sunday Alonzo Brown, Oscar Perez and Sam Assmar joined the meeting to discuss the problems of organizing and the development of program. Our surveying points towards a day care center as the issue to build a program around. The executive committee decided to intensively recruit for two weeks people who want to work seriously on a JOIN program and to call a meeting of all of these on February 14th. The February 14th meeting will direct our activity for the following period of time, and presumably will launch our attempt to build a base around a specific issue.

At the Sunday meeting we also talked about the Cleveland Community Conference. Alonzo Brown is writing a paper on democracy and the War on Poverty, Dorothy Perez on why JOIN is needed and what it can do, and Sam Assmar on the problems of newcomers to the area, like Puerto Ricans in Chicago. Either the "What is JOIN" pamphlet or a revision of it will be prepared for the conference.

The area Tony Kramen is working in is starting to develop. This Monday he is bringing together for a meeting five people who have expressed interest in organizing for JOIN. He has talked at length with 20-25 people.

We continue to be very friendly with Chicago CORE, and are talking with them about sponsoring a joint conference. We are doing preliminary talking about this right now, and agree on the desirability of alot of cooperation between JOIN and CORE.

Morale is a little short right now. The staff has to learn to reinforce itself, and is beginning to cope with this problem. A new staff person-Peter Freedman-is being initiated and Jim Bundy is visiting with the possibility that he will work in Chicago until next September. This helps, but is also time-consuming. As the pace of organizing increases, morale should increase. We are also looking for a bigger apartment, redefining work tasks, etc..

The high school group continues to meet and continues to be exciting. Stevie led them yesterday in a discussion of marriage. She talked briefly about it as an institution and then they were-off! The group wants to start to work in Uptown, and we decided to take them around with us to meet established contacts. We feel that community people should understand us as well as us them, and that preparation for this would be a good chance to explain to them our involvement in the movement and how it came about.

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# APPALACHIA

(reprinted from The Floyd County Times, Prestonburg, Ky. as it appeared in The Mountain Eagle, Whitesburg, Letcher County, Ky.)

## WRONGFUL CONVERSION OF FUNDS?

The Times is not among those who oppose for the mere sake of being "against" something. It appreciates any sincere effort to lift the region which is commonly referred to as Appalachia from the misery which is compounded of lack of education and training and economic opportunity; of despoilation of natural resources, including the human, and of the isolation which paralyzes ambition as well as progress.

We believe that the Appalachian Program is a "must," and at the same time we believe that the so-called War on Poverty meets many real needs. It is true that Floyd and other counties of Appalachia have their shining examples of economic development and success, but these stand as individual battles won. The federal government's interest lies in winning the war.

Having endorsed what we consider a monumental effort to help a neglected part of America, we turn to register a protest against one phase of the War on Poverty. That is the setting of men to work at a wage of \$1 an hour, at public expense, to reseed strip-mine spoilbanks.

These spoilbanks were created at a profit to private interests and to the detriment, present or potential, of the public interest. This fact has been recognized by Kentucky's General Assembly at least enough to cause it to enact legislation providing that strip-mine operators shall do a certain amount of work to restore the land despoiled by such mining, including the reseedling of spoil banks.

In view of these facts, it simply appears that public funds are being diverted to do for the mine operators a job which state law has already said they must do for themselves.

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