

ERAP-65-9

ERAP NEWSLETTER

March 11, 1965

1100 E. Washington, Ann Arbor

APPALACHIA

BERMAN GIBSON TO RUN FOR SHERIFF

Berman Gibson, leader of the unemployed miners of Parry County today announced his candidacy for High Sherriff of Parry County. Gibson has filed to run in the Democratic primary which takes place on May 4th.

This represents the first move of the unemployed of that county toward political representation and power. The present High Sheriff, Republican Charlie Combs, is himself a coal operator and bitter reactionary. He has used his office to harass the unemployed movement since its inception and has been a roadblock to peaceful organization and protest by the people of that county. The Appalachian Committee for Full Employment, an organization of the unemployed has had to call upon the Justice Department for protection on occasion, because of the complete breakdown of anything resembling justice in that area. Gibson was only recently exonerated of charges of "conspiracy to blow up a railroad bridge" and "attempted robbery and assault."

In filing Gibson has called for an end to dynamiting of worker's homes, an end to police harassment of union organizing, lack of protection of workers and unemployed. Gibson has also announced his determination to see Parry County become "a booming, prosperous county for all the people."

The primary fight should be a rough one, in traditional kick-down, drag-out style of the Kentucky mountains. We can expect increased harassment of the worker's movement by shovings and beatings and court cases.

SERIES 4.A - NO. 8

Gibson has called on all people concerned with the welfare of the people of Appalachia to support his campaign and to raise funds for it. Gibson's opposition will have tens of thousands of dollars supplied by the coal operators, with which to buy votes, advertise and staff their campaign. Thus, Gibson must raise his money from the people.

The Committee for Miners (1165 Broadway, New York, N.Y.) is raising funds for this important political upsurge. CFM is also looking for competent people who would be willing to work in Gibson's campaign during the months of March and April. All persons interested should apply to Art Gerson, Committee for Miners.

SERIES 4.A - NO. 8

Reprinted from

VOICE FOR JOBS AND JUSTICE

GOD HELP US TO KEEP OUR NOSE OUT OF OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS
by Mrs. Francis Hagger

What would you do with \$28.00 a day? Would you thank the picketers or the UMW? Or would you still hang on the operators shirt tail? I don't think any more of the operator than I do of the political party in our town and that is nothing. Because both are taken from the needy and is trying to make us like it. They may take our program and if they get it in their hands after we have worked so hard for it. We are back where we started and that is on corn bread and starvation, and that is where the coal miner will be if they let the UMW down. Men stop and think how much money is took out of your pay check since you have been scabbing. Do you get paid for taking down draw rock? Now do you get traveling pay? Do you have a medical card for you and your family? Do you get a vacation with pay? Add all this up and see how much the operator is taking out of your pay check.

I know you are not satisfied with your wages. -- If you get sick the company won't advance you one dime to feed your family and will give a house mtice because you are not able to work, and out you go. If you were a union man the union would take care of you and your family. It is up to you to join the union and live good. Scab and let your children go hungry and go without clothing the rest of their life. So choose this day who you pay serve, the union or the operator. I hope it will be the union.

Why can't people wake up? What's wrong with the business people in Perry County? Are they afraid to take sides with the working man, or do they actually think their business can survive without the laboring mans money. When are they going to realize that until the men are paid enough to buy something besides food stamps, rent, lights and the bare necessities of life? The people will not have any money to spend in town. It is "almost" impossible to spend money one doesn't have to spend.

Working men spend their money and keep it in circulation. The bosses' heard it up so no one enjoys it. Wake up people before it is too late to do any good. All in this world we want is for Perry and surrounding counties to be prosperous and everyone living good. I pray God we live to see this happen and not too far.

by Mrs. Berman Gibson

To all you women that has a family of little children in school or not in school and has a husband working in a non-union mines for such little pay. They work like slaves and go barefoot in the snow and mud.

Everyone should thank Mr. and Mrs. Berman Gibson for what they are doing for all of our families.

I remember well, before the UMW came in these mountains, my husband would go to the mines to cut coal and I would have to send him as many as 3 lunches before he would get to see me and the children. I would leave my children from six o'clock until

six o'clock at night and ride a cab here in Hazard and stand over a hot stove and cook in a restaurant eight and nine hours for \$16.00 a week. That is how it was before the UMW came in. That is why I hope Mr. Givson gets elected for sheriff. If everyone will vote for Mr. Gibson, you won't be sorry.

by Ella Davison

On the day of February 16, we were on the way to Letcher County to picket some mine which we attempted to do. On the way up there Sargent Mitchell, Paul Russel and another trooper picked up seven cars full of men in order to get next to the leader. When we got to the picketing place they began to push us around. I told the troopers if anyone was violating the law, it was them because they wouldn't let us talk to anyone. The state police was going out and bringing the workers in over the top of the picket line. There would be a load of state troopers in front of about seven or eight cars of scabs then another car load of state troopers. They would take them to the mines to work at South East Coal Co. Letcher County. I told the troopers to keep their hands off me because I don't like for any man to push me around. They got mad and Paul Russel and Sargent Mitchell arrested me. I told them if they would get the man with the white cap, I would go. Paul Russell (trooper) punched me under the arm with a machine gun.

by Ashford Thomas

A-2 STAND

FREEDOM HOUSE

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

When it rained, a great stink rose from two vacant lots behind the houses on Steiner St. between Eddy and Ellis and on Borbin between Eddy and Ellis. When it rained, the rats also arose from the loss. They came out of their nests amidst the lumber, broken furniture, discarded plumbing, rusted car parts and wondrous miscellany which covered the lots.

The people who lived around the lots had complained to the Health Department months before the Great Stink and the Great Rat Run. The Health Inspector said yes it was a problem. While he watched, some of the junk was hauled away. When he went back to his office, the people on the street watched as the junk was piled back on the lots.

Finally the people arose, following the example of the rats and the smell. The members of the Steiner-Eddy St. Block Club decided to present the health department with a petition demanding immediate action. The people in the block also decided to tell the owners of the lots that unless they cleared the lots, the people and their friends and their neighbors and their children would take action. Against the owners. Led by stalwart Block Captain and Freedom House Worker, Pleasant Carson, Jr., the people collected 50 names on a petition and presented it to the health department. In two days, the people watched truckloads of junk being hauled away. Now the people are beginning to see grass through their back windows, instead of garbage, and the rats have gone.

CAIRO REPORT

Steps are now being taken to formalize the relationship between the Carbondale and Cairo community organizing projects under the name of Southern Illinois Movement. Area wide organizing is rapidly approaching concreteness.

The first edition of the community newsletter is being mimeographed now. It was written by community people expressing their concerns. Initial response to the newsletter was enthusiastic. We hope it will become a real vehicle of expression both within and without the community. The newsletter is being used in conjunction with block organizing to overcome a narrowness of outlook unaffected by the earlier programs of the project.

At present we have three precincts being organized using volunteer organizers in conjunction with staff members for each concentration of about 100 people. At our first general meeting of the year, 35 people came to discuss their problems. The most pressing seemed to be with regard to the new Cairo Adult Vocational School. This school teaches grades 1 through 12 and 5 trade schools. The people were afraid that the Public Aid would pull people out of the school in the spring to chop cotton. They decided to march to the Public Aid office to ask that nobody be taken out of the school. The next day 20 people marched to the aid office and found that the Superintendent did not want to take people out but "policy" might force him to. The next meeting was snowed out by the biggest snow in twenty years. The meeting tonight will decide what next steps to take. Suggestions have been made by some of the people that we go to the Governor, tonight will tell.

A follow up on furniture complaints showed that 2/3 had received all that was requested, the others had received most of what was requested.

Perhaps the most significant result of our block organizing so far is the uncovering of leaders "overlooked" by previous movements and programs.

The influx of staff has given new vitality and direction to the Cairo Project.

Reprinted from the FREEDOM HOUSE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER:

SPEAKING OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH PUBLIC AID, by Geneva Whitfield

To those who have some other income: Don't be a Public Aid Recipient!

You lose your rights to be grown up. No matter what you are doing, your time doesn't mean a thing. If they feel they want to interrupt you, you must stop what you are doing and sit down and answer lots of foolish questions for your Case Worker. When they make a change in Case Workers, you are turned over to the new one like you are on parole. If you ask to be treated like a grownup your Supervisor will say that you are going to have to understand you can't have your way. Meaning that you must behave like a child and consider them as your parents. As sure as you demand them to consider you being grownup and your household

furniture begins to collapse, you are in for real insult from your Case Worker and Supervisor. They will assure you that you remain on the waiting list until they feel that you have suffered to suit them. Then they consider giving you some of the worst there is in household furniture. My feeling about it is that I want you to be as decent as possible but my experience with the Case Worker of Public Aid is different. They don't want you to feel too comfortable, and to make sure you don't, they pester you so you hate to think about Public Aid.

My Case Worker picked me up one day and drove me to a used furniture store where there were four chairs setting out that she had purchased for me. While standing in the store I repeated what I had told her about being refused estimates on certain items of furniture. She did not believe me until this day. As we left the store she said to me, "Now I see what you mean. You were verifying what you told me. Isn't that so?" So the Case Worker doesn't trust the recipient unless she proves everything that is said to her. My family has been given a bad reputation by the Case Workers.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM, by Dorothy M. Houston

The housing problem in Cairo is very bad. First of all, the houses are old and have been standing for too many years. But people have to live somewhere. I know that most of these houses are old because of the wiring and the fuse boxes which are inside, high on the wall.

Whenever there is a tornado of bad storm these houses lean just a little more to the left or right. Some houses look fairly decent on the outside but on the inside there is an entirely different story. Walls need painting or papering, floors need leveling, house needs raising. Water and toilet are outside. Some of these baths look worse than those outhouses in the country.

The walls inside the house look like they are laughing or crying. Ask the landlord to paint or paper for you, most of them will tell you they will give you the supplies and you have to hire someone to do the job for you; or, if he does it, he will go up on your rent which is already too high for a termite-eaten house.

Another problem in these houses is the rats. They cut their way in so you cover that hole; but you haven't done anything, for they cut themselves another hole, come in and help themselves to your food or to you. The rats ruin more food in one night than your family eats in two weeks. Some of these rats are so big. You would like to put rat poison down but when there are small children in the home the chances are two to one the children would come across this poison so you would either have a very sick child, or a dead one.

Better housing is needed very badly needed in this little town called Cairo. Some barns where dumb animals are kept look better than some of these houses. I couldn't say whether they smell better though.

CHICAGO REPORT

Reprinted from JOIN Community Union Newsletter.

DAY CARE

No one has built a day-care center here, and no one is planning to. Because of this, the JOIN stewards decided last Wednesday that they would begin fighting for one. First, mothers on the blocks are going to circulate petitions. But a lot of people have circulated petitions and never got anywhere. So JOIN is going to go ahead and set up its own day-care centers on the blocks, and demand that the War on Poverty pay for them. These day-care centers may be closed because the law is so strict about housing regulations that no one can afford to put in all the fancy equipment that costs thousands and thousands of dollars. Anyway, the center will be as safe as any home in the neighborhood and will have hot meals, recreation, etc. The city may fold them, but if it does that, then it should build one itself. The politicians won't get a day-center built. Will they let the people run one themselves?

When politicians don't listen to the people, then the people have to show them they mean business. Only if the people can get together and fight for a day-care center, will they get it.

DAY LABOR

Many men in Uptown are poor because they work for day labor agencies like "Manpower" or "Ready-Men." These outfits send workers out for a day at a time to factory jobs. But instead of getting the good union wage that the factory pays, these workers get \$1.25 an hour. And traveling expenses and taxes are deducted from that!

Often a man will spend 13 hours and will bring home a check of only \$8.50. He may have spent three hours waiting in the office to be sent out, and another hour or so of traveling to the job (on his own money). Even if the same job is open the next day, he's got to go back and get the job from the day labor agency.

Meanwhile, the factory owners and the day labor owners are getting rich off a poor man's sweat. The owners not only avoid paying union wage rates, but also avoid things like workmen's and unemployment compensation. Last week two members went to work at one of these agencies. They want to talk to the men who work there about JOIN, a community union which is working toward the day wage men are guaranteed a decent day's wages for a decent day's work.

THIS IS PROGRESS?

Seventy-one people have been appointed to be so-called organizers for the Urban Progress Center at 901 W. Montrose. These people are supposed to "give assistance in developing programs to meet local problems" and "help interpret the anti-poverty programs to community residents." All but three of the seventy-one

*Chicago?
Counsellor?*

have official titles and are either professional people, businessmen, or government employees. Not a single poor person was appointed.

When JOIN picketed the Urban Progress Center three weeks ago we were protesting the fact that no poor people were involved in planning the programs for Uptown. The officials answered that we weren't giving them a chance. If they were sincere, why wasn't one poor person appointed to be an organizer? How long are the poor supposed to wait before they have a voice in what happens to them? Why do they have to have an anti-poverty program interpreted to them? Why can't it be their program, not the officials?

STUDIES ←
ON ←
THE ←
LEFT ←

The new issue of Studies will be out in a week. It will contain the first reports on the movements -- what the editors plan to make a regular feature in later issues. It also contains their statement of the post-election situation and their ideas on the perspectives of radical organizations

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LIFE WITH LYNDON IN
THE GREAT SOCIETY

JACK MINNIS

On February 1, 1965, Lyndon announced that he was launching yet another battle in the war on poverty. He said he had instructed his Secretary of Labor to use existing funds and laws for what he called his Job Development Program. Lyndon said that there is a labor shortage in employment areas such as domestic service, and he wanted Secretary Wirtz to do something to provide more trained servants for families which don't like to do their dirty work for themselves.

The Washington Post calls the new program "dignifying the service jobs that are necessary to running a modern home and meeting the needs of family life today". The Post did not explain just how you could inject dignity of any kind into a relationship which requires that one person, in order to live, bind himself to the personal service of another. Nor did the Post explain what's to become of those families that can't afford to hire someone to run "a modern home" for them. But the Post did describe one of Lyndon's Job Development Programs which is underway in LaGrange, Georgia.

Lyndon's Office of Manpower and Training (OMAT) got together with a retired school teacher, Emmy Murray, in LaGrange. OMAT put up the money to redecorate an old roadhouse, and to equip it with various household appliances. Emmy is now teaching prospective household servants "cleanliness and work discipline," which is to say she's teaching Negro women how to address Miss Anne and Mr. Charlie with the proper degree of deference, teaching them how to shuffle their feet and tug their forelocks and convince the white folks of their profound satisfaction with a life of servitude.

The top wage available to the best-trained household servants in LaGrange -- that is, the top graduates of Emmy's careful instruction -- is \$4 per day. If the servant works every day of the year (and this is usually the case) she makes \$1,460 per year. This is just half of what Lyndon says (out of the other side of his mouth) is necessary for a minimum subsistence, and about one fourth of what is really necessary for a decent standard of living. And this is being done with federal tax money from Lyndon, the Second Great Emancipator of Black America.

There are two kinds of people in LaGrange who will be employing Emmy's graduates. The first kind is represented by the Callaway family. They own Callaway Mills, a textile manufacturer which is LaGrange's largest employer, employing more than 3,000 persons in a town of 23,000. The Callaway family owns the mills in a peculiar way. They don't own the stock of the corporation personally. Rather they control tax-exempt foundations, which, in turn, own the stock. In this way dividends paid by the mills to the foundations are free of federal income tax.

Callaway Mills received more than \$600,000 of federal money last year as part of Lyndon's program of subsidizing the textile manufacturers. If they used all of this to employ household servants for the various branches of the family, they'd be able to hire about 410 servants at the going wage. Thus the Callaways could use the money Lyndon gave them, which is tax free, to employ more servants than an Oriental Potentate, the servants having been trained to the peak of servile perfection with money supplied by Lyndon from the federal taxes from which the Callaways are exempt.

The second kind of prospective employers for Emmy's graduates are the workers in the Callaway Mills. Diane McKaig, who works in the Atlanta office of Lyndon's Labor Department, explains that these Callaway employees don't make much money (she doesn't explain why, nor does she compare the amount they make with the amount the Callaways make), so the servants -- she calls them "homemakers"

aides", a bit of double-talk worthy of Lyndon himself -- have to be "taught to make low-cost dishes, including surplus foods." She doesn't say whether the servants will be preparing surplus foods for themselves, or for the Callaway employees--perhaps both, considering the general level of wages.

The white female Callaway employees, of course, can't work in the mills unless they can find Negroes to care for their children and homes while they're at the mills. Since the Callaways don't pay their workers much the workers can't pay their Negro servants much. So the upshot of Lyndon's new job program, is to provide cheap and well-trained servants for the Callaway employees, at a price the employees can afford to pay without requiring a raise from the Callaways.

The Callaways exploit their white workers at low wages, and the white workers exploit their Negro servants at even lower wages. Lyndon lavishes hundreds of thousands a year on the Callaways, in the form of textile subsidies, and provides federal money with which to train Negro servants for the Callaways and their white mill employees.

It takes the guts of a burglar to call a sewer like this the Great Social Security Act; whatever he's short of, Lyndon's always been long on guts.

Lyndon's Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, announced that the Republic of South Africa's sugar quota is to be raised from 98,047 short tons to 100,018 short tons. This means that Lyndon is permitting the South African sugar producers to sell even more sugar at the U.S. Government supported high sugar prices in the U.S. Without this quota, the South African sugar producers would have to sell their sugar at much lower world market prices. Quotas for exporting sugar to the U.S. are a very real bonus to sugar producers of other countries.

At about the same time that Lyndon's man Freeman made the announcement about the quota bonus to South African sugar producers, authorities in Windhoek, South-west Africa (protectorate of Republic of South Africa) announced that a South African farmer and his wife had been jailed for beating a Negro servant to death. The farmer and his wife were sentenced for assault with intent to commit grievous bodily harm". The man got three years and his wife got two, for beating a black man to death. But don't let this turn your stomach as you spoon the South African sugar into your coffee because we have no evidence that the farmer and his wife are sugar-producers at all.

Lyndon announced that Lou Leventhal, counsel for the Democratic National Committee who figured prominently in the engineering of the meaningless "compromise" with the MFDP at Atlantic City, has been appointed to a federal court judgeship. Not long ago the Democratic National Committee made Joe Jr., assistant counsel to the National Committee. Will Joe Rauh, Jr., now to the position Leventhal is vacating? Stay tuned.....

The Rockefellers' Chase Manhattan Bank, one of the biggest overseas spenders, issued a special economic report last week, in which it said that American big business would comply with Lyndon's request as much as possible. The Chase report continued, though, saying that the big businessman "unquestionably wants to be a good citizen, but he must also defend his corporate interests". We've already seen some evidence of which side big business comes down on when these two issues confront one another.

ERAP. CORRESPONDENCE

March 8, 1965

Dear Paul, Rennie, Bobb and etc.

As you know I have very little time to spend on my writing. So I should be using the time it will take to write this, if given thought, to work on THE WATCHMEN (term I sue for SDS project activity). However, I won't give it a thought -- will just bang away and let you put it together.

Read Oglesby's letter in Newsletter, 2-19-65. I'm not attempting to answer it, but will take a few points as a starting point, I guess. His letter opens with an idea of new left arts project. Good.

One of the major goals of a community theatre would be to create a dialogue between the poor and middle class. See p. 2 of Oglesby's letter, par. 3. On the question of getting a "poor" play before the local bureaucrats and middle class power, he asks, "How do you get them to come?" While it is a large assumption I would say by creating exciting theatre. If the theatre is as Theatre (not propaganda) they will come. The propaganda comes extra.

Why can't we "flirt with libel?" (See p. 2, par. 5) There are ways of disguising characterizations of real people -- yet everyone will clearly know who is under attack. When Rennie was here we touched on Power. He suggested that it was within the "power" of the poor to murder landlords. He didn't say do it. But it could be the subject of a working play. I think the possibilities are clear. The play could, for example, be a dialogue of right and wrong power. In short, I believe it possible to confront real enemies in working plays by "flirting with libel."

Would a "well-brained speaker" draw larger crowds than exciting and relevant theatre? It seems to me there is little that is certain about this one way or the other.

Is Oglesby dismissing the idea of a theatre for the poor, in and of itself? Why Not? I think it is important in and of itself! I discussed this very point with Paul Goodman and he thinks it important for any community to have a theatre that discusses relevant issues. There is nothing wrong with that idea, that I can see.

The poor do not know about power. I don't know about power. That is the thing about the poor -- their sense of powerlessness! If they had a sense of powerfulness, might not there be more action and less problems? Their sense of powerlessness is real. The problem goes further -- it is not just a feeling of the poor -- but one which we all have. We feel cut off. Isolated. P. A dialogue on that feeling (Waiting for Godot) is relevant. Who does he mean? That dialogue is relevant too.

It seems to me that a touring of working plays from project to project could be another dramatic way of demonstrating the common problems within the differences of the total movement. A working play built around the problems of Hazard, Ky. shown to Newark, etc.

SERIALS 4A - NO 8

Oglesby speaks of "failures" in the tone of an Absolutist to me. The danger in this point of view is in what it fails to perceive. Christianity can be said to have failed. But what would the world be like without the positive influence of Christianity or the other ethical systems? Consider the middle ages - consider the Negro movement.

And, oh!, let him and you and I and all of us hope to fail like a Brecht or Sartre and the others he mentions! This is no argument against a Community Theatre - it is an argument for a Community Theatre. He argues well for National Lit. - Arts project - what gives him hope for that where so many have "failed"? Following this line, Oglesby's list of "failures" would be a long and honorable one - and one I long to join! Burn my books too, is the cry of the poet. Yes, and burn my plays, but don't, pray God, shoot me. I might be a "failure" as Joe Hill the people's poet was.

Sincerely,

Bob Smiddle

PREP CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Todd:

Responding to your letter about the Third World, etc.:

I think we crossed wires on the UN. For much of its history, the UN has indeed been used as an instrument of American policy on those issues for which the United States felt a UN instrument would be useful (as Hans Morgenthau put it at a seminar here the other day); but it need not continue to be. Nor is the only alternative that the UN be paralyzed entirely, which is the alternative the Russians are pushing (probably out of fear that the only kind of UN there could be is the kind there has been, a US-oriented one). The Soviet insistence that all peacekeeping be put back under Security Council control in fact works out the same way the US insistence on making the Soviets pay up does: it paralyzes the Assembly. Thus both the Soviet and American (and French) policies are destructive of any protection for the small, the weak, and the poor.

But my point was precisely that the small, the weak, and the poor might respond to this challenge not by collapsing before it--as they have so far--but by turning the Assembly into their own instrument and "taking it away" from the United States. And my point is that they would be far more able to do so if there were a vigorous pro-small-and-poor, pro-Assembly, pro-new-kind of UN, pro-Third-World voice inside the United States itself. As things stand in the Assembly, the US no longer has an automatic blocking one-third (38 votes out of 114), especially if France sides--as she well may--with the Third World. The Russians never did, and while the Third World does not have an automatic two-thirds majority against both the NATO-OAS bloc and the Soviet bloc, it is quite close--and presumably could capture or fracture one or the other of those blocs on a particular issue. I could certainly imagine the Assembly voting to interpose a peace force against a Chinese invasion of India, an American air strike against North Viet-Nam, or a Soviet attack on Turkey.

But in order to push the American government onto being willing to accept such independent power for the Assembly (even power limited by the small nation's limited abilities to pay for and provide such an interposition force), I think there would need to be a strong voice in the United States supporting the Third World's power in the Assembly, and the Assembly as focus for the Third World.

And there is a much wider base in the United States for that position, right now, than the Delta-slum-campus alliance you suggest as a base against "the New American Arrogance." The Delta-slum-campus alliance is still fantastically weak--individually and as an alliance. The Saturday Review UN-ers, however, are the backbone of the country. But it may take students to energize SR-type into this new approach to support of the UN.

Just one other point. Do you think it's mere accident that the "N.A.A." emerges, or gets much stronger, with the detente? Is it not possible that a decent campaign against the Soviet image of what the world should be, and the best American images thereof, would energize new commitment to transform the Third World--and incidentally give the Third World a choice between: money and ideas to take? That kind of anti-Communism appeals to me, and I can

name at least one Senator, not a "slick amoral type," who would like to
massive economic aid of a particular kind: McGovern. Read his new book
Against Want: A Super Food for Peace program.

Best regards,

Arthur I. Waskow
Resident Fellow

BALTIMORE REPORT

The involvement of the East Baltimore St. staff with Clarence Ashby, a tenant who has been fighting his landlord alone for a year, has developed into a housing program. When we first met Ashby, he had a legal aid lawyer who wasn't doing anything for him. The first thing we did was get him a good lawyer. In addition we went with Ashby to see Mr. Fratta of the Bureau of Building Inspection, twice. Naturally, the Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI) had never taken real action on Ashby's complaints until we talked to them and the story hit the papers. Mr. Fratta insisted that the Bureau always responds to complaints, but admitted that it was their conscious policy to ghettoize the "undesirables" on E. Baltimore St. Nonetheless the publicity has forced the BBI to take Ashby's landlord to court - coming on March 11th. Scherr, the landlord, attempted to use the fact that Ashby's apartment is overcrowded as a reason for evicting him and thereby silencing him. Unfortunately, for Scherr, he had once signed a paper that proved he knowledgably rented to 11 people (3½ rooms) so our lawyer was able to knock down the eviction notice in court. Scherr, who manages 600 houses and is not used to losing in court was shocked and angered. He immediately for a repossession notice, an eviction notice that landlords can get simply because they own the property, and in the same day it was served on Ashby. We will fight this in court, but will probably lose. However, we will help Ashby sue Scherr for damages done to his children as a result of the condition of the house, and will be present when the BBI takes Scherr to court.

What is really important, is not Ashby's case, however, but the fact that it has given us a dramatic issue to organize on! We have been going door to door and from family to family organizing block committees to fight on the housing issue. In addition to involving people who helped us with our War on Poverty fight, we have met a number of new people who seem very promising. It is they who have suggested that we get a group of 20 or more and go to the mayor to demand a massive rat extermination program for Baltimore St. as a start. Also we have talked to another of Scherr's tenants and are attempting to get him to fight Scherr. The thing is still in embryo and no block committee exists formally, but we have solidified some of our War on Poverty contacts and doubled our contacts in general.

In addition, U-JOIN has unwittingly become the home of a massive "kiddies" program. We have 4 groups: a childrens play school, run by our new staff member, Joan Berezin; a 10-12 year old boys club; a teenage girl's club, called the "Teen Stompers" which works with the kids, takes typing lessons, distributes leaflets for us; a teenage boys club. The two teenage clubs promise to be movement oriented-- a school fight, and a fight with the anti-poverty people for a community center. These clubs have led us to new adult contacts, helped in our office work, passed out our leaflets and apparently gotten their parents to read them. All of these programs will be combined into the fight for a Community Center run by the people in the neighborhood. A number of the parents have expressed interest in this plan.

Because of the time required now in the Baltimore St. area and around Bond St., we are considering withdrawing from the projects. This will be reported in the next report.

On Bond St., an entire block has been thoroughly canvased and a meeting will soon be called-- later this week. It looks as though housing will not be an issue on that block, however, as the housing is not that

COMMUNITY PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE: A REPORT

PREFACE:

To you people who couldn't come with us to the Cleveland Conference, what I've done in this little leaflet is to try and make you feel as if you were really there with us. It was impossible for me to capture the emotions of people, when they listened to Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, Mrs. Unita Z. Blackwell, and Mrs. Susie Ruffin of the MFDP. The three teen-agers from Detroit who sang freedom songs from their hearts; and to hear the testimonies of poor black and white people tell frightening stories of their experiences. People cried, I did, and more than once too. Couldn't we in Newark make a pledge to unify our selves? Let's try.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Newark Community Union Project to thank the SDS staff who came here last summer to organize. I would thank them, also for the privilege of going to the Conference. And I shall not forget the kind and gracious people of Cleveland and to the Rev. Paul Younger for opening their hearts and their homes to us. We thank you all very kindly, and by God's grace hope to see you all in Newark at our Convention.

About 31 members of N-CUP went on the trip to the Cleveland Conference. We piled into the bus at 8 PM after a short delay. We sang freedom songs, laughed and joked with each other until we arrived at New Brunswick, where we picked up Community Action Project people. While there, we let off some exhaust and took on new fuel. We then proceeded to Pennsylvania where we picked up more people, by now the bus was fully loaded and we were officially on our way. Our driver's name was Bob and he certainly knew his business. He handled the bus wonderfully. We stopped approximately four times at the Howard Johnson's rest and comfort stations along the way. People were gay and excited and we had the opportunity to meet and discuss and exchange points of view with each other. During a four hour drive many people had retired and were taking cat-naps. No one really slept. One of the amazing things about the trip was to observe the courtesy of the tractor-trailer and bus drivers.

The night was clear, the moon shone brightly and we could see snow-covered trees and mountain tops covered with caps of snow. We drove through tunnels which are dug through the mountains. The night scenery was very beautiful and picturesque, and one that I will remember many to come. As usual the inevitable did happen, in the east-bound traffic a car lost control and crashed under a trailer. At our last stop in Pittsburg we picked up two men whose car had broken down and the bus driver was kind enough to drop them off at the next station. By this time all were snoozing for a few hours.

The bus had now approached the Ohio Turnpike and were on the last leg of the trip to Cleveland. And the last things that I heard were snoring, zzzzz and the quiet and a comfortable-warm bus was a perfect lullaby to slumber land. It was about 4 AM. About 7 AM people began to stir about all eyes were opened and we were just one hour away from our destination. By 7:30 the bus rolled off the Pike and onto the streets that led us to St. Paul's Church.

We came to a stop exactly at 8 AM. People from the Cleveland

Project were on hand to greet us. We went inside and registered. While there, we met with people from as far away as Detroit, San Francisco, and Chicago. We lullled around, had coffee and cereal breakfast, chatted, and as you can guess, the good old fashion bull-session. It was now 10 am. The Conference didn't start yet. There were more people than were expected and more kept coming. The Cleveland people were busy making last minute placements.

The conference started at 10:45am. Topics included Welfare, Housing, Education and in general how to combat the ravages of Poverty: Mabel Swanson was Mistress of Ceremonies. Speakers included Alonzo Brown from Chicago, who spoke on the general problems of the poor people faced with government or people of the power structure. 2. We heard from our own Jesse Allen. Topic was what the future holds if poor people can organize. 3. Lillian Craig from Cleveland spoke on the need for inter-racial and inter-faith organization of the poor. Gloria Ransom gave the welcoming address (Cleveland). "Go Tell It on the Mountain" was sung by Mrs. Fannie Hamer. She is a member of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Mr. Tucker from Detroit spoke on the ghetto in his city, and how Negroes should fight and demand. We must stop begging and demand our rights even to the extent of civil disobedience.

12:15pm the assembly met in small (workshop) groups. Topics of discussion: 10 persons met in my group. Lady spoke of dilapidated conditions in Pittsburgh. One man told of how the (bourgeois) middle class Negro who let down the (proletarian) poor Negroes by not fighting for equal opportunity: Middle class have some education, and invest in property and bonds, and so does not share the cause of the poor Negro whose "assets" are to produce children and do the common labor.

We adjourned the discussion at 1 pm for lunch, lunch consisted of hamburgers and chicken soup, and a variety of pastries and goodies. Our Bob and Norman made movies and sound tracts with their movie equipment. Then the biggest attraction of the lunch period came when three sisters from Detroit called the Barbour (High School) kids, together with Mrs. Hamer of MFDP shook the rafters of the building with "Do You Want Your Freedom Now", "We Shall Never Turn Back", "Let My People Go" and "Freedom Train." And there were approximately 200 people who attended the convention. People just let themselves go. And it was just like good old fashion revival meeting.

Lunch period finished at 2:15 pm! The assembly met back in the hall and we were assigned to the people to whom we were staying for the night. Motion was made whether or not to go on a march and it was unanimous that we march. It was now 2:45pm. 200 people excited, enthused and ready for action. People from many cities, poor, black and white sharing each others problems. This is a day that I will remember.

The March was put off until later. We met in small work shop groups. Our group spoke around the 4 R's of Rats, Roaches and Ridiculous Rents and slumlords, and the threats of eviction when one try to fight these ridiculous conditions. At this point motion pictures were made and a tape recorder was set up in the room. So that everyone's testimony was heard. The discussion group adjourned at 4:30pm and we returned to the sanctuary. We drove from the church at 4:45pm to Detroit Superior Bridge then we walked to the Public Square where we sang freedom songs. We had newspaper coverage of the march, including local police patrols and photographers. The temperature was around 14

and winds up to 25 mph in gusts. And people just sang and clapped hands in the sub freezing weather. The Public demonstration lasted about one hour. The church bus and people with private cars picked us up at the Public Square and brought us back to the Church. It was then 6pm. People was very exhausted at this time and we were ready for the wash and also dinner. The police meantime had come over by the Church and had given the rector a ticket for illegally parking the church bus on the wrong side of the street. (The Rev. Paul Younger). Rector of St. Paul's Baptist Church. People stood around and talked about the problems back home. Best of all I enjoyed hearing from Mrs. Hamer of MFDP. She told of the brutality in Mississippi. She told of constant police harrassment in her home and while walking the streets of Miss. hoping to persuade her people to register. Mrs. Hamer also mentioned that she had received bomb threats, and telephone calls from the Northern states, which she said was very amazing. By this time it was 7:30 pm and dinner was being served. O, Boy, O Boy section of baked chicken, potatoes, cole slaw, dressing and good old fashioned giblet gravy hmmm! delicious good to the last lick. We chatted at the table about the happenings of the day. After dinner, all of the people that had contributed towards making the program a success were then honored and given long rounds of applauses.

It was now 8:15pm and that part of the program was turned over to Mrs. Fannie Hamer of the MFDP. Here she talked of more harrassment. At one time she stated that the bus driver was given a ticket for driving a bus which was the wrong color. In 1963 16 bullets had been fired in the house where Mrs. Hamer stayed with a friend. The bullets missed her but killed two teen-ager girls. Mrs. Hamer stated that thousands of Negroes are still hungry and need clothes in Miss. When Mrs. Hamer had finished speaking she received a standing ovation, then she sang ("Go Tell It on the Mountain"). The time was now 9:00 pm. Thus ending the convention program for Saturday, February 20, 1965. People are now assigned to their respective homes. Several parties are being held for visiting civil rights groups: Mrs. Hamer blames our power structure for failing to carry out their responsibilities towards the poor people and farther said that there was a wide open opportunity for others to come in and do the job. She mentioned that we have the key, and it is now up to us.

People then met back into the sanctuary where the day's program was coming to a close. A collection had been made for the Miss. people and presented to Mrs. Hamer a total of \$72.00 was collected. People joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome" Mrs. Hamer closed the program with the dismissal prayer and the Battle Hymn of the Republic. The program came to a close.

A closing remark was made by Mrs. Unita Z. Blackwell, who thought we shouldn't feel sorry for the Mississippians in their struggle for democracy and we should organize up here. We then swept and mopped the church in preparation for Sunday worship. We sang while we cleaned the sanctuary and Sunday school rooms. When we got done it was now 11pm. A party followed at Lillian Craig's apartment, (police harrassment). Over two dozen people participated. People from many civil groups. While there we drank and ate with people from Cleveland. The party carried on until late into the night, we left Lilly's apartment at 2:30am The party continued at Mrs. Susie Moore's apartment (the lady that put me up). At this time the party was at its peak, and I was having a ball. We danced and ate and drank, everyone was having a swinging time. It was then that I glanced at my watch and decided to retire around 5am.

Sunday, Feb. 21, 1965:

I was awakened by the radio-alarmed clock which Mrs. Moore had left for my conveniency, at that time it was 8am. I had a refreshing shower, dressed, and by this time other people were stirring around upstairs. Talking about southern hospitality! Well, the people of Cleveland, Ohio bended backwards for us. The weather was a little warmer, but it was raining. Breakfast was served. The time was 9:45am. The telephone rang and someone at the church reminded Mrs. Moore that they'd be picking us up at 10:15am: we were picked up about 10:45am and driven to Fidelity Baptist Church where the final meeting of the Convention was to be held.

We arrived at the church at 11am Sunday worship had begun and Susie Ruffin of MFDP was speaking: She also told of the harrassment of police and members of KKK brutality, and of how her civil rights were violated (nothing new to Negroes). After she was through speaking, Rev. Younger introduced the members of the B.D.S. projects: They were from (Kentucky), Chicago, (Detroit), Boston, Mass., California, New Jersey, (Mississippi), Pennsylvania and Baltimore: we were given a standing ovation. Then the Rev. Younger preached his sermon and his Text was called "Dominion" and explained that this word Dominion broken down to the lay-man language meant God's Given Power. He closed by saying that all of this God given power did not mean for man to abuse use and use it for his own evil and sinister goal for greed and graft. But instead, to those who possess that power to lead his people righteously, all men as brothers, Black, White, Yellow, Red, Brown, to organize the educated, the depressed to come together. We are all God's children. congregation then joined hands and sang We Shall Overcome. The Church then came to a close with the singing of the hymn "Who is on the Lord's Side?"

By this time it was 1pm. The SDS grassroot groups met downstairs, where luncheon were being served, ham, potato salad, cole slaw, and baked sweet-potato filled hungry tummies, followed by jello for dessert. It seemed to be more than 200 people sitting at the table. At this time a short farewell meeting was called. People summed up their talk, telling how they felt, through the work shop experiences shared with each other. And I shared everyone's opinion that the poor negro and whites common enemies are the politician, the need for better housing, employment involving higher incomes and better job opportunities, and a Welfare program staffed by people who know and who live with poverty and who merely exists hand to mouth. People applauded the cooks and assistances who prepared the food. Outstanding highlight of this meeting was the praise and honor that were bestowed to the staff members of (S.D.S.) Students for a Democratic Society. Paul Potter, president of SDS accepted the honor, stating that SDS shares the grievances of the communities and felt that they are a part of the people united to make a progressive change.

At this point Jesse Allen of N-C.U.P. asked people to write to Mrs. Ida Brown and to tell her that she is not alone in her fight. People took Mrs. Brown's address and said that they will support her. The last two wounded up the conference by saying: Quote: Mrs. Susie Ruffin: Let's organize more Freedom Party movements and not Freedom Clubs unquote. And Mrs. Unita Blackwell, asked us not to feel sorry for the people in Mississippi, but instead, she urges us Negroes and poor whites in the North to organize ourselves in dominion and make America truly "The land of the free and the home of the brave for every man."

PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND, UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF.

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Trip Home

There is no end: By now it was 3:20 pm. The big bus had rolled up to the curb. Everyone was shaking hands, kissing, and saying a fond farewell, a tear or two running down the cheeks, black men and black women, white men and white women together, and now, we were leaving, going back to the many cities scattered to tell what had taken place at the convention. And so, we boarded the bus in a down pour of blinding snow, and whipping cold wind. And as the bus slowly pulled away. I said to myself, Thank you God, We shall overcome.

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