

NEWARK - 155 RIDGEWOOD  
AUGUST 31, 1964

Rent strikes continue to be the major emphasis of our block work. An almost total preoccupation with working out our relationships with the other components of the Newark Full Employment Project has undermined our organizing effort for the last two weeks. Nevertheless, the rent strikes have continued. All of the tenants still on rent strike have received eviction notices and several have already gone to court. The city clerk now holds some of the tenants money in escrow pending a trial in Superior Court where a pro-tenant precedent has been established. These first steps in legalizing rent strikes in New Jersey are important victories.

The other major community action in the last two weeks was the 4 R's Rally (AGAINST RATS, ROACHES, AND RIDICULOUS RENTS) held on the 21st. Over 200 people attended. The major emphasis was on community unity, support for the rent strikers, and a commitment to a housing program in Clinton Hill. The speeches and singing were at their finest. We had "the good fortune" to be visited by Lee Bernstein, our local Councilmanic opposition. One of the speakers told him "not to come around elction time unless he did something for Clinton Hill now!" Following the rally, a farewell party was held at 716 at which several community people gave really moving speeches about our work in the Hill.

The willingness of some homeowners to support the tenants indicates that housing program may develop community of interest between two groups which have been hard to bring together. Homeowners still tend to look down on tenants and condemn their indifference, but they are coming to recognize that for the tenants a rent strike means a break out of the hopelessness circle. This situation may be somewhat peculiar to Clinton Hill because the blight declaration has devalued all property and therefore any improvement helps the owners. The owners who have proven difficult to work with are those who are just waiting to sell and get out to the suburbs. There is a growing willingness among the community people we have worked with to recognize common interests however.

Since the Rally, we have had to devote all our time to second-guessing various trustees who were out to remove us from the project. The growing tension between the "students" (us) and several trustees around working out a new decision-making structure for the project finally erupted on the 27th, at a Board of Trustees meeting. The trustees refused to believe our willingness to accept the programmatic decisions of a project committee made up of 4 staff, 3 members from the block leaders, 3 members from the Executive Board of the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council, 3 trustees, 1 from National COFE (Aronowitz), and 1 from the research staff. The distrust was largely the result of several incidents which Stanley Winters magnified into cries of "unilateralism" for the trustees. Winters is the founder of CHNC, and the power behind it now although a VP in charge of publicity, and co-chairman of the Board of Trustees. The trustees insisted on the hiring of a full time project director who would have final authority over daily staff actions, be a Negro, work in community organizing, and be responsible to the Trustees. The "students" felt that this would be unnecessary since we were more than willing to accept the authority of a project committee. We fully supported an integrated staff with community people and students working full time. When it became apparent that Winter's desire to hire community people was really a straw man designed to remove us, we decided to "put it up to the people." The night before the Trustees meeting, we had a terrific block leaders meeting which pledged its support for the "students" and decided to send a 5 man delegation to the Trustees meeting.

This group told Winters that until the Council democratized itself, they would not support any of its actions. (Winters wanted support in a fight to get a CHNC executive-himself perhaps?-onto the Board which would distribute money from the Poverty Bill). Block leaders in the above paragraph are the most active members of a block group, and not necessarily the elected officers of a group.

The Trustees meeting could easily be categorized as a play from the theater of the absurd. The group voted to hire community people and rejected giving us any money. (N.B. \$1500 of the projected project expenses for the year was to come from us.) We were red-baited and covered with all sorts of vile generalities. We had discussed the necessity of getting away from the Trustees but had decided to wait because of uncertainty about the depth of our real community support. It became evident that no functioning coalition was possible between the trustees and the students at this time. Carl, Barry, and Harriet resigned after Tom tried to disband the Trustees (also known as the Newark Committee on Full Employment) on the grounds of its being a non-functioning coalition. Tom tried to remain a staff member of both groups (them and us) but was promptly fired. (by them). We cleaned out 716 Bergen and moved down to a new office at 155 Ridgewood, Phone BI 3-1895. Winters took back his pots, pans and mattress.

The real showdown will be Thursday evening. We continue to emphasize our faith in the CHNC (IF DEMOCRATIZED) as the community organization with which we want to work closely in Clinton Hill. The most impressive result of the conflict has been the increasing militancy, unity, and support from the block leaders (nearly 60). This week many of them will try to get as many people on the blocks to become card-carrying members of the CHNC and to go to the Assembly. They are in the process of drawing up a proposal which will establish a working relationship and a project committee for the students and the CHNC. They are demanding that the council's control rest with its most active members. We have been accused of trying to flood the council with lower-Hill people probably in order to get the upper-Hill people against us. In actuality most of them (upper) are inactive due to the Winters' refusal to give anyone a say in the council working. A further proposal is that the council share an office with us instead of being housed in the kitchen of 26 Shanley (the Winters' palace). We have given little thought to considering what will happen if we lose the support of the council since we expect to keep it. The trustees intend to continue this organizing effort but it is unclear with whom, by whom, and for whom. Should we win the support of the CHNC on Thursday, we will have achieved a political victory. Our demands for a democratic council, our desire for a well-functioning representative project committee, and the growth of block leader unity represents a challenge to the liberal power structure (leaders without a base). The demand for grass roots control may begin to make them reconsider their so-called constituencies (be it unions, a civil rights group, or liberal political), and to begin to be concerned with the people they are supposed to represent.

One of the chief questions which remains unanswered is whether the existence of an independent SDS project in Newark will encourage further attack from the local politicians. In all probability, it will help us within the community. The implicit questions of "who we are," and "why we're here!" are becoming explicit. By giving information on the ideals and goals of SDS and ERAP more clearly, we begin a more realistic, honest, and fruitful debate on what a movement in Clinton Hill and Newark means to the community. We are now in a better position to help create a grass roots coalition based on the equal status of all components. The red-baiting and rumor-mongering which has gone on quietly may become more open but so far its net effect within the community has been minor. It may however, make it difficult for us to go into another area of the city.

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# CLEVELAND - 2908 JAY AVENUE

AUGUST 23 TO 30

Monday -- Back from Ann Arbor and into the field, preparing for a meeting of CUF AW. Mon. evening. The meeting had the characteristics of an established group with business to do; the chaos quotient has been greatly reduced from that of the first few meetings. The focus of the evening was a voter registration project for the 10th and 11th of September outside the Near West Side food stamp office where 1500 mothers go through. Plans include a speaker on Monday the 31st to discuss Goldwater and Johnson, a platform to be drawn up by the mothers on which they will judge the candidates, and full scale voter registration, co-operating with the AFofL-CIO, with sound trucks, buses to transport people downtown to register, two Spanish-workers, and hundreds of volunteers from CUF AW for the 10th and 11th. Lillian, a member of CUF AW, went with Sharon to the AFof L to explain their plan and line up support. Continuing welfare work with mothers and CCPers revolves around recruitment for the group by house contacts, and committee meetings for the next CUF AW meeting.

CUF AW  
+  
Voter reg

Tuesday saw a CORE voter education workshop attended by a few CCPers. Ward 27 is CORE's target. There they plan an extensive voter registration drive involving contacting and recontacting every person in the ward. Attention will by-pass the '64 presidential elections in favor of the up-coming (65) councilmanic elections in which CORE hopes to run a candidate in ward 27 and perhaps other wards. Ruth Turner's (executive secretary of Cleveland DORE) lunch Saturday with the CCP stimulated talk about a similar idea for Ward 8 -- our turf. The three groups with which we've been working in the Near West Side could unite to select and elect their councilman. The '65 elections are especially appropriate since the 30 year term councilman now in office is retiring and the field is wide open. This enlarged group could form the basis of a Near West Side council which could serve as a vehicle to involve the rest of the neighborhood in action. The campaign could perhaps serve as the issue for which we've been searching to develop a neighborhood council. Reservations about participating in the '65 councilmanic elections involve both an uncertainty as to the readiness of the three groups forming our constituency -- for example, none of the groups offers a possible candidate -- and an unwillingness to become involved in politics merely because the opportunity has been presented. Further plans on this will include more talking with CORE representatives and searching within our own ward for a possible candidate.

electoral politics  
+  
CORE

Wednesday morning we finished up our envelope addressing job for local 427, part of their voter registration drive. Another facet of our fund raising program.

fund-raising

Wednesday evening saw the fifth meeting of WEB block and surrounding areas in the housing project. The meetings, held in St. John's Church as a result of being banned from the project, represent a growing dissident faction from the management's company union council. Plans were laid for bypassing management in a petition to city health demanding immediate rat extermination and general health check of the project. Inaction on the part of the health department will be met with full-scale newspaper publicity. We discussed briefly the potential in this action to bring down the roof and with a general sentiment of "Let's Give 'Em Hell," the group moved on to other topics. Among them was a discussion of a Near West Side coalition, precipitated by the entrance of a representative from CUF AW who explained and asked for help with their voter registration drive. Meeting such strong opposition from management to our groups has forced us to think in terms of a possible Near West Side coalition as a supplement to the limited activities that will be possible with a renegade tenants' council. The housing project meeting included whites, Puerto

housing project tenants

Whites + Negroes

Cleveland, page 2

On Thursday, were two meetings, one of the U-JOIN and one of the company union from which the CCP is excluded. Also we had an internal education session with Mark Chesler on the right-wing in the United States.

U-Join  
agenda  
The U-JOIN meeting was also attended by a representative from CUFAW. Mr. Ortez, one of the members present, hails from the housing project. Of the three topics, spot labor, voter registration, and retraining, the former occupied most of the evening's time and interest. Plans were made for approaching organized labor on the spot labor question, both in terms of research needed to be done, for instance on the extent to which spot labor workers undercut unions, and in terms of the possibility of closing down spot labor in Cleveland. U-JOIN intends to check out the State Employment agency, which finds spot labor for union wages and conditions, is continually undercut by private spot labor. The group also wrote various candidates asking them for their position on spot labor. Thursday's saw the beginning of solidification of Cleveland U-JOIN, the group becoming more than just a conglomeration of contacts. A new factor was introduced into the U-JOIN meeting, that of an agenda written by several members of the group and several CCPers. Though the people working with CUFAW feel that the addition of a written agenda to the meetings has been valuable in giving needed direction and cohesion to them, the question still stands as to whether the agenda merely satisfies a need felt by the organizers or is seen as necessary and useful by the group as well.

The Thursday's meeting in the housing project of the company union's committee on constitution served to clarify the lines of conflict between the management group and the left caucus, the group with which we've been working. When asked by a representative of management with which group he would rather work with, Mr. Imm (tenant) replied, "I want to work with the group that's for the people," and went on to add that it looked as if that group was the St. Johns group. The line is drawn; the curse is cast.

Internal ed  
No-wing  
backlash  
Internal education Thursday evening was with Mark Chesler in a discussion of the right wing. Before beginning discussion, he mentioned that he is now working to prepare for the use of union's material explaining and documenting Goldwater's position on labor. The whole discussion and Mark's remarks were valuable and everyone should try to find out what he had to say. Especially meaningful to the Near West Side was a distinction made between the backlash and right wing phenomena, for in Mark's analysis of the backbone of the right wing were not included the many whites who live in the Near West Side and who may vote for Goldwater. The vote for Goldwater from this area would be in reaction to the civil rights movement rather than in approval of right wing policies in general; guys living around us feel that they have a tough choice when they know that the nominee who will "take care of that race problem" will also support right to work laws or relief cuts. How the right wing will attempt to capitalize on this feeling in the NWS could make a good fall study based in the NWS. Right wing groups must sit around and discuss how they can conservatize the people whom they've drawn in on the backlash.

Men  
house  
Friday night saw the social beginning of the interracial movement. CCP held an open house for neighbors and organizees, Negro and white. Only 14-15 people showed up at various times but the evening was well spent. Our neighbors on each side were interested, and not negatively so, that there should be Negroes coming to the house.

It is a little known fact that the CCP has a scarcity of little known facts this week.