

ERAP NEWSLETTER

451 Dudley St., Boston, Mass.

October 5, 1965

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POETRY

A POEM BY DELORES MAXWELL, ^{Cleveland} CHICAGO

There's a place we all know
Where we all love to go
Where unity's heart is beating
on Thursday nights
We discuss our rights
at Community Union Meeting.
That's where we unite
to fight for our rights
and try to keep unity's heart
beating
We pool our ideas, and share all
our fears
and go by the slogans we've all
heard for years
"Together we stand, Divided we fall"
"All for one and one for all"
So don't be misguided, and don't
be misled
it's not a group with one boss at
the head

We all work together for one
common cause
To destroy and wipe out poverty's
claws!
We'll march and we'll sing
and we'll all fight like hell
for the rights of the people
We'll fill up the jails!
"All for one and one for all"
With this great slogan
We'll tear down the walls
of poverty and filth and all that
destroy
the hopes and the dreams of our
girls and our boys
Let's strengthen the arteries of
Unity's heart
and all pitch in and do our part.
Your suggestions and ideas
are worth repeating
and the time and the place is
Community Meeting.

1965
Paw

REACTIONS TO THE NEWARK COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

I am writing about my trip to Newark's peoples conference, and I can truly say that not only myself but all involved had a joyous time, we all went to get our problems worked out and to make things better among ourselves, and especially among the poor people, I do feel that all of us got a great understanding because we let every one talk about his problem and how he felt he should go about abolishing this problem, at first I had the idea that things would become tiresome and uninterested and may I say that I was taken by complete surprise, never before in all of my gatherings had I been completely spellbound, never before have I had the pleasure of listening to poor people like myself make such a fine speech, never again will I doubt the voice and opinions of one less fortunate than some others, how brave and clear they were to protest and march, and if necessary to keep their children out of school in order to let some one know that they were tired of sending their children to old and ugly schools, schools that taught reading two or more years behind better schools, schools... how they talk about the rich man draining the poor people and the rich man that the poor man is unaware of what is going on, how for years that the rich man has promised to give and never does, I along with the rest of the group think it is about time to march and protest and if necessary protest in front of these landlords how if he refuse to fix up his building, but I must say this can not be accomplished if we do not organize and come to meetings, and stop being satisfied with what they have been giving us; stop listening to these sad and fake stories, with out us they are lost, we do play an important part in their lives... without our poor dollars where would they be, without our Mothers where would the social workers be, and on the other hand why don't we ask them about the things those daughters do, and some of the places they go, and see if things are as bad as they say we are. **3**

From Chicago -

By Jim Leahy (#800, Anthrop)
The final assembly accepted a proposal to form a provisional committee composed of two elected representatives from each local project, who will represent the community groups nationally as the National Community Unions (NCU). This committee will convene for the first time on the weekend of Nov. 25, probably at Cairo, Ill. (depending on where ERA meets). The location will be announced later.
One of the first duties of the committee will be to draw up an agenda for the Washington conference on the War on Poverty.
I'm sure that the representatives will be bringing many ideas of their own to consider and my only suggestion is that they first pinpoint their ultimate objectives and work slowly until the local projects are more fully organized.
I'm sure the inception of a national group will bring us a sense of

unity and a singleness of purpose, that have not existed until this time, and I sincerely hope that we will be able to fill the conception of social change advocated by Students for a Democratic Society.

By Wilson Hanna
At the Newark Conference I met a lot of new faces. I met a lot of different people. I was in the Housing discussion group. And what I seen in Newark was a shame to me which here we have paradise to what they have there.

Why do people have to pay the tremendous rents to the slum landlords which they are pocketing and not fixing up the property for these people to live in?--if it were fixed the way the people would like they wouldn't mind paying the rent.

I do not think it is right for the landlords to pocket the rent. Therefore, that is what causes your slum districts which I was very surprised to see things as they were.

NEWARK CONT.

You've got slum landlords here. But sometimes they try to help. But down there, there is no cooperation at all.

I would like to express my opinion - cause I don't expect ever to be able to go back unless we have another conference. But I would like to see these people of Newark in this slum district to have nicer homes than they have now.

If there's another conference I want to go to it.

I've already told them that work that I want a day off for the Washington Conference next January.

JOIN ATTENDS POOR PEOPLE'S MEETING

By Ralph Rowell
I arrived late on account of having to drive the car. By the time we got there the conference was well under way.

Right after I arrived they was divided into different groups for the discussion of different problems. I went into the "War on Poverty" one.

Each person discussed his own problem in his own area, and each person had his own idea of how to work it out. So we exchanged ideas, which was a good thing, but everybody had their own way of doing things. One person said we should mail letters to your Congressman, Senators, and President to get investigations on what the War on Poverty money is used for in different areas. The people know it isn't being used for the poor. Some rich man is sticking it in his pocket. And keep writing until you get an answer.

Another thing that was discussed was having our own delegation on the War on Poverty Program instead of the big shots. We should go to the Board of Directors and force him to put our names on.

We should write a letter to the President and War on Poverty Director and have all the names of the different groups signed to it.

I met a wonderful lot of people up there from different states. I talked to them about housing projects and also food stamps. That was my problem to work on up there - the food stamps.

I met a speech up there about running the picket line here at the welfare office and also we run one on the Vice President, wanting the boys back from Viet Nam--that was at Madison, Wisconsin, and I told them about that one, too.

We had a wonderful time up there at the conference and I think we did a lot of good up there, too. We hope to get a lot more people coming out and helping us more than we have right now -- got this thing out on the road and keep pushing.

They all had about the same problems we do--people not getting rent receipts from the landlords, checks from welfare being late and the landlords throwing them out before they get their checks to pay the rent, and it's hard for people in California and different places to get apartments cause they are in the welfare and the landlords want to get the checks on time so they won't rent to them.

By Ras Pritchard

Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, California... All the people dictated what should be said in the letter and then the chairman who was running the meeting made the letter out of the suggestions to send to the President. The chairman was a little colored gal from Newark and we all signed our names to it and what organization we belonged to. It will be sent out within the next week.

After that the small meetings broke up and all assembled in the hall. We all started to "freedom march", essombled in front of the church and we started down to Soldier's Park with a police escort. They even stopped traffic for us. After we arrived at the park each group discussed what was wrong with their area; what they wanted changed. After everyone had

NEWARK (CONTINUED)

discussed their problems in their areas, the march broke up and everyone went back to the church for chow. After chow, everyone was talking about the problems with each other; getting more acquainted.

And then we all went to a party at the office of the Newark Community Union. We all assembled talking to each other, refreshments were served and a lot got drunk.

After that we all went to the different apartments of people in the Newark project we was assigned to. Next morning there was services and reports of the different meetings of the day before. Then we had lunch and people talked among themselves and said their good-byes. Everyone started for home.

I met some very wonderful people that I'll tell you, and its really something when people can get together and work on the same thing--colored, white, each race--they all have the same problems.

And if there is ever another conference, I'll never miss it. The people here wasn't there have to be there to see really what its like, and to really appreciate it.

from Boston

By Doris Bland

Arriving in Newark New Jersey Friday the 27th day of August 1965, I didn't know what a great and wonderful experience lie ahead for me and many more people. Right off the bat I started meeting warm and friendly people like NCU staff and other people from Newark and other states. I began to feel right at home after being there for a while I met the lady I was suppose to stay with. She is very sweet and kind. She open her home to myself and Yvonne like she had known us all her life. After the rest of the people from Boston came, we got settled and went where we were staying.

Bright and early next morning one of the NCU staff woke us up. He told us it was time to go to the church where the conference was being held. First we had coffee and doughnuts, after that the program started. First we watch the Cleveland Conference film and then we saw one about Newark. They were very good. The next thing that was on the agenda was speakers from all over like California, Cleveland, Mississippi, Conn., Maryland, New York, Mass., Alabama, and many more states. Most of these speakers spoke about welfare, housing, schools, and South Viet Nam and more subjects. After this we broke up into small groups and talk about one of the topics. I got in the welfare group. One lady from Cleveland her name's Corde told us that they have to buy food stamps clothes stamps and the welfare workers come in their house any time they want. They get their checks once a month. These people have to buy those stamps. In a way I am glad I don't live there. There are some good points about it and some bad ones too. Then a lady from Oakland California (name Bossie Smith) told us about the welfare Bill of rights that people on welfare drew up. Their program is just the greatest. They gave me a copy of this book. We are going to make copies of it, maybe, we can do the same as they have. Mrs. Smith's husband told me he would come and help us if we need it. We talk about lots of things, it was just great. People are so wonderful and so good. They are full of good ideas and dreams. I know with strong minds we can get what we want. I see our dreams and ideas coming to life. We won't always be down. Every day we have come another step further than the day before. "There gonna be a change." Well it's here and all the big people will be laughing out of their side of the face. We, the little people and poor people have woke up and we will take a stand as proud people.

I guess you can say this is what the people's Conference has done for me and many more. I am counting the days until the next conference will be held. (January in Washington).

NEWARK - (CONT.)

FROM CLEVELAND --

by Lillian Craig

The second People's Conference was held in Newark New Jersey on August 28 and 29th. It consisted of two full days of meeting and talking with people from all over the United States and hearing what is going on in other parts of the country. Men, women and children were there from Cleveland Ohio, Cairo, Illinois, New Haven Conn., Selma, Alabama, Mississippi, Oakland, California, Baltimore, Maryland, Chicago, Illinois, Boston, Mass., New Brunswick, New Jersey, Morristown, New Jersey, Hoboken, New Jersey, and of course Newark.

It was held in an Episcopal Church on Rectory Street. It started out with Betty Moss from Newark welcoming everyone.

Workshops were set up in the morning where everyone discussed what they were doing in their immediate

towns. Lunch was then served. After lunch, we again split up into discussion groups where specific topics were discussed, such as Youth, Welfare, Housing and many others. Dinner was next and then a play was given by Lillian Craig and Bob Gros. Both are on the staff there. Many regrets that the Writer and Director of the play couldn't be there. Bob Smiddie was in Cleveland ill with Virus Pneumonia and Flourisy. Many Cheers for him. A party, a really great party was held at the office afterwards.

On Sunday a service was held, a different kind of service. It consisted of Bible reading and hymn singing. Then the General Assembly was held and Good-byes were said. The atmosphere of the conference was similar to the Cleveland Conference. It was one of Love, Concern and the wanting to better themselves. The problems the people talked about were so similar you would have thought they had come from the same city in the same state. You would have thought they were the same race, the same age. The ages of the participants of the Conference ranged from eight months old to possibly in the sixties. The races at the Conference was also a wide range, Nationalities were many, Caucasian, Puerto Rican, Eskimo, Indian, and Negro. Yet, the Conference was one of angry people and one of disgusted people, disgusted at the way the SYSTEM oppresses and dominates them.

The most interesting thing about the week-end in Newark, I have save until last and it was the March. It was held in the afternoon on Saturday, between the afternoon workshop and dinner. Like the March in Cleveland, it was to protest the inaction across the Nation. A loud-speaker system was hooked up to one of the cars and was used to let everyone know in the downtown of Newark what we were doing and why all the people were there and where the came from. Singing, linking hands

HAD

US

TIME!

NEWARK

(cont'd)

(CLEVELAND, CONT'D)

together, and people speaking into the March very interesting. The Police cars rode very slowly in the street watching our every move. They lined up and sat in the cars while we rallied around the park. A boy from Selma expressed his sentiment that if the people from Selma could demonstrate for what they believed in, so could we, everyone who is oppressed and is being denied the bare necessities of life along with being denied our own self-respect.

My own feeling about the Conference was one of mixed feelings. One was that it was not able to last longer, one of complete awe that there can and should be a national movement of the POOR. I guess the wanting for the Conference to last longer was one of selfishness, because I didn't want to say Good-bye and I know I would not be seeing these people again for another possible six months.

But there WILL be another such Conference. There has to be !!! This time we don't know where it is going to be, but as more and more people come into involvement there has to be another Conference.

RACE and the MOVEMENT

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ERAP BULLETIN

After reading Peter Countryman's open letter to the ERAP Bulletin (concerning black communities and white organizers), I felt a need to write a general reply expressing my own views and observations. At first, I declined, for I have tried and failed to speak truth on the black-white question to SDS-ERAP student-radicals often enough already. Nonetheless, I am convinced of the sincerity (if not the "openness")

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of many student radicals and anxious that -- for its own sake -- white America, too, in fact, develop a viable New Left.

To the point --

The essential problems of black people in America are 1) racism and 2) powerlessness. Racism has to do with white people (big and little) and how they operate with respect to me; i.e., black people. Powerlessness has to do with black people and how we do (or do not) operate with respect to white people.

The problems of poverty, social exclusion, and political impotence that affect the black ghetto have their roots in American racism; racism is a tool of economic exploitation, a means to political power, and a system of psychological gratification.

The continuation of these problems and the psycho-social, economic, and political "powerlessness" (powerlessness) of the black community to solve these problems have their roots in racism -- legal, and to a growing extent, extralegal oppression, exploitation, and castration* of black people by white people.

ERAP has not made a "gut" recognition of this. In spite of Baldwin, Malcolm, or LeRoi, if even that asshole Moynihan -- ERAP does not admit to this TRUTH. To state accurately WHY ERAP does not come to grips with this TRUTH would require an extensive critique of ERAP's non-ideological ideology and a venture into social psychoanalysis of white student rebellion in America in the 1960's. This is not my job.

Let it suffice to say that if we accept the TRUTH as outlined above he will readily understand the immorality, undemocracy, and bad strategy of dealing white kids and semi-adults into the black ghetto as "community organizers."

To mention a few points --
1. It reinforces dependency patterns among black people.

* Yes, "castration"

CONT'D P. 13

SUMMER STAFF - CLEVELAND

Dear Steve (Block),
As we did not get a chance to talk about the appropriateness of summer ERAP staff, I thought I might say a few things now.

First, a few questions. Even if we assume that all the work this summer could have been done by the smaller full time staff, did the summer people create any burdens or cause any disruption? Was the summer a radicalizing experience that one cannot look upon as merely a summer experience?

A few answers. The problems of the rival of people who are pretty sure that they will be going back to school in the fall, are basically two. Summer people must be integrated into the project work and way of living, and their contacts must be transferred to other full time staff or, preferably, the project as a whole. I'll deal with the second problem first for it is the easier of the two. The problem of relating community people to the project is faced by all organizers. That summer people only have three or so months to do that in should not be an increased burden that can not be dealt with. In this area, people in Cleveland have been successful. I don't think there are any people who we have met and begun to work with who have not been related to the whole project. (Methods of doing this i.e. relating community people to staff and ERAP and each other is a topic for another paper.) In any case, contacts have been "transferred" and thus problem two has been taken care of.

The problem of integration is greater, and ultimately perhaps much more important. Integration here was excellent, and thus very exciting for a number of reasons. For me, the summer was my first taste of what "community" can mean. Almost all of what we proclaim as ingredients were there: close relationships with people of different ages, different backgrounds, and to varying degrees different interests outside of the desire to

effect radical social change; encouragement of others and self to fully develop latent potential; a great sense of openness and candor; constructive criticism taken gratefully; plus many other things that lead to the kind of "love" that in other situations is kept dormant. What this first taste meant was an affirmation of the belief that "community" can, and in fact does, exist, and moreover it instilled a desire to create that kind of community wherever we are. In that sense alone, the summer was a "radicalizing" experience.

My sense of why summer people did not create any burdens or cause any disruption is derived from this feeling of successful integration of summer people into the project. I separate the causes of this into two categories: the objective conditions, and the subjective feelings of the full time people.

The objective conditions were such that thirteen staff members were not needed to maintain the ongoing organizations in the community. We were only committed to two organizations, CUM and the Abbey area group (working for a playground). Many close relationships had been built with community people, but most of the people were not involved in organizations other than the above two. Thus summer people did not need to be allocated to work with going organizations, but were to be involved more so in building new organizations that would ultimately perhaps result in the formation of a community union. And so a tentative decision to re-occupy the neighborhood was implemented. This in some ways meant that summer people would work with full time people on equal footing, i.e. knocking on new doors. Initially we broke down the neighborhood into "turfs" with teams of one old and one new staff person working together. This meant two things; now people could benefit by the experience of the older people in actual organizing, rather than just some kind of "role-playing"

CLEVELAND (cont)

back at the house. And secondly, summer people were able to "see for themselves" right away what it meant to organize in a poor white community, and were able to get a feel for the neighborhood, etc., before entering any pre-structured program. This built into people a feeling of independence of sorts. It allowed them to start things and thus participate in the formulation of programs rather than just come into existing structures. From here, summer staff were included into the decision making as to who would do what, and what the project would do.

Participation brings us into the second category, that of the subjective feelings of the full time people. This category was characterized by that "practice what you preach" idea. But the phrase takes on meaning and reality here. The internal democracy of the project was consistent with ideas and values that we are trying to implement in the world at large. What that means is that full time people made great efforts to involve summer people in all things. From the very beginning no one was told what he should do, but each was encouraged to decide for himself. With that attitude of not "pulling rank," knowledge gained from experience was handed down in such a way as not to thwart individual ideas, but to be really constructive. Thus our respect for full time people was gained by evidencing respect and confidence in us. This gave the individual the freedom to relate himself to the group, and allowed for the group to draw from all the qualities of the individuals.

Encouragement of summer people to voice their reactions and opinions of their work came frequently, both in informal discussions and in formal meetings. Meetings were not dominated by older people, and thus the concept of "no leaders, encouraging all to become leaders" was put into practice. Each person spoke, and everyone really listened.

This subjective attitude was extended also to the drily needs of keeping the project going. Jobs such as cooking and cleaning were rotated. Such little things added to the feeling of having a stake in the project. New people also helped with the fund raising, as well as with the speaking engagements. And we also took our turns

at being keeper for the week, and being responsible for knowing who was doing what, and who could do what, and when.

The fact that we lived communally is also key. Living together provided the opportunity to talk to each other, share ideas, and in this way facilitate interaction and collective decision making. Again, there are many other things that would take too long to write that I could say about this, but I think I have mentioned the salient points relevant to this subject.

To conclude then; even if we assume that the full time people could have done as much if summer people hadn't come, which I don't, the net effect is still very positive: the creation of "life time radicals" with no cost to the project. This of course is from the perspective of one of those summer people. The effect we had on the personal feelings of the full time people is not for me to say.

I hope that that answers some of your questions (there are several other things I might have included like communication between East and West side projects, but all can't be said in a few pages) and I also hope that that serves notice to future summers. Your responses are encouraged.

Peace,

Bob (Gross)

COME
LET US BUILD
NEW WORLD
TOGETHER

SUMMER STAFF - NEWARK

There are three big problems right at the start when one sets down to write about staff problems: first of all, many people should write about it, not just one. Secondly, there is the difficulty of being honest. And finally, it is hard to know how to bring in specific personalities. It's so easy to explain everything in specifics, but you can hardly learn anything to help your own project that way, much less have your experiences help people on other projects.

I can't tell what information we have that can be helpful to others. A large part of our troubles follows from staff problems this winter -- what has happened this summer was almost predictable, and was certainly predetermined by the state of the organization that now staff came into. (If all that stuff doesn't get streamlined out the project's in very bad shape, but that's another story).

It's easy to outline the problems, but it's really hard to tell what they mean. But anyway, the most obvious problem is communication -- making sure all 45 or so people on staff know all the relevant or important things everyday is really difficult; in fact, I don't believe it ever really happens. Telling that many people something seems so tedious you just shrug your shoulders and don't bother. It ends up that on each subject certain people have and continue to get all the information. The rest form a more or less shady picture of what's happening.

A problem closely related to this one is how 45 people take part in decision-making. We've been unable to set up a structure in which this happens, and we're unable to create an atmosphere in which people feel that their opinion matters. I think that part of why people feel this way is that when there are say 5 staff members, each person is one-

fifth of the organization -- he is obviously vital to the whole. But with 45 staff, people don't feel important. This number business also leads to lack of closeness among people -- you don't know where to start making friends, so you aren't friends with anybody. The exception to this, in some cases, is the people you're working with, but in some this is a very superficial kind of relationship.

It's interesting that at first I didn't look at all as though that was going to be the case but that social groupings of various sizes were going to develop. At least that way people would have had some real friends among staff members. But it would have meant going the way of the rest of the world, with people having their own circles, and not relating to large numbers of people or even feeling the need to.

Anyway, from the ERAP Institute we returned to chaos in Newark. We landed into the police brutality issue without having set up any structure for the summer people. This lasted about a week, and during that time people were saying that if that were the thing to do, they would feel a right about the project. So we took a couple of days for a retreat and set up a structure for block organizers and people in other roles (research, welfare, big kids, little kids, law students, hospital work union, Central Ward). A staff meeting a couple of days later, we set up working committees for stuff like office maintenance, newsletter and finance.

After all this had been arranged we went along for a long time without regular staff meetings. This, of course, greatly increased the lack of communication and the problem of circulating knowledge. People were very critical about the way the summer project was going throughout this period; a couple of people

Newark; cont.

became so unhappy that they left. Finally it was pushed to have "organizers' meetings" every morning; all staff except block organizers were to feel unwelcome at those meetings (The reason for this was that people felt the meetings would be too large if they were full staff meetings). Few organizers went regularly to those meetings.

Next we decided to have a coordinator. This person would spend his time trying to make sure the project ran smoothly. It was hoped that he could make things work well on the surface, and also talk a whole lot to everyone and work out some of the underlying problems of the project. About the same time to have full staff meetings every morning.

Now for an exciting new development. In the middle of this month we decided to end the summer project early - summer staff were encouraged to finish up and leave as quickly as they could. About half left in a few days and most have been slowly drifting away. The main reason we made this decision was that we felt we could never get down to our problems with so many people around. Things were getting worse in many ways, and several permanent people were thinking of leaving. It was hoped that these people could work out their problems in closer contact with a few people, rather than with lots of people around who would be gone in a few weeks.

I'm sure I don't know what all this stuff means. I'm certainly not ready to say that projects shouldn't have large staffs, but it's obvious that we have a lot to learn about how to make them work. There wasn't enough planning for the summer by full-time people beforehand, but I'm sure that wouldn't have prevented the problems. Perhaps the only preventative would have been for summer people to come into an organization that is already working and running very well.

please send us ARTICLES!

Coordination?

A possibility has come up which might allow us both to co-ordinate the coverage given to the projects by the newsletter and Studies on the Left, and at the same time provide for the "national ERAP person" spoken of frequently at the Newark Conference. Studies on the Left, which has been quite closely associated with SDS in the past, (Haydon, Aronowitz, and Kissinger are on the staff) is to become, hopefully, a bi-monthly publication. Part of this move will go toward expanding their "With the Movements" section to the extent of employing a full-time person to travel around the country and help give first-hand coverage to the movement in different areas. The person would write perhaps two articles per issue for Studies and would have sufficient time to write for the ERAP newsletter. More generally, such a person would begin to function as a kind of national ERAP coordinator in a move to build the kind of national organization which is relevant to our needs. Studies could hopefully pay most, if not all, of this person's salary. Anyone interested should get in touch immediately with Norm Bruchter, 188 6th Ave., New York. Planning is still tentative; perhaps three different roles could be combined. Still

PROJECT REPORTS

... WELFARE MOTHERS ORGANIZE in Newark in Chicago

Being a welfare client is in some respects has its advantages and disadvantages although there is strict laws and regulations to content with whether it is your wish or not.

In my opinion, where there is a extraordinary large family involved and maybe there is a family income from the spouse, the supplementary income on ECW (Essex County Welfare) is fine. Now where there is a large family depending completely on ECW it is not too good. In the first place they feel if you must depend on them for you only support, they are to tell you what moves to make, how when and where to make them. That you should do and what you should not do. You friends visiting in and out -- you apartment has a limitation. Your associates are supposed to be of higher standards so you really have problems with them. Above all, you are not to have anyone spending "a" nite in your apartment and believe it or not, if they should happen to find this before you know it, your investigator is knocking on your door inquiring in the regards of it.

Your monthly check is really figured out to the penny as to what you are suppose to spend for everything. You don't ever think of getting on ECW to accomplish anything because you are budgeted to live from day to day.

-- by D. M. Lowe

DO YOU WANT WELFARE TO KEEP RUNNING YOUOR

DO YOU WANT TO RUN WELFARE?

We are asking to come to Springfield on September 13 in relation to the Federal Food Stamp Program.

Since this is our children's bread and butter, we would like to hear what Mr. Hilliard has to say.

We would like to tell you what our community people told us. We would also like to have some recipients testify why it is impossible to take advantage of this program. We are qualified to give you the facts.

We are angry with the sugar-coated carbon copies of facts and in many instances, false statements the welfare workers give to cover their errors.

We are concerned that we are always made to appear incompetent by the Cook County Department of Welfare to the general public and to the courts.

We want the blame to go where it belongs.

--by Mary V. Hockenberry

in Boston

At the last meeting of Mothers for Adequate Welfare we made a list of rights for people on ADC and other parts of welfare. Those are things we all deserve:

- 1. Written copy of rules and budget under each section of Welfare issued once a year to each family with explanation given if asked.
2. Any supplements going through court sent to Welfare Dept. recipients directly being kept on consistent budget so money can be counted on a regular basis.
3. People on welfare should be able to go to any nonprofit hospital.
4. Telephone included as a necessity in the budget.

and in Cleveland

Citizens United For Decente, Welfare, an organization made up of primarily persons on Public Assistance, staged a demonstration protesting insufficient school clothing and no school supplies. Behind the radical nature of the demonstration were many reasons, one of which was the apparent "I don't care" attitude of the coworkers of the Welfare Dept., the County Commissioners and the School Board.

We tried to talk previously to the Welfare Dept., but as usual, were given no answers. There was no other voice but to dramatize our plight.

Rally was held at St. Phillip's Church on Central Ave. where Mrs. Vernon L. Gaston spoke and then we started marching down to the Welfare Dept. on Payne Ave. There were over forty adults and quite a few children. The reason children were present was that many parents felt it was their fight as well as the parent's. My three children were there, two of which go to school. The group decided to try to talk to Mr. Yeager, assistant to the Director of the Welfare Dept.

A force, all the marchers wearing placards that read of the inhumanities that welfare children have to suffer because of the lack of school clothes and school supplies went into the downstairs room at 2424 Payne Ave. I then went to the first floor still in hopes of speaking to the assistant director. He came out of his office, not to hear what we had to say, but to give us a little message of his own. The message and I quote "Get it and get yourselves a job." We asked him what about our children and he said that was our problem not his. I left quietly and orderly, but did not leave the outside of the building. The Picket Line was formed and singing was heard. A few Social Workers came outside as it was lunch time and some made snide remarks, some were sympathetic to our cause, but their hands are tied with the thick rope of the Society that they work for. The front door was locked and a man stood there to let a reporter in whom I wanted to get the other side of the story.

We then proceeded to the Board of Education where we knew ahead of time that we would not be able to talk to anyone. One nice thing about the Free Society that we live in is the open meeting of the Public Officials, such as the School Board. At a meeting of the School Board in order for a person or persons to speak is by appointment only two weeks in advance. So we decided to picket outside. We were met by not only the Police cars like at the Welfare Dept., but also Mounted Police. The Special Forces were very evident. A circle was formed of the adults inside of which a smaller circle was formed of the children. One passerby who was talking to one of the detectives made the comment that she had to pray for her education that we should also pray for our children's. If she only knew that we would if we were able to. One of the Newspaper reporters told us that the Commissioners had heard that we were on our way to see them also and had their meeting at ten in the morning instead of two in the afternoon, so we checked on this and it proved to be the truth but we decided we had to go there also.

After we had stopped long enough to get something to eat, we started out for the County Administration Building. We picketed a short time, spoke to some reporters and decided to go inside. One of the Welfare Mothers who had been given a package of "new" clothing for her five children, one of them a high school student of seventeen years old and she wanted to put it on the desk of one of the Commissioners. The reason she wanted to do this is that in the package were many things, four pairs of short size 43 that could be used either for Gym or Underwear, worn out tennis shoes, girls, that her high school son could use for Gym, also all forms of torn, worn out clothing. We went upstairs to see a uniformed policeman and again the Special Forces Men (Subversive men). All of us in a quietly, orderly fashion went to an office and asked to see one of the Commissioners. We were told they had gone for the day, but evidently this is not true as it was only a little bit after two in the afternoon. Mrs. Worrells then showed the contents of



CLEVELAND (cont.)

the package to an assistant of some sort. Again, we received the same pat answer that they didn't know what they could do about the situation. As we were leaving the group decided to leave a present for each of our "Honorable" Commissioners... a pair of the outlasted shorts, and a sign was left on each of their chairs. The demonstration then ended.

There are so many people in this big city that can afford to buy their children the necessities that are needed for school, but what about the hundreds, yes, the thousands that can't? Are they to be given no education or perhaps just a little bit so that when they are sixteen they too will be thinking about quitting? The children Citizens United for Adequate Welfare are fighting for are the future leaders of the world. Or are they going to become the future recipients of Public Assistance? Illiteracy and Ignorance exist today, but we workers don't want it to exist in the next decade. The only way to rid this country of illiteracy is to go to school, but the Public Officials of Cleveland seem unwilling to help welfare children try in school.

Lillian Craig
(an ADC mother of three)

LETTER cont'd from p. 6

2. It introduces alien goals into the black struggles.
3. It presumes the superiority of the "white folks' view" of my problem to my own view.
4. It ties up white energy that could be better put to use researching or fund-raising for black community groups organized and run by black people.
5. It fosters the worst kind of hypocrisy in the white organ-

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Letter, cont'd

izer himself ("no, I'm not really leading these people...")

6. It constitutes reckless, inhuman trifling with black individuals, persons who are the most psychologically vulnerable.
7. It disregards HISTORY -- remember the populists, remember the Communies -- which is often the radical's most significant textbook.
8. It "muddies" the waters and confuses the issues at hand in the black community. (There is too damn much time wasted by black people, already, with the speculation "Well, I don't know if ALL white people are bad..." --Neither are all landlords "bad", and neither is that the point.)
9. It stifles the development of independent black organizations, that is, after all is said and done, the only realistic safeguard for black people against white society -- as history and the black man's good sense indicate.

What is the answer for the white ERAPER in the ghetto? Pack the hell up. Get out. Go to work in your own communities, and come back when and if that ghetto gets itself together and invites you (or more likely, your money) back.

Sincerely,
(signed) Donald W. Jackson
Chairman,
Chester CORE*

*formerly the SDS-ERAP Chester project

Let the
PEOPLE
DECIDE

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PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

ERAP Newsletter:

The assumption that impoverished communities are apathetic is really beginning to be a boring excuse for people who don't want to take the trouble to find out the truth. These people are the little gods who set up committees to run the affairs of everybody without consulting anybody. People who think a mother with ten or twelve children is apathetic if she doesn't come to a meeting. People who don't know that public assistance doesn't provide money for babysitters or carfare. People who can't understand that after working in a sweatshop 11 day (or night) shifts meetings are hardly a welcome form of relaxation.... Especially when you're bogged with bureaucratic bull and statistical facts about why you're poor and "maybe we can do something to help you." Even the rallies where everybody excitedly demands better housing, police protection, better schools... even they turn out to be talk because demands are rarely if ever met.

Now the people of the P.O. Providence area have had enough of "things being done for them." They have written a petition to the Advisory Committee of the Proposed Community School for P.O. Providence. The Advisory Committee was set up by the Neighborhood Council, a supposedly representative group of citizens. The committee is composed of people on Public Assistance, three people with incomes of less than \$4000 a year, and three "others" (?). A white Episcopal minister is the chairman. This committee is supposed to submit its choice for director of the school and some sort of structure and program to the School Board downtown. However, as usual, the schools from downtown LET IT BE KNOWN that they expected the director to be a qualified certified teacher with all the right masters degrees and solid gold status. Does this story sound familiar?

Three men submitted requests for the position of director of Community School. Two of them had the "qualified certified" education; one had the real qualifications. Instead of collecting degrees, he's been in the area getting people good housing, jobs, scholarships, forming clubs for children, running interference in the courts, fighting welfare, fighting landlords, getting the school to revolutionize the ungraded classrooms, training boys to pass the armed forces tests. This is the man the people want as their director. There were people on the committee who spoke up for him. One woman lost her vote because she supported him. The chairman led the committee to believe that the school board would not accept an uncertified man and that the teachers would not respect him because of his lack of formal training. The chairman made the committee vote to accept only certified applicants, thereby eliminating this man from the start.

The conditions of the poverty program make it mandatory that the School Board accept what the community wants or the federal government won't support the program.... Even if this fails the people of P.O. Providence will be out of the school. Almost 100 families have signed the petition. So... it would be wise to find out what a community wants before assuming it is a faceless mass of apathetic idiots. This is what the chairman of the committee told me, and I think it is indicative of his attitude. "If you want anything done around here, you have to get yourself the head of a committee and railroad it through." Betcha he didn't expect to see the whole community on railroad tracks!

--Sandra Barnett

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ERAP STRUCTURE

Dear Roger, John, et al,

Y'all are thinkin' 'bout structure of ERAP, and belatedly, here are my thoughts on it. Hayden's suggestion brought up in 'nn Arbor is the only one that makes sense to me. And, here's why.

Whoops - here's what it was - that ERAP have a national office run by the ERAP field staff on leave for, say, six months.

Here's why.

1. Staff people definitely undergo a lot of wear and tear in the ghettos. The change in work would relieve tensions and frustrations built up by constantly knocking doors and all the other things we have to do.
2. I, and others too, I think, tend to become immersed in the day-to-day affairs of ghetto organizing - organizing for a meeting or a picket, opening a new block, figuring out a new issue and an attack on it, working with a particular guy, etc. This immersion is of course necessary, but one is narrowed. You don't have or make time for wondering what new forms of protest can occur about Vietnam, or how to involve artists as artists in the movement, for instances. Also, you rarely, if ever, stop and think of the relationship of what you're doing to what you want, much less, what you want. In Chicago, for example, the farthest I seriously stopped out of the narrow Uptown organizing framework was to concern myself with other groups in Chicago and how JOIN could tie up with them - what we could do for each other and what we could do together. Field staff, in a national office would have, I think, wider concerns necessarily.
3. Field staff should be able to do better ERAP bulletins and better "face" work, especially staff from - low projects. Field staff have a better idea of what the projects need.

With community-people on the staff on most projects now, I guess, staff doesn't just mean students. The advantages of community people

working in an N.O. have been discussed.

5. In reality, the ERAP office dissolved when Ann Arbor closed. We in Chi. answered letters, but only got half-way through one Bulletin, did no ERAP lit, no ERAP fundraising. The projects were more self-sufficient, consequently, but there were handicaps. People who were or could have been full-time organizers had to get fulltime jobs, e.g.

I don't think the present tendency toward dividing national ERAP functions among projects answers the questions raised above at all satisfactorily.

For Freedom,
Peter Freedman
1322 S E Madison
Portland, Oregon

to our Readers

Dear Newsletter Readers,
We're sorry it's been so long since the last issue - we've been in the process of moving the newsletter operations to the Boston project. Some of the stuff in this issue is pretty out of date, but we're going to start putting out the newsletter on a regular basis after this.

If your address has changed in the past few months or if you got this because it was forwarded to you, send us your current one so we can keep sending you the newsletter.

Because of the cost of printing and mailing, we have to stop sending copies to people who aren't connected with projects (SNCC, SUPA, etc. -- not just ERAP) unless they send us \$4. If you're not working on a project, please send us the money soon; or if you've already paid, write and tell us that, so we don't cancel your subscription by mistake. Some records were lost in transit from New Haven.

Boston ERAP
451 Dudley St.
Roxbury, Mass.

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CHICAGO REPORT

-- JOIN'S HISTORY AND NEW STRUCTURE --

by Rich Rothstein

JOIN was organized originally by a group of students from SDS. Its purposes and structure even today conform to their preconceptions and hopes, due to their continuing influence, authority, and power in the community union.

The students saw as their goals for their organizing:

1) the creation of a democratic organization. By this they meant a number of things. First, they meant an organization in which the action issues were indigenous: i.e., where the substantive goals of the organization were derived from those issues which the community membership felt were most immediately relevant to their lives. Secondly, they meant an organization which was internally democratic. This internal ("participatory") democracy was never adequately defined. It included, however, these elements: (a) people take part in making decisions which affect them. This principle is a theoretical refutation of the "one man, one vote" principle without providing an equally simple arithmetic alternative. People should have power over any decision, not according to the fraction of the total membership which they represent, but according to the degree (intensity of feeling; objective, material interest; etc.) to which they are affected by the issue. (b) the structure is a means of encouraging, not inhibiting, the expression of individuals in the organization; it allows individuals to assume roles and take powers in the organization at their own pace. Thus, meetings are unordered, without rules of procedure. Discussions are continued until the last participant has had the last word. An attitude of respect for the issues and feelings behind what anyone has to say at any juncture is encouraged. In addition, the number of formal offices are kept to a minimum, and even those are rotated rapidly, so that the offices are open to people almost as soon as they are ready to fill them. A corollary to this principle has been adopted in JOIN, to prevent the fluidity of the chairmanship from being a bar to the continued activity of the outgoing chairmen. This is the notion of a "staff", whose powers with respect to the chairman have never been defined, but whose level of activity is great enough so that an outgoing chairman can avoid suffering any diminution of authority and activity by joining the staff. (c) over a period of time, the student staff is "replaced." They become unnecessary as a result of the increasing activity and responsibility of community people. The community union becomes increasingly, and finally totally, self directed and self run.

2) the students were, of course, not neutral about the goals of the organization they were creating. They not only wanted the organization to run itself, but wanted their ideas on the structure of the union to be reflected in the union's programming. They wanted the community union to fight not only for better housing, but for tenants' councils, not only for better welfare, but for the participation of welfare people in the public aid system. They wanted to communicate ideas of decentralism and anti-bureaucracy to the participants in the union. In a possibly contradictory fashion, they also often wanted to communicate a commitment to national programming and national reform to the participants.

CHICAGO - (continued)

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At this time, a number of disturbing facts characterize JOIN's lack of structure. These are to be viewed, however, in the context of an increasing attachment of active community people to the democratic values which inspire the informality of structure. It is reasonably sure that the insistence of the student organizers on informality and non-structure is responsible for the fact that community people now see it possible to realize their humane values within an organizational context. Nonetheless, the following are true:

1) JOIN's political and action program conforms exactly at this point to that of its student organizers. This is not to say that JOIN members participate in programs thought up by students against their own will. It is to say that in every instance student organizers have been able to persuade community leaders of the wisdom of their ideas. This is not due to irrational manipulation of any sort; it is due to the fact that students spend much greater amounts of time working out political strategy, spend much greater amounts of time working in JOIN, and are held in high esteem by the active community people. It would undoubtedly be preferable, however, to have at this point a program which was, at least in some of its parts, initiated and adopted by community members without amendment by the students. People need not only to participate and assent to action; they need also to be entirely responsible for it.

One way of attempting to allow this to happen, is to lodge some formal powers in the hands of community people. Decisions made by proposal, vote, and action in a meeting rather than decisions made by informal conversation provide a structural (procedural) check against rule by the best conversationalists.

2) The Wednesday night meeting chairman is nothing more than a meeting finger-pointer. Whereas the office was originally conceived as a first step towards democratic decision making in JOIN, in fact the staff continues to make all decisions, and the chairman does not even have a power of veto over these decisions. This is not to say, again, that the chairman couldn't veto a program if he wanted to. It is to say that the task of veto or check is made superhumanly difficult by the lack of any formal channels through which to express such authority. Assuming it is desirable that there be some powers to an office such as chairman over something like program, for a chairman to exercise them in the present situation would take a chairman who was unusually bold, stubborn, and persuasive with respect to the staff. Formal powers could be granted, however, which would not be so difficult to exercise: e.g. the power to appoint other officers or staff members, the power to assent or veto all JOIN activities, the power to have reports submitted to him by staff.

Of course, all this is merely a reflection of the fact that the relationship of staff to chairman, or staff decision to Wednesday night decision has never been clarified. With an informal structure, influence, not formal power, rules. The staff has influence over Wednesday night decisions, the students within the staff have influence over the staff. Thus, at this point the community, despite its meetings and officers, has little actual or formal power in JOIN.

3) The lack of structure makes it embarrassingly impossible for JOIN to make very crucial decisions, or more often, forces very unjust and arbitrary decisions by default. Decisions are impossible because nobody knows who has the right/power to make such decisions. The decision program--staff or Wednesday night meeting? Who allocates money? --if the staff, who is on the staff, and who is entitled to receive money? This decision has been made largely by discretion of whoever happens to have JOIN money at the moment. Who is on the staff and who chooses new staff? How are student staff chosen (who chooses them)?

and how are community staff chosen? In fact, this question has become so confused that the term "staff" now has almost no meaning. It includes (a) any student who happens to live in Uptown and says he is staff; (b) community people who have been asked to be staff by some student; (c) community people who are very active and hang around the office a lot; (d) just those community people who come to relatively select staff meetings.

The following guidelines should be present in any JOIN structure:

1) Some formal powers lodged in some formal office which is formally responsible to (elected by) the JOIN membership (the community).

2) Decision making power should be in some manner proportioned to activity. The more active members in JOIN should have more formal power.

3) The power of the most active should in some ways be checked by the membership.

4) The decision to be active in JOIN should be primarily left to the individual concerned.

5) Yet this means that individuals would have the right to decide what power they have in JOIN. Thus, the active members (decision making members) at any given moment should have the right to guarantee JOIN's continuity by having a check on who decides to become active. This, in turn, requires some minimal structural institutionalization of "activity."

6) There must be some continuity between the present informality and any adopted structure. That is, some device must be invented to rationalize "who decided on this structure."

Traditional organizations fall short of achieving a structured democracy. They err in the direction of structure and responsibility even more, perhaps, than JOIN and SDS err in the direction of lack of structure, irresponsibility, and dictatorship of the most articulate.

A traditional organization has a mass membership, card-carrying. To join, one usually needs to agree to abide by some broad principles, set down in a constitution. The membership is divided into regional groups, and the groups elect delegates to a convention which decides policy and which in turn elects a board of directors. (Alternatively, the board of directors may be made up of representatives of the regional groups or chapters.) The board of directors usually elects an executive committee, which in turn appoints a staff. Member--delegate--board member--executive committee--staff. The higher in this hierarchy, the more active is the member and theoretically, the more power in the organization the member has. However, in practice, in such organizations the staff, which is usually permanent, has absolute power. It is permanent and full time. The other roles are sometimes as permanent but never as full time. So the staff has a monopoly on information and on day to day decisions. Although formally responsible to the executive committee and on to the membership, in fact the staff runs the organization and often even proposes the membership of the board and executive committee.

Such a structure is made almost inevitable in most organizations by two factors: first, most of the membership have occupations which prevent them from devoting much time to the organization, and almost no members can devote full time as does the staff. Secondly, the full time tasks of the staff are much more crucial to the maintenance and power of the organization than are the part time tasks available to the membership. Most organizations (if political), seeing themselves as pressure groups, are forced to place a high priority on

professionalized, full time, and bureaucratic activities: press relations, servicing of a paper membership, intensive lobbying. The tasks which might be done part time by membership are relatively few and are, even then, often coopted by the staff (e.g., committee work).

Student organizations like SDS and community unions like JOIN are unusual in these critical respects. First, their membership is generally much more free to devote large amounts of time to the organization. Full time occupations either do not exist, or else do not prevent the membership from going to frequent out of town meetings, "hanging around the office," attending regular meetings or even deciding to become "full time". In the case of the community union, its geographical limitations are crucial to maintaining this ability of members to decide how active they wish to be without the constraint of other commitments. Thus, in terms of the time devoted to the organization it is possible for the distinction between staff and active membership to disappear.

Secondly, both SDS and JOIN see themselves as action oriented organizations. Both have relatively decentralist political ideologies. Thus, they avoid placing highest priority on tasks which require a professional staff. Consequently, as long as JOIN, for example, continues to value "backing people up at the local welfare office" and membership picket lines more than it values lobbying for better welfare laws in Springfield, it will be able to avoid a professional staff. The same is true if JOIN values counter-community activities and direct action: activities such as building our own playground on the city's property allow new forms of internal democracy to develop in the organization. Activities such as press releases on the need for a playground, pressure on the mayor through traditional means (petitions) will encourage the development of more traditional staff dictatorship.

Thus the specific program decisions which JOIN makes will determine the possibility of a "participatory" structure. This consideration is prior to the guidelines listed above.

A Proposal for JOIN Structure

1) Because of the confusion presently surrounding the term, drop the term "staff" altogether.

2) JOIN, the community union, should continue to be absolutely unstructured. It should have completely open and free meetings.

3) A "JOIN organizing committee" should be formed, made up of all individuals who do some JOIN task (block organizing, newspaper editing, secretary, welfare representative, etc.). The idea of some task, no matter how small, should be inherent in membership on the organizing committee. But it should be made clear that anyone can be a member of JOIN once they identify themselves with it. The Organizing Committee is made up of the organizers.

4) To maintain the continuity of the JOIN Organizing Committee with the present organization, the organizing committee should be defined by the following list of names: "We here form the JOIN Organizing Committee, etc."--i.e., the present active membership and staff.

5) The open community union meeting, open to everyone in the community, should continue to elect a chairman once a month. This chairman automatically becomes a member of the Organizing Committee.

6) The community union chairman has the right to appoint additional members of the Organizing Committee. His appointments can be vetoed by a 2/3 vote of the present organizing committee. (This is a crucial provision. It attempts to allow the Organizing Committee to preserve its continuity and at the same time allows the community union to affect, even determine, its policies.)

CHICAGO - (concluded)

7) There should be no other way of becoming a member of the Organizing Committee save by being appointed by the chairman. Other committee members should, of course, introduce and recommend prospective committee members to the chairman.

8) ERAP student volunteers must also be appointed in the same way.

9) The JOIN bank account and all its assets (office, typewriters, mimeograph machine, etc.) become the property of the Organizing Committee. Decisions about money must be made or delegated by the Organizing Committee.

10) The Organizing Committee should also elect its own officers. A chairman of the Organizing Committee should be elected once monthly to run committee meetings and to make interim policy decisions between committee meetings. He should also appoint members of subcommittees.

11) The Organizing Committee decides broad and specific JOIN policies, but must be bound by decisions of the Wednesday night meeting.

12) The Organizing Committee may never meet without 40% of its membership present, and a majority of those present must be community people (not SDS).

13) People may resign from the Organizing Committee, or the chairman may determine that they are no longer active in JOIN, and thus no longer members. This decision of the chairman may be subject to a 1/3 veto of the Organizing Committee. Any person missing five meetings of the Organizing Committee automatically ceases to be a member unless an exception is made by the JOIN chairman.

14) 2/3 of the Organizing Committee can make changes in this constitution.

Duplicate Mor for the post

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Dudley Street Action Center
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Boston, Mass.



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