

SPRING 1977

civil rights digest



THE CITIES

IN THIS ISSUE . . . several authors explore aspects of the problems besetting American cities.

Robert C. Weaver, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, recounts the development of the suburbs, pointing out the factors that have led Americans to move out of the cities and the effects of their migration.

Weaver's article sets the scene for exploring Federal urban policy, a topic developed by Bernard J. Frieden and Marshall Kaplan. Frieden and Kaplan analyze the changes in policy as they are reflected in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Joe Guggenheim examines the application of that policy from the viewpoint of a local coalition of citizens' organizations seeking to make sure that Federal funds are spent to help low-income persons.

Ruth Jordan explores a controversial aspect of urban life—school integration—writing from the vantage point of a white parent whose child attends a majority black school.

Finally, Jan Jarboe describes how Chicanos in San Antonio built an organization to fight for equal municipal services and succeeded in winning important victories.

Many aspects of the problems of cities are left untouched in this issue because the subject is so broad, but we hope to raise them in future issues. In many ways, the fate of American cities, at least in the short run, is synonymous with the fate of minorities since the latter are urban residents to a disproportionate degree.

For more copies of the *Digest* or inclusion on our free mailing list, please write to the Editor, *Civil Rights Digest*, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20425.

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Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and Congress.



Handwritten signature

By Robert C. Weaver

THE SUBURBANIZATION OF AMERICA

OR THE
SHRINKING OF THE CITIES

Suburbanization has been going on much longer than most persons realize. It, and most certainly the impulse to suburbanize, are probably as old as cities themselves, if we can judge from a letter written on a clay tablet and addressed to King Cyrus of Persia in 539 B.C. by an early suburbanite. He wrote: "Our property seems to me the most beautiful in the world. It is so close to Babylon that we enjoy all the advantages of the city, and yet when we come home we are away from all the noise and dust."

Although the basic motives that triggered suburbanization in ancient Babylon have changed little through the centuries, the form and content of suburbs have undergone vast changes; never more so than in the United States within the past three decades. Because of magnitude alone, contemporary suburban settlement would have to be assessed as a phenomenon that is uniquely different from its predecessors. The suburban population of the United States in 1970 exceeded for the first time that of central cities and nonmetropolitan areas. The suburbs contained 74.9 million inhabitants; the central cities, 62.2 million; the nonmetropolitan areas, 63.2 million.

This phenomenon cannot be understood if we limit our investigations to observations made in our lifetime. As noted by the President's Task Force on Suburban Problems in 1968, "To be meaningful, any examination of the suburbs as they are today—and as they will be in the future—must consider the Nation's growth trends that began before the turn of the century."

As a matter of record, this phenomenon was already being studied by scholars long before this century began. Thus, Charles Booth, whose classic works on cities were written in the late 19th century, described the movement of industry at that time to the outskirts of London, where more land was available at lower prices. His studies of the influence upon metropolitan form of social and economic classes and of transportation and housing, which he considered keys to understanding the urban growth process, led him to predict a trend toward local suburban centers.

Filtering such scholarly observations upon urban form through his vividly imaginative mind, H. G. Wells predicted in 1902 that the

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very terms "town" and "city" will become as obsolete as "mail coach," because spreading urbanization will submerge them as distinct identities. Casting about for a proper designation of the predicted urban form of the future, Wells wrote that "We may for our present purposes call these coming town provinces 'urban regions'."

Wells' "urban regions" had been in existence in the United States for several decades at the time he wrote the above lines. But what has come to be regarded as suburbanization has deep and often unrecognized roots in population movements within cities. Movement of the more affluent from concentrations of the poor has long characterized urban life. Jean Gottman, for example, reminds us that it occurred in the larger cities of Europe during the Industrial Revolution.

American Suburbs

In the United States a similar process has long been typical, and social standing in American cities has increasingly been evidenced not only by the type of housing but the type of neighborhood. Today the latter is the more important. The flight from deterioration—real or anticipated—has, in large part, been a movement away from poor immigrants or, more recently, from blacks, Puerto Ricans, or Chicanos.

Actually, however, the migration of Negroes to cities was quite small compared to the earlier volume of European immigrants. At its peak the latter migration was at least 8 million in a decade and most settled in the cities; Negro migration at its height was about a million and a half in a decade. Anthony Downs notes that, "in terms of infiltrating cities



with large numbers of low-income people with a different culture, the Negro migration has not been unusual."

Ours has long been one of the most mobile populations in the world. Involved has been not only movement across regional and State lines and from rural to urban areas, but also within urban areas. Thus, the movement from the center of the city to the periphery and beyond is nothing new.

Census data for many years concealed this fact, largely because city boundaries were distant from active residential areas. At the same time, many American cities in the past annexed territory or otherwise extended their boundaries. As a result, large-scale building, industrial, and commercial activity could and did take place within the city's limits. A generation or more ago, suburbs were frequently within the boundaries of cities. They were at its fringes which, at that time, contained much undeveloped land and large sections where streets had not been cut through.

Several factors have affected development. The first was a revolution in transportation. The horsecar extended the geographic limits of urban development. Railroads, with their land resources and commuter trains—as well as their intensive sales efforts soon aided by the activities of the real estate industry—successfully played up class exclusiveness as an attribute of suburbia. Just as the horsecar permitted those who could afford it to live beyond the poor, first in the city and then at periphery, commuter trains extended that option to small villages beyond.

Electric rapid mass transportation, successively in the form of streetcars, elevated lines, and

subways, facilitated much greater dispersal of the urban population within the city and beyond its corporate limits into suburbs. In the process, economic groups previously unable to afford the transportation costs could increasingly participate. It was, of course, the automobile that made large-scale and far-flung suburban living possible for millions of Americans. Its advent consummated the final escape from the geographic limitations of horsepower that had characterized the 19th century city.

The year 1900 marked the apex of population for a number of central cities in relation to their suburbs. In that year Boston's population was already only 43 percent of its Standard Metropolitan Area as it would be defined in 1950. By 1970 it had shrunk to a mere 23 percent. (Unlike most cities, Boston's boundaries have not been expanded by annexation in over a century.) Cincinnati in 1900 contained 63 percent of the population of its 1950 Standard Metropolitan Area, shrinking to 33 percent in 1970. St. Louis' 71 percent in 1900 had become 26 percent in 1970. Buffalo's 69 percent had become 39 percent. Cleveland's 85 percent had become 36 percent. The engulfment of Detroit by its suburbs was unusually precipitous; as late as 1920 Detroit accounted for 77 percent of the population of its metropolitan area but shrank to 36 percent by 1970.

It is noteworthy that New York City in 1850, then consisting of the island of Manhattan, contained only 50 percent of the population of its metropolitan areas as it came to be defined in 1950 (a definition which excluded New Jersey). New York City was to achieve 68 percent in 1900 as a

result of the consolidation that created the present city consisting of the five boroughs. (In 1970 New York's population of some 7.9 million represented only 39 percent of its 31-county metropolitan region.)

Turning the Corner

The explanation of this relentless outward push of urbanization, then increasingly taking place beyond the boundaries of central cities, was given in succinct language by the President's Task Force on Suburban Problems. The close of the frontier

... was followed, in the first half of this century, by a major shift of the nation's population and jobs from the land into the cities, from rural areas into urban centers. As a result of this internal movement, immigration, and natural urban increases, the 1960 census showed nearly 70 percent of Americans to be living in urban areas—a significant turnaround from the urban-rural population distribution of half a century earlier.

Recently another shift has taken place—and is destined to continue. By and large, the cities have developed all the land within their boundaries, and the suburbs are now the growth centers of the nation. The suburbs are absorbing at an increasing rate the people spilling outward from the urban cores, the many families migrating inward from rural regions, and natural increases in population. The suburbanization of America—rather than its urbanization—has become the country's dominant growth pattern.

The year 1900 seems also to mark the beginning of a widespread awareness of the suburban phenomenon. It was in the decade of 1900-1910 that the Bureau of the Census first took statistical notice. Beginning in 1910 the Bureau made population data available for what it termed "metropolitan districts," forerunners of today's Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs). In preparation for the 1950 census, it was decided that defining metropolitan areas and identifying classes of data to be collected should be the responsibility of a broad-based, inter-departmental committee of the Federal government.

Formation of this committee officially recognized the importance of metropolitan areas for record keeping, analysis, and projection for a wide range of subject matter. SMSAs have since become a critically essential classification for all departments of the Federal government that touch upon urban affairs, as well as for governments at State and local levels. They are equally essential for private enterprise and scholarly research. It would be difficult to imagine either the public or private sector's being able to know what is happening in urban America and to plan their operations in relation to it without the availability of data that treat cities and suburbs as parts of a metropolitan whole.

Suburbanization slowed down during the Great Depression when both economic expansion and residential construction came to virtual standstills, then recovered slowly in the late 1930s, and was finally stirred into feverish activity as the decade closed with rearmament and the outbreak of war in Europe. War production in the 1940s brought a reversal in the outward

trend of population and employment as the expansion of industrial capacity took place mainly in established centers that contained basic plants and housed an available labor force.

This proved to be the central cities' last economic advance compared to the suburbs. As a National Industrial Conference Board study noted, "The evidence of a further concentration of manufacturing employment in the large cities during World War II now appears as a temporary interruption of a long-term trend of a declining share that was begun as far back at least as the beginning of this century."

Postwar Development

Even before World War II came to an end, increasing numbers of leaders in government and the private sector began to project concerns for the postwar shape of things, especially the location of jobs and housing. As early as 1942 one voice, speaking for town planners and architects, called attention to the bleak prospects of America's maturing cities. J. L. Sert, in a book prophetically titled *Can Our Cities Survive?*, warned that, "Up to recent times city planners have disregarded the fact that, when a certain degree of maturity is reached in the cities of today, they universally exhibit the same alarming symptoms. These endanger their very existence."

The failure to make the city livable, Sert declared 33 years ago, causes people

... to abandon their overcrowded neighborhoods for "a quiet home" in remote suburbs, undeterred by hours of uncomfortable travel back and forth. Industry, too, moves out—to cheaper land, to re-



gions of lower taxes, to convenience sites on rail sidings or side roads. *The city is breaking up.* Such dispersion of great cities knows neither control nor planning. It is provoked by urban chaos itself, and is facilitated by modern means of transportation.

Crying out in the frustration and despair of those who see when few others do, Sert challenged his contemporaries. "It has not even occurred to most people to question the condition of our cities. A conscious minority, however, familiar with the gravity of the situation and recognizing its eventualities in the near future, might well ask themselves the question: Can—and should—our cities survive?"

If even heard, such voices went unheeded. As the first troop ships were reported on the high seas, bringing millions of citizen soldiers home to take up their lives where war had interrupted—most of them concerned about prospects for employment and housing—Congress and the executive branch feverishly initiated programs to stimulate the economy and get housing built. Those with concern for long-range consequences were trampled underfoot by the stampede to "get things moving."

Most of the economy needed little impetus to "take off"—actually only that government dismantle controls and get out of the way. Millions of product-hungry consumers with bulging wartime savings did the rest. Housing, however, required a liberal credit policy and the Federal Housing Administration supplied it. The country was off and running in its longest and biggest economic boom. It transformed the Nation in a number of important respects. One was to carry our large cities peril-





ously close to the doom foretold by Sert. The other was to make tens of millions of upwardly mobile families also outwardly mobile. Mass migrations moved millions from cities to suburbs, leaving vacuums that sucked in other millions from impoverished rural areas. The third result was the transformation of the suburbs.

A Difference in Kind

Unlike the central city, the basic function and form of which have changed only in degree, the suburban settlements that emerged since World War II have little in common with the ecological type called "suburb" previous to that time. The contemporary suburb is different from its earlier name-sake in both function and form. Without the functional role it has assumed, today's suburb could not have attained its vast scale. There could hardly have been a social and/or economic need of such magnitude for the classic type of "bedroom" suburb.

Essentially the difference between the prewar and postwar types of suburban development is that the former generally existed in a symbiotic relationship to the city as one of its more remote residential neighborhoods, while the latter increasingly duplicates the functions of the central city and, consequently, competes with it as a destructive rival.

The persistent, even if at times interrupted, growth of population and, more vitally, employment in the suburban rings around central cities accumulated over time what George Sternlieb identifies as the "critical mass" that ignited to propel the suburbs ahead of their central cities in many of the very functions that historically were the *raison d'être* for the cities' existence.

After pointing out that in Newark there is not a single first-run theatre left in the entire city of 400,000, and that central city museums and public libraries have their operating hours and acquisition budgets cut because of declining municipal tax revenues, Sternlieb observes that

... meanwhile, the suburbs have achieved critical mass, a scale of population and buying power which permits them to sustain amenities of a type and at a level which once only the central city was capable of sustaining. The shopping center which had at best a single department store branch now has three and soon will have four. The suburban music calendar is evolving from a marginal summer collection of odds and ends to a year-round independent activity. Small suburban hospitals have grown to thousand-bed monsters which can supply all the services and specialists available in the biggest central city hospitals.

But at the core of the suburbs' critical mass is employment. From the slow growth of employment in the suburban rings from 1900 to 1950, it took a forward leap in the decades since. Whereas previous to World War II, suburban employment gains tended to keep pace with those of their central cities, since 1950 they have tended to outstrip them. In many of the large metropolitan areas the central city recorded an absolute loss in number of jobs, while their suburban rings gained spectacularly.

Among the Nation's 10 largest SMSAs, between 1960 and 1970 New York City lost 9.7 percent of its jobs, while its suburbs gained

24.9 percent. Los Angeles lost 10.8 percent, while its suburbs gained 16.2 percent. Chicago lost 13.9 percent, while its suburbs gained 64.4 percent. Philadelphia lost 11.3 percent, while its suburbs gained 61.5 percent. Detroit lost a whopping 22.5 percent, while its suburbs gained 61.5 percent. Though San Francisco and Oakland made a minute gain of 0.4 percent, their suburbs gained 22.7 percent. Washington, D.C. gained 1.9 percent, but its suburbs gained a spectacular 117.9 percent. Boston lost 8.6 percent, while its suburbs gained 20.2 percent. Only in Pittsburgh did the central city hold its own with a 4.4 percent increase in its suburbs. St. Louis lost 15.2 percent, while its suburbs gained 80.4 percent.

Commenting on the changing economic function of the central city, Raymond Vernon, Harvard economist and director of the multimillion dollar New York Metropolitan Study in the late 1950s, concluded that:

... the outward movement of people will be matched by an outward movement of jobs. Retail trade will follow the populations. Manufacturing and wholesaling establishments will continue to respond to obsolescence by looking for new quarters and by renting in structures in the suburban industrial areas where obsolescence is less advanced. The movement of jobs will reinforce the movement of residences.

Metropolitan developments during the 18 years since Vernon made these predictions have given us no reason to find fault with them. His optimism regarding continuing high levels of office

employment in central cities, however, seems to have been exaggerated as significant numbers of both corporate headquarters and smaller business offices continue to drift away to suburban locations.

The changed role of the suburbs, therefore, casts them in the role of a new type of human settlement, an "outer city" wrapped around the old central city, living in uneasy proximity to it, linked through surviving governmental, utility, communications, and banking networks, but relatively independent socially, culturally, and, increasingly, economically.

The populations of these new outer cities are relatively more homogeneous ethnically and in social class than the populations of central cities. The suburban population is characteristically younger, whiter, more affluent, better educated, and more prestigiously employed than the majority of central city residents. Though political controversy occurs in suburbia, the suburban population projects a collective feeling that they have "arrived" socially and economically by virtue of where they live. This status image of suburban life is accepted by most of the inhabitants of central cities also. Such acceptance is essential to the suburbanization process because it supplies endless candidates for suburban status who seek but to realize it when the practical means are at hand.

The Impact of Race

In the wake of the prosperity of World War II and subsequent economic growth and rising incomes, not only were the affluent able to enter the suburbs, but skilled and semiskilled workers, clerks, small merchants, and young professionals could do so, too. Some came from the cities;

others moved from rural America directly into suburbia. Their concept of what was typically American was seized upon by home builders, financial institutions—and most assuredly by FHA—all intent on developing and supporting homogeneous neighborhoods. Such a population, according to all the actors, was an absolute requirement for the protection of real estate investment.

Because in recent decades the exodus from the central city to the suburbs peaked at the same time that a large number of the newcomers to the large metropolitan areas were readily identifiable minorities, there has been much distortion of what has been involved. Some have confused coincidence with causation. To them desertion of the central cities by middle- and upper-income whites is purely and simply a means of escape from blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos.

As noted above, suburbanization through migration has been almost a universal phenomenon in the United States. Today it is characteristic of Canada as well. In this country, many metropolitan areas with extremely small non-white populations are involved. Binghamton, N. Y.; Brockton, Mass.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Duluth, Minn.; and Superior, Wis., are just a few examples. Thus color alone cannot account for the great migration to the Nation's suburbs. As a matter of fact, race became an identified factor only after technology and rising incomes had made suburban living possible for the great mass of Americans.

Had there been no migration of nonwhites to urban communities, large-scale expansion of suburbia would have occurred. And, of course, nonwhites participate in the process when they can do so.

In *The Unwalled City*, author Norton E. Long notes, "Without the problem of race, Canada's urban history has developed along lines much like the United States. The homogenization downward of the central cities with the departure of the affluent followed by the middle class and elements of the working class is similar."

In this Nation, obsession with race has not only distorted popular understanding of the process of suburbanization, but also obfuscated the true nature of the crisis of our cities. As Sternlieb recently observed:

This process of the "defuncting" of the central city would have occurred even if there had not been a problem of race. It would have been considerably slower in that case, and the capacity of society to adjust to it would have been greater, for the pace of change in our central cities has unquestionably been speeded up by racial tensions and fears.

But serious though that cost has been, perhaps the greatest cost of the race factor is that it has obscured the real nature of what is going on in the central city. Even if there were no racial difference in our society, there would probably still be as many people on welfare and as many under- or unemployed, and they would still be unwelcome among their more affluent fellow citizens.

The "affluent fellow citizens" referred to by Sternlieb, in the absence of race as an issue, would still have opted for suburban living and would have been busily engaged in erecting zoning barriers and opposing subsidized housing to

keep out those of low income, as they do in the suburbs of cities with relatively few minority residents. Sternlieb is probably right to suggest that in the absence of race, the pace of change might have been slower in many cities and suburban exclusion on the basis of income might have been more moderate. We are dealing, after all, with a racist society where the public power is widely used to assure a racially discriminatory effect; where private actions in violation of minority rights are widespread; and where many whites are prepared to pay a premium to assure themselves separation from blacks.

Drawing Conclusions

Because we are a racist society, there is a tendency to attribute all or most of the problems of our cities to the presence of racial minorities. This leads to two equally misleading conclusions. The first, and most dangerous, is to assume that were we racially homogeneous, the cities would have none of the crucial problems that they face. The second, in a large measure a reaction to the overemphasis of the racial issue, is the assertion that race is not relevant to the city's problems.

Suburbia was not created in order to establish a haven for a racist middle class (although many of its developers appealed to class and color snobishness), but once suburbia was created, our society easily found a way to convert it into such a haven. This outcome can, of course, be explained with due regard to our Federal system of government, of constitutional interpretations, of States' rights, and of home rule. But it is necessary to conclude that it was no accident that in our society the

institutional arrangements that emerged with suburbanization operated, even if blindly, to yield the decaying sections of old cities primarily to minorities and the attractions of suburbia primarily to whites.

At the same time, the myopia induced by accentuating race, so that any and all phenomena in which it plays a role are seen exclusively as racial matters, not only distorts reality but occasions acceptance of current racial residential distribution as inevitable and unchanging. It identifies any and all racial conflict in the urban complex as a major factor in accelerating the flight of whites from central cities.

But such is not the case. For example, the recent opposition to, and violence in, school busing in Boston has not to date noticeably speeded up the movement out of the city. Preliminary census data showed that Boston's population was holding steady. In November 1975, Massachusetts' Secretary of State Paul H. Guzzi stated at the time that, "There is no evidence of an exodus of people from the city." Of course this may also reflect the shortage of alternative shelter in today's housing market.

The suburbanization of America is a fact—inevitably and irrevocably so. But it need not have been suburbanization in the form or with the content that emerged. In the long run, more likely by succeeding generations than by our own, even some of the wasteful and depressing physical form of suburbia can be remedied. The social pattern of suburbia, especially its racial exclusion, cannot and will not be altered unless and until we recognize the process and identify the many factors which make up the push and pull in migration.

By Bernard J. Frieden and Marshall Kaplan

Urban Aid Comes Full Cycle

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE MODEL CITIES LEGACY

Federal aid for community development has raised troublesome issues from the New Deal to the New Federalism. Allocating money fairly to the cities, channeling it into projects that serve both national and local needs, giving Federal direction while allowing local flexibility, above all, minimizing delay and red tape—these are chronic problems. Each generation of program designers and public officials deals with them in its own way.

The more basic issues of purpose—who is to be served, what types of programs shall be funded—are defined mainly by the priorities of each administration in Washington and by the political contexts of the cities themselves. On these fundamental questions, we have come almost full cycle since the 1930s. At that time, Federal aid for community development meant support for municipal public works, with the benefits going mainly to well-off citizens and their neighborhoods.

From Public Works to Model Cities

The combination of Federal money and local public works construction did little to improve conditions in

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slum neighborhoods even after the invention of later Federal aid programs for urban renewal, highway construction, water and sewer facilities, and open space. Public officials and city residents both recognized that the great suburban boom of the 1950s left in its wake inner-city neighborhoods suffering from poverty, physical deterioration, and civic neglect. When Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was ready to take new Federal initiatives in the cities during the 1960s, this perception gave rise to the Model Cities program.

Model Cities dealt head-on with the problem of how to move Federal dollars into the poorest urban neighborhoods, but by then the notion of what help was appropriate went far beyond the neighborhood parks and swimming pools of the thirties. The Nation had rediscovered poverty in the early 1960s and had found its causes to be varied and complex, requiring a wide variety of solutions.

The spirit of the Great Society called for a more ambitious approach to community development, one that would go beyond the hardware of cities and give equal priority to raising the performance of school children, improving health conditions, training the unemployed for jobs, and bringing the poor fully into the political and economic life of the community. To this already formidable set of goals, the designers of the Model Cities Program added another that was close to the hearts of both Federal and local officials alike: streamlining and reforming the Federal grant-in-aid system.

And Back to Public Works for the Well-Off

Before the Model Cities Program could move very far, it met with resistance from the Federal agencies whose cooperation was essential for its success. Then it came under attack from within the Nixon White House. Although the program continued to be funded at roughly the levels promised, repeated threats to close it down created a climate of great uncertainty that frustrated both Federal and local efforts to make it work. Ultimately, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 replaced Model Cities with a different strategy for the 1970s: community development revenue sharing.

This major initiative in community development grew directly out of President Nixon's strategy for dismantling the Great Society. In his State of the Union message in 1971, he drew on the rhetoric of power-to-the-people in presenting his program of Federal aid to the cities, calling for redirection of power and resources away from Washington

and toward the States and communities.

The underpinning of President Nixon's new approach, general revenue sharing, became law in October 1972. During its first 5 years it will provide \$30 billion allocated on a formula basis to all 38,000 units of State and local government in the country. These governments can spend the money in almost any way they see fit, subject to very few Federal restrictions.

Accompanying general revenue sharing as a part of the New Federalism were proposals to consolidate previous categorical aid programs into a series of new block grants. One of the block grant programs, for community development, was included within the Housing and Community Development Act of August 1974. It replaced the Model Cities Program, urban



renewal, water and sewer grants, grants for open space, urban beautification, historic preservation, neighborhood facilities, and loans for public facilities and for housing rehabilitation—all of which were formerly administered as separate categorical programs.

Community development block grants are too new to have produced much action in the field. Their evaluation, then, must be based on the plans that cities have rather than projects underway. Even from scattered and incomplete evidence, however, the way the program will work is already clear enough. The important news is: 1) there is less Federal red tape than in the older categorical programs; 2) hardware expenditures and public works are back in fashion; 3) poor people and minorities are no longer in fashion.

Cutting Red Tape

Community development revenue sharing has unquestionably made it easier and simpler for cities to do business with the Federal government. It consolidates seven different programs, each of which formerly had its own complicated application and review procedures. Now a single local application and HUD review are enough to start the Federal funds flowing for all the purposes of the seven predecessors. The new annual applications have been averaging about 50 pages per city, compared with an average of 1,400 pages per year under the earlier categorical programs.

HUD processing time has also been much quicker. Under community development revenue sharing, the total time from preparation of the local application to HUD approval and execution of a Federal contract has averaged only 8 months. All the previous categorical programs for community development averaged more than a year for this process, and urban renewal averaged 2½ years.

But if the purpose of cutting red tape is not only to reduce uncertainty and frustration among municipal officials, but also to speed the time it takes for Federal money to "hit the streets," then community development block grants must be rated as only a modest success so far. By the late spring of 1976, local governments had not yet spent the bulk of funds made available to them under the block grant program. Despite the financial squeeze in many towns and the repeated pleas for greater Federal aid, by mid-April 1976 the cities had been able to spend only a third of the \$1.9 billion made available to them.

This record is comparable to the chronic under-spending of funds under the Model Cities Program,

except that, in the latter instance, onerous Federal planning regulations were at least partly responsible for the delay. Under the newer program, although some Federal regulations remain burdensome or confusing, red-tape cutters should look next to city hall administrative and decisionmaking procedures.

A Return to Hardware

Model Cities, reflecting the spirit of its times, relied mainly on public services to achieve its community development objectives. The bulk of the money went for projects in education, health, manpower training, economic development, public safety, recreation, and miscellaneous social services.

This emphasis on software resulted from Federal pressure to be comprehensive; innovative attempts to provide a wide balance of projects seemingly responsive to the interests of different resident groups; and widespread belief among urban technicians that previous programs had failed to help the poor partly because they were too concerned with physical rebuilding and not concerned enough with the social needs of residents.

As community development revenue sharing went into operation, it did not offer the cities a free hand in deciding on the mix of hardware and service activities. According to the law, public services may be funded only if they are related to a physical development activity in the same area and only if the community has been unable to get support for them under other Federal programs. In addition, the joint House-Senate conference committee stated its understanding that no more than 20 percent of any community's funds were to be allotted to support services for community development projects.

While the Federal government has been requiring special justification for social services, pressure from another source has been pushing cities to invest heavily in physical development once again. Almost 1,000 urban renewal projects and 400 related neighborhood development programs approved in the past have not yet been completed. Because HUD still has \$4.7 billion in loan guarantees outstanding for urban renewal and neighborhood development projects, that agency has been urging local governments to use community development aid funds to complete these projects. Under the law, the Secretary of HUD has authority to deduct up to 20 percent of a community development grant to apply it toward the repayment of these temporary loans.

Not surprisingly, then, cities are choosing to con-





concentrate 42 percent of their community development block grant funds on urban renewal and neighborhood development in the first year. Similarly they report that 42 percent of their total funds are "clearance related." Even outside urban renewal and other clearance projects, the great bulk of all the spending under community development revenue sharing is for hardware. According to approved first-year plans, only 4.3 percent of total funds will be for public services and another 7.7 percent for service-related facilities and equipment. Significantly, former Model Cities communities account for 80 percent of the proposed public service expenditures.

The new popularity of hardware expenditures goes beyond the completion of urban renewal projects. An analysis of community development plans in California cities shows that even those communities that never before received any categorical funding under HUD programs are also concentrating their outlays on physical facilities and are investing virtually nothing in social service programs. Hardware projects are attractive locally because they are one-shot investments followed only by maintenance costs. Service programs may create clienteles that demand high budgets for years into the future. Further, hardware projects are tangible and visible and, therefore, traditionally good politics.

Beyond even these considerations, a general disillusionment with human service programs has occurred as their failure to deliver anticipated results has become increasingly well known. The pendulum can swing too far, however, particularly since the need remains to improve basic community services. As important, in some cities poverty neighborhoods are reasonably well equipped with community facilities while important social services are unavailable or underfunded.

Who Benefits from Community Development?

The central question about community development revenue sharing (and also about the new federalism in general) is whether it is bringing power to the people or power to the powerful. As a Federal aid reform it has succeeded in simplifying grant applications and in giving greater flexibility to local communities, but it has bought these merits at the expense of the poor.

First, the legislative history tells us something about the degree of commitment to the poor embodied in this program. The original Nixon administration proposal was concerned almost entirely with grant-

in-aid reform and would have allowed local governments virtually complete freedom to decide on the use of community development funds from the Federal government. As a result of objections from many congressmen and urban interest groups, the law that finally emerged in 1974 moved farther in the direction of establishing, as a national priority, aid to people of low and moderate income.

This commitment was clearest in the provisions that Congress made for the allocation and distribution of funds. While keeping the total grant authorization at about the same level as categorical program outlays of the early 1970s, the law provides a new formula for distributing grant funds to eligible communities. The formula is based on the population of each city and on two other factors chosen to emphasize the social purposes of the program: the extent of poverty (given double weight) and the extent of overcrowded housing conditions in each eligible community.

As far as the local uses of funds are concerned, the legislation does attach strings, but they are loose ones. The declarations of purpose have the ring of a bold commitment, such as "the expansion and improvement of the quantity and quality of community services, principally for persons of low and moderate income."

But the application and review requirements are more equivocal. They call for each city to certify that its community development program "has been developed so as to give maximum feasible priority to activities which will benefit low or moderate income families, or aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight." However, the law also authorizes the Secretary to approve applications for activities which the applicant certifies as meeting "other community development needs having a particular urgency." Similarly, the law requires each community to meet certain requirements for citizen participation, but these have more to do with providing information and holding hearings than with assuring a significant role for citizens in policy making.

Since these requirements are vague and difficult to enforce, it is clear that local officials will make most decisions on the final use of funds subject only to a limited amount of Federal prodding. Why, then, should anyone expect local governments to give higher priority to poor people in this program than they did with their own community development funds in the past?

Proponents of the New Federalism strategy countered with two major arguments. One was that during the 1960s the poor and minority groups, because of Federal requirements attached to various Federal

programs, became better organized and more effective in local politics and that local government, in turn, became more responsive to them. This argument neglected the fact that Model Cities Programs were limited to relatively few cities and that most of the time low- and moderate-income residents, without the certainty of Federal funds or Federal legitimacy, have to compete for resources in an unfriendly majority environment.

The second argument was that special revenue sharing funds would go directly to elected officials who, being directly accountable to voters, were in turn subject to political pressure from their constituents. Under the earlier categorical programs, in contrast, the bulk of Federal funds went to special purpose agencies such as local renewal authorities. These were not directly accountable to the voters and had their own special pipeline to Washington. This second argument neglected the importance of Federal prerequisites in beefing up the courage of many mayors. As one mayor indicated, "without being able to blame the feds, I couldn't propose spending funds in ghetto areas. . . . The politics would kill me. . . ."

The Allocation Formula

Despite congressional intentions to distribute community development funds according to established poverty indicators, the legislative formula actually shifts money away from cities with concentrations of poor people and into communities that are more affluent. The full effects will not be felt until 1980, because cities whose funding is being reduced will receive transitional grants during the first 5 years of the program.

The new pattern, however, is already becoming clear. The Southern Regional Council's study of community development revenue sharing in the South found that major new beneficiaries of the act include 75 urban counties consisting primarily of suburban communities with strong tax bases, low operating expenditures, and populations with incomes well above the low to moderate level. Most of these counties did not use the earlier categorical programs to undertake community development activities for the poor, and the council reports growing concern over whether they will spend the \$100 million they received in fiscal 1975 to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income people.

A more definitive study of California cities that looks ahead to 1980 formula entitlements demonstrates clearly that the allocation formula does a poor job of carrying out congressional intentions for



targeting funds. The authors, Richard DeLeon and Richard LeGates, have identified 15 California "new-money" cities that never received categorical urban development aid but will have community development funding; 41 additional "phase-in" cities that will get more aid than previously, and 23 "phase-down" cities that will get less than before.

The allocation formula actually shifts funds away from areas of black concentration. The new-money cities are 0.6 percent black. Phase-in cities are 3.7 percent black, while phase-down cities are 13 percent black. Cities that are older and have more substandard and overcrowded housing, as well as a higher percentage of people below the poverty line, are hurt by the allocation formula. As an example, the proportion

of the population below the low-income level of 1970 was 5.4 percent for new-money cities, 7.1 percent for other phase-in cities, and 9.3 percent for phase-down cities.

DeLeon and LeGates found that a city's allocation formula depends almost entirely on a single factor: total population. The formula gives about the same results as one that would distribute resources on a per capita basis. This is because the present formula fails to measure the number of poor people in a particular city as a proportion of that city's own population.

Even the congressional stipulation that the poverty measure be given double weight makes virtually no difference. In an alternate formula, DeLeon and LeGates gave the poverty component 20 times the weight of other factors and found only minor differences from the present distribution. Their simulation of other formulas shows that using a proportion of local population that is in poverty or inadequately housed to total local population will produce allocations that match resources to needs much more closely.

City Spending for the Poor

Once Federal money reaches a city, are poor people and minority groups now capable of competing against other interests to get a fair share of the money? Early experience with general revenue sharing is enlightening in testing the view that, thanks to what they've learned under Great Society programs and thanks to newly established Federal aid channels operating through elected officials, the poor and the minorities should now be able to look after their own interests at the local level. Although it is difficult to know who precisely benefits from most local expenditures under general revenue sharing, the Treasury Department's Office of Revenue Sharing has reported that through June 30, 1973, the category of social services for the poor and the elderly received only 3 percent of total local spending.

One of the very few strings attached to general revenue sharing requires nondiscrimination in programs paid for out of revenue sharing dollars. Many local groups have brought complaints of discrimination to the Office of Revenue Sharing. Where ORS records show the type of discrimination alleged, about half concern disparities in local services, such as segregated locations of park and health facilities or unequal levels of service for street repair, sanitation, or water utilities in black and white neighborhoods. These complaints come from 17 States across the country, and ORS investigators have found substance

to the complaints in at least half a dozen cases so far.

Another insight into how well the poor are doing on their own comes from a California study in which the investigators interviewed public officials in 97 cities to ask them what percentage of their general revenue sharing expenditures they thought benefited the poor. Officials in two-thirds of the cities said they spent nothing at all on programs aimed specifically at benefiting the poor. In the other third, local officials claimed that some revenue sharing expenditures were intended to help low-income groups but, of these, three-quarters said that they spent 5 percent or less of their funds for this purpose.

Under community development revenue sharing, the poor are not left entirely on their own to fight for a share of the funds. Provisions of the law and of HUD's administrative processes that direct local funds toward low- and moderate-income people are weak, but they are not totally useless.

For an overview of the results nationally, it is possible to locate locally planned expenditures in specific census tracts and then to characterize these tracts according to the median income of their residents. HUD's first annual report follows this procedure; however, it uses a questionable yardstick. It classifies census tracts according to the relationship of their median income to the median income of the entire metropolitan area in which they are located. Those tracts with median incomes 80 percent or less of the metropolitan area median are considered to be low and moderate income. According to this analysis, local communities plan to spend approximately two-thirds of the funds in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

The problem with this measure is that in most large metropolitan areas the entire central city has a median income well below the metropolitan median. To determine whether a city is using its community development funds for its poorest residents, a better yardstick would be the median income of the individual central city by itself, rather than the median income of the metropolitan area including its suburbs. The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials surveyed first-year applications from 86 entitlement cities and found that only 12 percent of the community development funds were used in low-income census tracts where median incomes were less than half of the city's own median earnings. According to the NAHRO study, another 39 percent of the funds are to be spent in moderate-income neighborhoods having between 51 and 80 percent of the city's median income.

A closer look at the data in HUD's first-year evaluation confirms that low-income neighborhoods are getting only a small share of the funds for new community development activities. Within the low- and moderate-income census tracts as defined by HUD, nearly half the planned expenditures are for land clearance activities. The bulk of this money is undoubtedly going to complete existing urban renewal projects. Land clearance usually means the uprooting of low-income families and their relocation to other parts of the city.

Demolition and relocation can hardly be considered benefits for poor people, especially at a time when the housing subsidy programs that might conceivably provide them with better places to live are either in suspension or not yet working. If we exclude money planned for clearance-related activities in low- and moderate-income areas—as defined generously by HUD—we find these neighborhoods will get only 34 percent of community development funds for the first year.

Further, HUD's analysis of community development strategy in its 151 sample cities reveals a shifting of funds from the neighborhoods in the worst condition to those that are somewhat better off. In comparison with recent expenditures under categorical programs, there is now:

... greater emphasis on activities in neighborhoods beginning to decline and those with decline clearly in progress. Those neighborhoods accelerating into major decline and nonviable, heavily abandoned neighborhoods receive less emphasis. (*Community Development Block Grant Program: First Annual Report*, published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

Local Controversies

Several local controversies illustrate the difficulty that low-income people are having in making the new community development system work to their advantage. For example, the Southern Regional Council reports that in Gulfport, Mississippi, local officials actively directed community development funds away from projects that would help the poor. In response to a questionnaire from the city, residents listed the most important community development needs as housing rehabilitation, clearance of dilapidated buildings, storm drainage, street paving and lights, and new sidewalks. Dissatisfied with these answers, local officials sent out more questionnaires. The new returns gave higher priority to building a central fire



station, which then became the feature of Gulfport's first-year community development program.

In Little Rock, Arkansas, a Southern Regional Council investigator asked the director of the Department of Human Resources how the city could justify spending \$150,000 in community development funds to build a tennis complex in an affluent neighborhood. He first claimed that 99 percent of the money was going to low- and moderate-income areas, but then added: "you can't divorce politics from that much money . . . we must remember the needs of the people who vote . . . because they hold us accountable . . . Poor people don't vote."

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, in a review of charges brought by the Southern Regional Council, explains that the central fire station in Gulfport and the tennis court in Little Rock, as well as a civic center and parking garage in Spartanburg, South Carolina, are all legally eligible for community development funding. As for the contention that Gulfport failed to follow the results of its own citizen survey, the HUD review notes simply that, "The statute makes very clear who makes the final decisions after it has followed the citizen participation process."

In Alhambra, California, legal service attorneys representing three local citizens have gone to court in an attempt to stop the city from spending \$100,000—half of its total first-year community development grant—to enlarge a municipal golf course from nine to eighteen holes. The city proposed the golf course under the statutory provision allowing HUD to fund activities certified by a community as having "a particular urgency," even though those activities do not directly benefit low- or moderate-income families or help prevent blight.

Not only did Alhambra's own first-year application not support this claim of special urgency, but, in fact, it ranked the goal of improving existing parks below seven other needs of higher priority. Since the statute gives the secretary of HUD final authority to determine whether a local certification of particular urgency is justified, the suit now in court charges that, in this case, it was HUD which abused its discretion.

In Honolulu, a proposed community development block grant budget presented to the city council included a flood control project, several new bridges and road improvements, sanitary landfill operations, sewage facilities, and expenditures for the Honolulu zoo, several regional parks, and other recreation areas. During city council hearings in March 1976, an attorney

from the Hawaii Legal Aid Society argued that, under the Federal statute, community development block grant funds are intended to benefit low- and moderate-income people, not to finance public works projects for the community at large. He threatened legal action if the council adopted the proposed program. The council then decided to revise Honolulu's plans.

No matter how strong local resident groups are, the statutory definition of eligible activities allows them only limited and occasional leverage to influence the content of local programs. Further, current HUD requirements for citizen participation offer no more than a small opening into the local political system. As we discussed above, guidelines require that each community provide citizens with adequate *information* about the program and hold at least two public hearings to obtain their views. The community also must provide citizens "an adequate opportunity to participate in the development of the application." But, the law is explicit in giving final authority for local decisions to elected officials.

One measure of resident involvement in decision making is the amount of community development funds used to pay for citizen participation activities.* Although no national data are available, two surveys covering most California cities found that four-fifths of them spent no money at all for this purpose. Most outlays for citizen participation in California were for continuation of former Model Cities activities.

In short, cities can have about as much or as little citizen participation as they want and still receive their community development block grants.

At this time, we know that the use of these grants from one community to another varies greatly. However, local experience has not been studied extensively; and, furthermore, judgments made in the first year of any national program must be considered tentative. Still, the incomplete and early evidence at hand strongly backs the following conclusions of the Southern Regional Council:

The 1974 act, with the New Federalism approach it embraces, rests on the theory that local governments can be relied upon to carry out urgent national goals—in this case, the goal of improving the living conditions of urban persons of low and moderate income. But the fact is that local governments are not carrying out this goal with any consistency. Instead, they have been permitted to deviate at will from the national responsibilities that the 1974 act supposedly places



upon them Local diversions from the national purpose are not just occasional abuses, but rather form a pattern inherent in the [act's] implementation

Clearly the most serious difficulty with the act is that it fails to assure the channeling of funds to its low and moderate income target populations. . . . The most important reason for this difficulty is the lack of political influence that low and moderate income groups exercise in the local community development decision-making process.

Comparing Community Development Strategies

Early returns show that community development block grants are operating very differently from the model cities program, but they are no more effective in achieving national purposes. The purposes of the block grant program are, in fact, hard to identify. Our reading of the legislative background suggests that the following objectives are legitimate points of comparison for evaluating the two programs: keeping red tape to a minimum, giving local communities flexibility to select their own projects, delivering Federal

resources to the low- and moderate-income groups for whom they were intended, and funding projects that are of benefit to their users.

The model cities program never succeeded in its attempt to simplify Federal aid management or to cut processing time for local applications. Model cities gave cities greater freedom to design their own projects than did the categorical programs that preceded it; however, Federal policy set the basic direction with an emphasis on social action and public service delivery. The program was a conspicuous success in channeling its resources into city neighborhoods where poor people and minority groups were concentrated. At a time of great urban unrest, local Model Cities projects were important symbolically, but our best judgment is that the services they offered were of little substantive value. They were more effective in helping the poor and minority groups to get public service jobs and to enter city politics.

Community development block grants are a success in cutting Federal red tape, although the cities are still unable to spend Federal funds without long delays of their own. Under the new arrangements, cities are much freer than before to design their own programs. Nonetheless, Washington continues to shape the character of local expenditures, this time favoring physical facilities and hardware investments. The block grant program is failing to target its funds into projects for low- and moderate-income neighborhoods: cities are taking advantage of the wide loophole the law provides to support activities that have nothing to do with families of below-average income. And, as we have seen, HUD has readily given its approval to this diversion of funds.

Community development block grants, as they are now operating, approximate a general revenue sharing program for public works. Cities are not funded on the basis of need but according to a formula that is virtually tantamount to per capita grants. Nor are the cities required to allocate their Federal funds to neighborhoods or projects on the basis of need: HUD relies heavily on the cities' own good faith in complying with the statutory purpose of assisting people of low and moderate income.

If the overriding national purposes in urban development are to cut red tape and to encourage cities to spend more money on public works than they might otherwise choose to do, then this program may be a great success. What remains of a national commitment to improve living conditions in poor neighborhoods, however, is rapidly becoming a casualty of the legislative shuffle.



By Joe Guggenheim

EQUITY UNDER
THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT

MONITORING FEDERAL MONEY

Activist individuals and citizen organizations concerned about equal opportunity in housing and about the housing and community development needs of lower-income persons have no choice: involvement in the Federal community development block grant program is a must.

This program, included in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, replaced a number of categorical Federal programs. Separate detailed applications for individual projects have been replaced with a simpler application for a block grant of a specified amount that can be used for a wide variety of community development activities.

The 1974 legislation requires local governments to meet housing needs as a condition of receiving Federal funds to be used for community development activities such as urban renewal, neighborhood conservation, housing rehabilitation, recreation facilities, various public works improvements, and related social services. Such block grant funds must also be spent in a manner that gives "maximum feasible priority" to activities that aid lower-income families or eliminate or prevent blight. The law also requires that community development and housing activities must be undertaken in a manner fully consistent with all civil rights laws. Affirmative action is required to overcome the effects of past discrimination, to promote fair housing, and to promote employment and business opportunities for minorities, women, and project area residents.

The recipient municipalities are also required to establish goals to provide subsidized housing for low- and moderate-income families and the elderly in order to meet the needs both of present residents and of persons "expected to reside" in the community because of present or

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future employment opportunities. The "expected to reside" provision, if fully enforced, would require suburban communities to provide housing for lower-income workers and prospective workers and their families. In the past, blacks, other minority group persons, and low-income families generally have been denied the opportunity to reside in most suburban communities as a result of exclusionary zoning and housing patterns.

In the central city, citizen involvement is an absolute requirement for community groups interested in sponsoring lower-income housing or in obtaining government funds for neighborhood improvements and community development. All Federal monies for general community development come through this program. The only housing for lower-income families that can be provided must be included by city governments in the local housing assistance plans that are a part of the block grant application. Community leaders who are concerned about and want to influence their city's efforts in housing and community development need to learn the rules and regulations, especially the provisions for citizen participation.

For persons who want to do something about suburban housing opportunities and regional housing approaches, the block grant program provides an unprecedented opportunity to achieve open housing and develop low-income housing in suburban communities. All municipalities with a population of 50,000 or more are automatically entitled to receive a fixed amount of community development block grant funds if they meet all the requirements of the program. In the larger metropolitan areas, smaller suburbs also receive funds by participating in the program as part of

an urban county application filed by their county government.

Citizen Enforcement

To deal with these issues in the Detroit metropolitan area, the Michigan Committee on Law and Housing, a statewide citizens' advocacy coalition working on the housing needs of low-income and minority persons, took steps to create the Coalition for Block Grant Compliance in order to monitor and enforce the equal opportunity and low-income housing provisions of the block grant program. The coalition includes organizations such as the Interfaith Centers for Racial Justice, the League of Women Voters, the Detroit NAACP, a number of religious denominations, the City of Detroit Human Rights Department, and other human relations groups.

With the help of members of these groups who live in the involved communities, the coalition is concentrating on monitoring the activities of 26 suburban Detroit applicants eligible to receive upwards of \$60 million in block grant funds over a 6-year period.

The first year applications, totalling over \$7 million, were analyzed by the coalition in 1975. Special attention was focused on the requirement that each suburban municipality measure the need to provide housing for the "expected to reside" population.

The coalition was able to develop data from the 1970 census and from special reports of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as to the number of lower-income persons in "existing employment facilities" who commute to work in each of the 26 recipient suburban communities. In letters to the mayors and mem-

ber of city councils in each of the communities, the coalition early in 1975 provided this data and pointed out that communities are required to measure the need for housing for persons "expected to reside" as a condition for receiving community development block grant funds. The coalition was also able to develop statistics on nonresidential construction in some stage of development in these communities. Such construction will ultimately mean new permanent jobs and create a need for housing for workers "expected to reside" as a result of "planned" or future employment opportunities.

Based on these and other statistics on housing conditions in each of the suburban communities, the coalition then analyzed the extent to which each of the applications complied with the housing and civil rights requirements governing the block grant program.

Filing Complaints

The coalition's analysis of the 26 suburban applications for block grant funds in 1975 concluded that civil rights deficiencies existed in all of the applications. In addition, all of the applications together contributed to a pattern that had the effect of discriminating against minority group members, as well as denying needed housing opportunities to low- and moderate-income persons either residing in or expecting to reside in the 26 municipalities.

The coalition submitted its comments on these applications to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). SEMCOG is the regional planning agency that administers the review and comment procedures through which interested agencies can have their points of view considered

when decisions on providing Federal grants are made. However, SEMCOG used a number of technicalities to exclude the coalition's comments from the review process.

The coalition concluded that its opinions had been deliberately ignored by SEMCOG. It publicly charges SEMCOG with a "whitewash" operation in approving all 26 of the applications without raising any significant issues, such as compliance with housing and civil rights requirements and with regional housing policies. By way of contrast, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission found 12 of the 26 applications to be "unacceptable" under the review and comment process.

However, the coalition was able to have its views fully considered as part of the decisionmaking process. A HUD Area Office letter sent to the 26 cities required each of them to respond to our comments under the formal complaint procedures provided for in the Federal regulations. We were also able to utilize the formal complaint process with regard to HUD itself. Under this process, any Federal agency is required to respond to the views of interested citizens on how that agency is administering its programs under the law.

The coalition's analysis and conclusions were also fashioned into a formal administrative complaint against HUD that was filed with HUD Secretary Carla Hills by lawyers from the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, a civil rights organization based in Washington, D. C., with a 25-year record of combating discrimination in housing. The complaint asked that block grant funding be withheld until each of the 26 municipalities revised their applications to conform to the requirements of the law. This

action in Washington stopped the HUD Detroit office from approving the applications and awarding grants to the first of the 26 cities in line to receive funds. National periodicals specializing in housing reported that the complaint caused a shakeup in the HUD bureaucracy.

In the interim, the coalition

successfully negotiated with four suburban communities, all of which amended their block grant applications to satisfy the basic complaints of the coalition.

While the Detroit Area Office was still under instructions from Washington to defer action on the 26 suburban applications, the HUD



central office issued a memorandum requiring that each and every block grant application must pay attention to the housing needs of persons "expected to reside" in the community. The memorandum included a method of estimating this housing need. The HUD method was derived from the one developed by the Coalition for Block Grant Compliance. However, the HUD memorandum allowed suburban communities to avoid using the HUD method and, instead, to make a commitment to develop an adequate estimate for the second-year application. Subsequently, 19 of the 26 Detroit area suburban communities responded by changing their housing assistance plans to use the HUD methodology. Seven of the 26 chose the option of promising to make an adequate estimate the next year. These seven were the communities which had the largest housing needs for persons "expected to reside" in their communities. Following these changes, HUD approved all 26 applications.

The HUD policy of waiving for one year the requirement that suburban communities measure the "expected to reside" housing need was challenged by the city of Hartford, Conn., in a lawsuit directed at HUD's approval of funds for seven suburban Hartford communities. The decision of the Federal district court in this case, *Hartford v. Hills*, was to enjoin HUD from funding the Hartford communities until they submitted an accurate estimate of the housing needs of persons "expected to reside." The court said that it was illegal for HUD to waive the legislative requirement that all block grant applicants take steps to measure and meet the housing needs of persons "expected to reside" in their community.

Another result of the coalition's

complaint was a requirement that block grant applicants develop housing goals for the elderly and for large-family households, as well as for average families, proportional to the needs of these household types. Our administrative complaint showed that in 1975 the proposed goals in the Detroit suburban communities for housing for the elderly were equal to 16 percent of the need, while the proposed goals for the nonelderly families and large families were equal to only 3 percent of the housing need for these household types. Generally speaking, the suburban communities were willing to set substantial goals to provide rental housing for the elderly, and they were willing to set significant goals to provide rehabilitation assistance for nonelderly families who are currently resident homeowners in their communities. However, they were clearly unwilling to make significant efforts to set goals for low-income rental housing that would have to be made available to persons "expected to reside" in the community and to others, including minorities, who in the past have been unable to obtain housing outside of existing concentrated pockets of low-income and minority populations in the central city.

Additional changes in HUD national policy to help remedy the discriminatory pattern in suburban communities resulted from a February 12, 1976, meeting in Washington initiated by the Detroit coalition. Representatives from nine national civil rights organizations joined the coalition in a discussion of key issues with HUD Undersecretary Rhineland and other top-level HUD officials. HUD's revised method for calculating the housing need of persons "expected to reside" in the com-

munity was substantially improved. (As noted earlier, the initial method adopted by HUD in May 1975 was based directly on the work of the coalition.) The final method embodied in the February 19, 1976, regulations contained many important changes resulting from the meeting with HUD officials. The net result is that suburban communities with a substantial employment base will have to establish significant goals for providing lower-income rental housing for families as a condition of receiving block grant funds.

The Second Year

Following these successes, the coalition determined in 1976 to file selective complaints and review selective applications rather than analyze all the applications and file complaints on the overall pattern of applications in suburban communities. These selective reviews were mostly aimed at developing special issues and addressing key problems existing in the administration of the program.

Before year 2 under the block grant program began, representatives of the coalition met with HUD Detroit Area Office Director Elmer Binford and his top staff to help clarify local HUD policies in administering the block grant program. As a result of that meeting and subsequent discussions and actions, certain area office policies were modified. For example, the coalition developed a method of estimating the "expected to reside" housing need for cities of under 50,000 (The HUD central office provided the method and data for cities of over 50,000 population.) With minor changes, the coalition method was adopted by the area office for use in the Detroit metropolitan area.

A complaint filed with the HUD Regional Administrator in Chicago on April 9, 1976, led directly to a new national policy letter issued by the HUD central office on May 12. (U.S. Senate housing subcommittee staff aided us in winning this change.) HUD policy now requires that each and every program activity funded under the block grant program (a) aid lower-income persons, (b) aid in the prevention or elimination of blight, or (c) be specifically justified as meeting a community development need of particular urgency. Prior to our complaint, this test was applied to the overall application but not to each individual activity. The net result should be that HUD will reject many proposed activities such as tennis courts, street pavings, and bike paths in middle-income communities that were previously acceptable. If followed, this new policy should have an impact on hundreds of millions of dollars of block grant expenditures in the next year or two across the country.

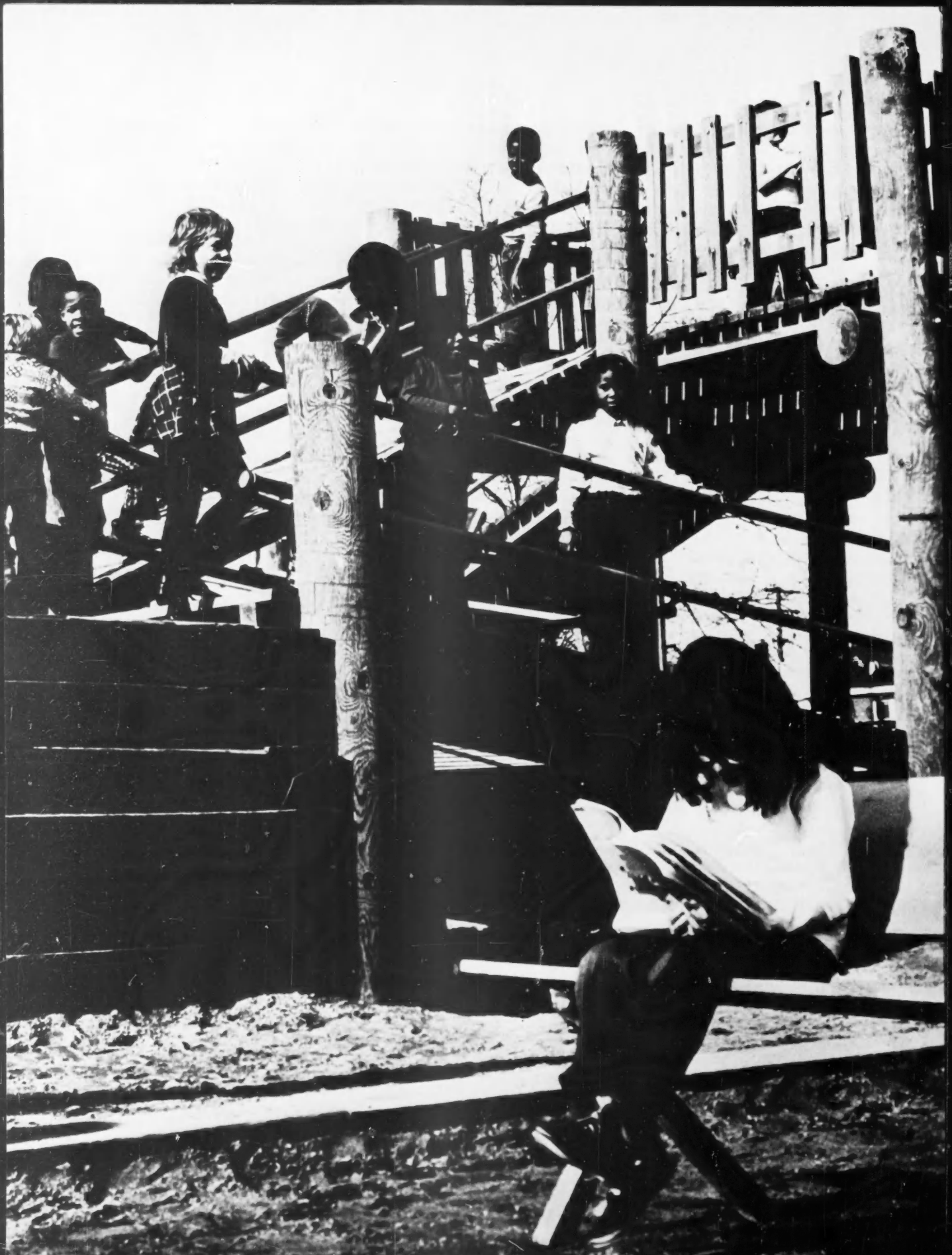
The coalition also made proposals and filed comments on pending HUD regulations that led to changes in the new Section 8 program for existing housing. These changes will allow a central city resident to find an existing unit in any part of the metropolitan area, rather than just in the city in which he or she resides, as long as the central city housing authority is not legally barred from executing a leasing contract with a suburban landlord. In addition, the coalition was instrumental in changing HUD policy so that it is now illegal for a local housing authority to set up residency requirements to exclude persons who currently work in the community. However, the regulations did not go far enough. Residency require-

ments should have been done away with entirely, so that any person seeking work or desiring to live there for any reason cannot be barred from housing in a suburban community.

Special attention was paid to the two urban county applications in the Detroit area. The coalition was successful in getting HUD to disallow \$300,000 worth of proposed activity in the Wayne County application that could not be justified as either aiding lower-income persons, attacking blight, or meeting a need of particular urgency. In the Oakland County application, housing goals were improved and locations for housing were designated in middle-class communities with a large and growing employment base outside of existing minority and lower income parts of the county.

Perhaps the most important complaint that the coalition filed in 1976 related to the application of the city of Livonia, Mich. The coalition's complaint, which was consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Detroit HUD area office, stated that the city was totally unwilling to provide new housing for low-income families, despite the very substantial need for such housing for low-income persons expected to reside in the community. The city was willing to utilize existing rental housing under the Section 8 program, but local HUD officials could find not one vacant unit in the city that could be utilized under the existing housing program.

The HUD area office recommendation that the application be disapproved was sustained by the regional office. However, the final decision was up to HUD Assistant Secretary Meeker. After meeting with the mayor of Livonia and after receiving pressure from the



offices of several Michigan congressmen, Meeker reversed the area and regional offices and approved the application on the basis of new data offered by the Mayor of Livonia. The mayor's data were challenged by the HUD Detroit area office and other HUD technical experts, but Meeker was not deterred from approving the application in a totally unprecedented situation.

Meeker was questioned about his action in hearings held at the time by the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs on the community development block grant program. Despite the adverse comments by Senator William Proxmire, Meeker maintained his position. Subsequently, the coalition filed suit against HUD. The case has not been heard at this writing.

Keys to Success

In the coalition's experience, four factors enabled us to be effective in influencing the pattern of block grant activities in the Detroit metropolitan area.

The first factor was the establishment of a coalition of organizations concerned about social issues and equal opportunity. Such organizations can be used to help draw public attention or bring pressure to bear on recalcitrant local communities or government agencies.

The second key factor was the judicious use of publicity through press conferences and news releases. The suburban weekly press was very responsive in writing about what we were doing, regardless of whether or not they agreed with our objectives or strategy. Coverage by metropolitan dailies was uneven, although a number of major stories were generated. In certain instances, we felt it was

preferable to work quietly without generating local publicity. This was the case only after we had established ourselves as an organization with some impact; the communities knew that they had to respond to us and that HUD would have to consider seriously our point of view.

The most important single element, of course, was developing expertise and familiarity with the block grant regulations and with the methods by which HUD interprets the law and administers the program.

The final element was developing the ability to put our point of view in writing quickly and to file complaints within the time limits that the review agency and HUD itself are required to act on the applications.

In our view, the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act provides an unprecedented opportunity for citizen groups to force municipalities throughout the country to deal adequately with the housing needs of lower-income persons, with the problems of blight in lower-income neighborhoods, and with the need to provide full and equal opportunity in housing for minority group persons.

The community development block grant program is the first major Federal program which provides a truly effective "carrot and stick" approach to achieving these goals. Local civil rights, good government, and community organizations need to take up this cause and this opportunity for action. If we work at it well, we can influence events at the local level as well as have a substantial impact on how the Federal government spends billions of dollars to revitalize communities and to provide adequate shelter for lower-income families.

By Ruth Jordan

A PARENT'S VIEW

Not too long ago **The New York Times** returned to Little Rock, Arkansas, to remember the Little Rock children who had integrated the schools. It recalled those angry and contorted adult faces and looked at the community 20 years later. Today the schools are integrated, the children work together unself-consciously, and the twisted faces and terrified children belong to people in the North who we once believed didn't have segregated schools.

The struggle to achieve integration has led me to reflect on my children's experiences with education in the District of Columbia, and it has convinced me that human education is the thing I value most, even over reading, writing, and arithmetic.

My oldest daughter entered our majority black D.C. school in kindergarten and moved through classes with a decreasing number of white students at every grade.

The reasons were complex. The Kennedy Administration and the

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subsequent Johnson years had brought literally hundreds of white, middle-class families to our integrated community in northwest Washington, D.C.

The parents' involvement in causes and cause jobs had helped maintain the integrated character of the schools. The parents both believed in an integrated community and found it helped them on the job to live there. A Friday night Neighbors, Inc., party (the name of our neighborhood stabilization organization) could find White House aides, Peace Corps management, VISTA volunteers, and liberal journalists of all races sharing their business life as well as their community life.

During the Nixon years these people lost their jobs or left them. The agencies were shut down, the character of many government departments changed, the potential for new work in Washington for these kinds of people grew increasingly slim. And as these families left and found other work in other cities, they decreased the base of both white and black families with a conscious commitment to integration. Those who remained became increasingly concerned about the "tipping" of the school from an integrated, nearly 50-50 student body to an increasingly black school population.

Whatever their fears—whether of slipping academic standards or potential physical or psychological abuse to their children—they began to drift away. The secondary schools—junior and senior high schools—were the first to lose white

enrollment.

Their populations were an amalgam of many neighborhoods, including black working class children who did not share the economic and intellectual aspirations of the black homeowners in our immediate neighborhood.

Efforts by Neighbors, Inc., to upgrade the quality of special programs in the junior high school weren't enough. Nearby suburban school systems beckoned. Private schools were "better" or more "progressive," allowed for more "creativity and artistic expression." Even parents who deeply resented the restrictive parochial schools of their childhood began considering Catholic and Jewish day schools as alternatives to the public schools.

Black middle-class parents became uneasy. They too were worried about fighting and falling education standards and some took the declining white population to mean that the schools were declining in quality. Even those imbued with rising black awareness and an anti-integrationist bias began putting their children in private schools.

By the time my daughter reached the fifth grade she was one of three white girls in the class, and most of her black friends from the primary grades were gone. By the sixth grade she was the only white girl in her class.

It was during that year that my own career caused me to spend less time doing volunteer and community work and it was not until the arrival of school pictures in the spring that

I commented: "You're the only white girl in the class."

"Yes," she said.

"You never told me," I noted.

"I guess I didn't think to mention it," she finally answered.

For me, that careless acknowledgment of minority status meant that it was not a matter of concern, that she could deal with any problems, name-calling, differences that developed. It also meant that any decision to move her to a private school would be based on some gnawing nugget of racism that I had never acknowledged.

I cannot say that I have never worried about the D.C. school system or questioned its excellence. I have worked with other parents to make changes. We have frequently failed as we would have in conducting the same fights for innovation or better teaching in a suburban school system.

From my conversations with parents in both the suburbs and private academies it is clear there are problems in every system. I have found the District schools compare favorably to others in the region, especially for my middle-class child, already well-disposed to education and learning. Ample evidence that the D.C. schools do an admirable job came from a former neighbor of mine whose Army husband transferred abroad. They discovered their three children were so advanced that each of them was placed in the grade ahead.

Lois Mark Stalvey, a white author who has written two books about

her three children's experiences in Philadelphia inner-city schools, notes they learned to read and write and made the best of school resources. They succeeded because they were expected to succeed and probably would succeed just about anywhere because the deck was stacked in their favor.

I cannot say there have not been times when I've wondered about what attitudes my daughter will come away with toward her own race, as in the first grade when she finished a black history unit and asked: "Mommy, did any white people fight in the American revolution?"

There was also a moment of panic when she was chosen to be the overseer in a play on slavery:

"Why did you take such a part?" I demanded.

"Because it has the most lines," she smugly replied.

What I've learned is that whatever excesses of emphasis this black school system engages in to teach its children pride of heritage, consciousness of past accomplishments, and their potential for success, these are insignificant when compared to the white, male, mostly Anglo-Saxon history that will be taught to my children by television, books, movies, and every other cultural message-giver. Between these two unrealities, which message would I like her to come away with after 12 years of schooling?

My daughter's experiences with humanity of a different color have taught her that the essential qualities

of human beings are alike. She can discern cultural differences. She can hear speech differences. She knows the pattern of her life is different from the pattern of another child's life. But she is neither afraid of those differences nor overly impressed by them.

The D.C. school system conducts an unusual environmental camp for sixth grade students. When my daughter went she was separated from her classmates and placed in a bunk with children from many inner-city schools. The girls looked tough, they were big, many were physically developed. She was the only white girl in the camp. The first thing she told me when she returned was that some of the biggest, toughest-looking girls had cried the first night for their mothers. They missed their sisters and brothers. They were afraid of the all-encompassing darkness of the mountains. They were afraid of the sounds of the country. They had families who loved them and they wanted to go home.

Her astonishment turned to sympathy and helpfulness. Her eyes were opened to their humanity. She could ignore their rough exterior and grown-up looks and see that they, like her, were sixth grade children. She had a wonderful time.

My daughter knows that her black classmates read books and discuss them, she knows they like to draw and play music. She knows their mothers and fathers. They have pictures on their walls of grandmas and great-great-grandmas in high-

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necked dresses with a look of long ago. Their antecedents look like ours in the family picture that hangs on our dining room wall.

On many weekends my daughter travels to a nearby suburban community to visit. She has seemed to enjoy the amenities of suburban life, especially the convenience of nearby recreation. When seventh grade loomed in the future, I asked her if she would want to go to secondary school in the suburbs.

"I wouldn't want to do that," she told me. "Mommy, those kids are prejudiced."

Then she told me about the jibes she received from her suburban acquaintances about attending District schools, about their fears of even "crossing" the District line, about their racism.

Is this what my former neighbors opted for when they moved to the "better" school systems of the suburbs? I think they ignored what they didn't want to see.

They didn't want to see they had selected an all-white world over a black majority world. Their new neighbors might be hostile to blacks but that attitude was preferable to keeping their children in a black majority school system.

"I won't sacrifice my child any longer for my ideas!"

That phrase was intended to mean that avoidance of potential physical abuse and educational deficiencies outweighed the benefits of living in an integrated neighborhood.

But what they bought was racial isolation and their children's insensi-

tivity to the needs of those they could no longer see.

The tragedy of our Nation is that it is at least two nations. One, the white majority; the other, the racial minorities. Each separate, unblending, each knowing the other on the most tentative and formal levels. Neither really aware of each other at all.

It may be too harsh to say the relationship is still that of master and slave. But it can certainly be said that the relationship is that of the haves and have nots.

Implied in all the laws to achieve equality of treatment for all Americans is the belief that with equality the economic differences between us would be eradicated and the basis for our prejudices removed. But even without income differences, the prejudice remains. Our suburban communities reject black neighbors even with high incomes, good jobs, and advanced degrees.

A recent report on metropolitan school desegregation issued by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights noted that one researcher, demographer Reynolds Farley, calculates that many more black families could be expected to live in the suburbs if the only limiting factor were income.

The report states: "... if blacks retained their present income but were represented in suburbs to the same extent as whites at each income level, 43 percent of all black families in the New York City metropolitan area would live in suburbs instead of the 17 percent who actually do live there." Farley's

figures also show that income factors alone should mean that 46 percent of blacks in the Chicago area should be residing in the suburbs when in fact the actual percentage is 8.

Some have recently charged that we are setting up our own horrid, **de facto** apartheid system, both economic and racial. Instead of the blacks being relegated to the outlying suburbs and the whites given the run of the city, we have reversed the South African process and kept the black folks in the dying inner city and the white folks in the suburbs.

The higher our income, the more education we receive, the more options we have. And with those options come certain choices between values that we hold with equal fervor. Many who drop out of city public school systems do so in the name of quality education for their children.

Frequently an eloquent and decent person will stand before an audience and tell them that in some community struggle over busing, "the real issue is quality education."

Well, we may all hope and pray that quality education is what our children receive no matter what school system they attend, but the real issue is not quality education, it is integrated education.

Were quality education the "real" issue, the people of South Boston would have been thrilled by the opportunity to receive an infusion of Federal monies. They would be delighted by the new-found attention of educational experts and any improvements to their isolated, ghetto

schools that have been notorious for the low expectations and career goals of their students.

Quality education is not the issue for South Boston. They simply do not want black children in their schools.

If you were to look for the "real" issues in the busing controversy you would have to look at many realities of American life.

The real issue is jobs for the unemployed and underemployed.

The real issue is media incitement of community fears and prejudices.

The real issue is how to involve people in the political decisions that affect their daily lives.

The real issue is segregated housing supported by discriminatory lending policies, fostered by the Federal government.

The real issue is the desertion of the cities by businesses and insurance companies.

There are many "real" issues, but the courts were dealing with only one issue when they settled **Brown v. Board of Education**. They stated a legal principle that segregated education, separate education, was inherently unequal and could not be supported by public funds.

Our maintenance of a segregated school system is exacting a horrible price which we will pay in the future. The population of that future is paying it now. Some 85.3 percent of our children including the 6 percent of Spanish origin are white. The struggle over integrating our schools centers around only 13.6 percent black children. Only 0.5 percent are

American Indian. Japanese, Chinese, and Pilipino children each comprise 0.2 percent.

A comprehensive statistical report issued by the National Council of Organizations for Children and Youth as a "Bicentennial Assessment" quotes 1974 statistics to show that children in black families were three and a half times as likely to be officially poor as were white children, and that 41 percent of all black children lived in families below the poverty line as compared to 13 percent of our Nation's white children.

By keeping our children separate from each other, by accentuating their differences instead of building familiarity, we have kept them suspicious and ignorant of each other. That ignorance dooms some to early death and painful disease.

The infant mortality rate for black children is double that of white children. We feed our children differently. Some 32.7 percent of all black children suffer nutritional deficiencies as compared to 14.6 percent of white children. Three-quarters of the Nation's 1,700,000 mentally retarded children live in slums. If we continue to separate these children in segregated, urban schools they will continue to get less money, less attention from government, and make less progress up from poverty.

These facts are inescapable. They make all our rhetoric about the evils of busing and the sanctity of the neighborhood school pale by comparison. These children are

being condemned to being poor and sick and ignorant and they are the only thing that should trouble every parent in this Nation. If our separatism is dooming us and consuming our human resources, why aren't we rushing to combine our two Nations? In truth we are not only avoiding integration but those who once embraced it are denying its value.

Recently two studies were done by academics from my own community about the white experience in the majority black public schools.

Their studies dwell in morbid fascination on the latent fears and insecurities of white families. They quantify the dimly perceived changes in walk, language, and dress of white children imitating the black majority. They write about parental fear of physical or verbal abuse that they imply flows directly from the black children in the black public schools.

They deny their own daily experiences by writing about a lack of social contact between white and black families even in integrated communities.

The liberal press, perhaps to expiate the guilt of those thousands of liberals who elected not to live in an integrated community, reinterprets, or perhaps misinterprets, their studies. The moral is clear: it doesn't really matter if you live in an integrated community or bus your kids for integration—it doesn't work anyway.

My own experience in these same neighborhoods has been richer than

my wildest hopes. My friendship with my black neighbors would be unachievable in any other setting in this Nation. I am not disappointed.

My daughter is now in the seventh grade experiencing all the adolescent upheavals that one could expect.

The other day she had a street fight with a girl she has known since the third grade.

She came home flushed and angry and I detected there had been a fight. Bad words had occurred because she believed another girl was spreading rumors about her behavior.

Lapsing into ghetto/teenage talk she recreated the fight scene for me and then went to her room, badly upset. I thought about it for awhile and then the doorbell rang.

The girl with whom she had just fought was standing there. I was astonished and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"I came to see R____," she said. "I think we ought to talk it out."

The two nearly-13-year-olds were closeted in my daughter's room for a long time and when I came upstairs I found they were friends again.

"Why did you come here, M____," I asked, "that took quite a bit of courage."

"Well, I've known R____ since the third grade," she said, "we've always been friends and I knew that someone had put us up to this fight. I just couldn't go home until we had worked it out."

Let's give our children a chance to grow up, to work it out . . . together.

GROWING UP IN THE SCHOOLS



MEXICAN AMERICANS STRUGGLE
FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES



By Jan Jarboe

BUILDING A

Movement

The movement, meager as it was at its peak, was not much more than a flame in San Antonio, Tex., by the summer of 1972.

Two key Mexican American heropoliticians, a State senator and a county commissioner, had been defeated by Anglo money—and not even old, established Anglo money at that, but the new cash, the pocket change of chic land developers and maverick retailers.

The morale of the political have-nots, the angry Mejicanos, and persistent Jewish liberals was at such a low ebb that their talk over fine scotch whiskey and draft beer had reached the good-old-days level. When the alcohol quenched their boasting, the talk settled to sad-mouthed discussion of the impossibility of fighting the Good Fight in a colonial city.

One of them, a three-piece-suit man with ringleted hair, rattled off the statistics, defensively: Roughly one-third of the total San Antonio payroll comes from the Federal paycheck, making the city more dependent on the Federal Government than most urban areas except Washington, D.C.

In comparison, he said, cocking his head the way thinkers are supposed to do, only 13 per cent of the San Antonio labor force is involved in manufacturing. The city is poor—very poor; 27 per cent of the households in San Antonio reported an annual income of less than \$5,000 in the last U.S. census.

He talks faster, caught up in the magic of his

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defense. There is reason to be discouraged about the Good Fight. Really there is.

"There is a high correlation between income and ethnicity in San Antonio, don't you know? The Anglos earn the highest wage the blacks, the second highest, and the Mexican Americans, a poor third. The wealth is concentrated, very concentrated. It's with the old families, the bluebloods. The big banks and financial institutions are owned by old families, men whose grandfathers probably wore velvet smoking jackets and played polo on Sundays in the park. It's part of their destiny to maintain the strength of the ruling class, don't you see?" he asked, his abstract blue eyes moving quickly from face to face.

"Baloney," came the inevitable slow-mutter from one of the more angry brown faces around the table, a man whose anger doesn't show itself full-faced, but rises like steam off a swamp. "What did you expect the rich to do? Throw away their riches? You and your theories. You and your numbers. Talk to me about people. Talk to me about the people's institutions."

Then, the angry one spewed forth a tale of how it came to be that the significant blocks of priests in San Antonio are not native-born Mexican Americans. The church leadership had historically, he said, viewed the Mexican American with the same colonistic eyes that they had viewed the Indians during the mission era.

In early days, Spanish priests ministered to Mexican American parishes. Then, much later, when Chaing Kai-Shek lost control of China, the Belgian priests found themselves suddenly unemployed. They sought out "poor parishes" where the ministering would be familiar. They were admitted to San Antonio's West Side.

The West Side.

To get there, follow billboard advertising in San Antonio. When the fair-skinned, golden-haired boy promoting cigarettes gives way to the buttery complexion of a high-jawed Mexican American, you know you're headed in the right direction. When the neon-lit convenience stores selling milk and bread get harder to find, and you find instead "ice houses" selling bottled beer and homemade pastries, then you know you have arrived.

The West Side.

It is a place where you won't find fancy apartment complexes with party rooms and swimming pools. It is a place where you will find row after row of proudly-

kept homes with petunias in the yards and silent, angry people inside sitting in large, over-stuffed chairs. It is a place where you will find chuckholes large enough to swim in when the rains come and make rivers out of streets. It is a place with few parks; where the water pressure is so low that you can't water the yard at the same time someone is washing the dishes. It is a place where N-E-E-D stands up and screams at you as if it were spelled in bright, red letters on the tallest billboard in town.

It is here, on the West Side, that the "movement" had always been directed and where, in the summer of 1972, the despair was the most acute.

But, in the summer of 1972, the despair bottomed-out. A citizens' organization, Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), was formed. It was not an organization built to back some hero. It was formed on the N-E-E-D itself.

The bricks that built COPS, a 5,000-plus-member organization of low- to middle-income blacks and Mexican Americans that is force-feeding democracy to traditional power brokers in San Antonio, did not come from crisp, antiseptic, computer-reliant materials. The bricks that built COPS came from mud.

The first brick was laid in January 1971 when one of the West Side's most angry sons, Ernie Cortes, attended training at the late Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation in Chicago and learned how to direct his anger to build COPS.

The second brick was \$50,000. It came from an eight-member "sponsoring committee," a group of men in San Antonio, many of them church men, who came to believe that the way to meet the needs of the neighborhoods was to put the people to work fighting for themselves. Ironically, the first of the \$50,000 came not from the Catholic church, which now heavily subsidizes COPS, but from Protestant sources.

After those two bricks were laid—a trained organizer and money with which to organize—the bricks that built COPS began piling on top of one another at a rate too fast to count in a one, two, three, four style.

"I had just heard it all before," said Mrs. Beatrice Gallego, a housewife and mother of three who is the current president of COPS. "He called me 17 times before I sat down and talked to him. I finally agreed to talk just to get him off my back. He didn't try to convince me of anything. He just asked me what needed fixing in my neighborhood. I laughed and asked him what didn't need fixing."

It went on like that for more than one year. One brick at a time. Sorting out needs. Mobilizing anger. All of it was underground. The local press didn't write



one word until November 24, 1974.

That was the date of the first COPS convention. It was the first time the public was invited into the house. The organization, the public was told, would not be a toy for any ambitious politician. It would be a fighting squad of citizens single-minded in their goal to get "action" on the long-neglected issues of the neighborhoods. Action was a key word.

The structure of COPS was unveiled. Individuals cannot join COPS. Only organizations, such as churches, block clubs, civic groups, can join. There are presently 38 such organizational members. Each of the organizations pays dues, ranging from \$50 to \$2,000 depending on the size.

Cortes began the brick-by-brick process of interviewing 2,000 people on January 15, 1972. He asked ministers for the names of natural leaders in the congregations. He wanted women who had successfully organized cakewalks and bingo games. He wanted men who had pulled off baseball tournaments. He wanted young people who sang songs in elderly homes on Sunday afternoons.

The West Side of San Antonio is ablaze with such people. People who, even though they live amid need on a daily basis, are not needy in the stoop-shouldered sense of the word because they are part of what neopopulists are fond of calling a "community." The community has its roots in the Federal civil service

system, which has been a vehicle for upward mobility for Mexican Americans here, and in the Catholic church, which has given many of them a reason not to fly to the suburbs. Their neighborhoods, though neglected, are pretty much intact.

Cortes found the going rough when he confronted the community's leaders about setting up a citizens' organization that would not send heroes to city hall to fight for them but whose members would go to city hall and fight for themselves.

But there is plenty of room for individuals to star within the rigid structure of COPS. Individuals attend the annual conventions, which are not gatherings of 1960s-styled radicals but are incredibly patriotic affairs replete with red-white-and-blue crepe paper hanging from the ceiling and a high school band playing the "Star Spangled Banner."

In addition to the annual citywide convention, individuals attend the annual "area" conventions—a smaller version of the same theme—where 19 "area vice presidents" are elected.

The 19 area vice presidents and 11 officers make up the COPS steering committee which rides close herd on the organization, handling day-to-day problems and coordinating the COPS actions.

There is still more bureaucracy. Each of the member organizations elects two members and two alternates to a Delegates Congress meeting that convenes monthly to review the overall progress and to set priorities for future "actions." All of the COPS leadership works without pay.

There is also a salaried staff. Cortes was the first executive director, but he has moved to East Los Angeles to organize a similar confrontation group. In his place came Arnie Graf, who was also trained at the Alinsky school and did organizing work in Milwaukee, Wis., before coming to COPS.

It's a labyrinth of a structure, designed to keep in close contact with the neighborhoods and to detect, at a very early stage, the symptoms of a growing political ego in order to expel it from the organization. The structure, coupled with rules in the COPS constitution that prohibit any member from running for political office, has worked reasonably well. COPS has stayed clear of the elective part of the political equation. It has endorsed no candidates, claiming instead that all officeholders will be held "accountable" to the organization. But it has defeated a few candidates who were opposed outright to the COPS agenda.

The town learned something else at that first COPS convention in 1974: COPS sees itself as a group of

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people whose only power is in numbers and whose mission—the survival of the neighborhoods—is not simply right; it's divinely-inspired.

Bishop Patrick Flores, the son of a migrant farmworker and the Nation's first Mexican American prelate, told the 2,000 persons who attended the first convention: "You are here today not as supplicants with downcast eyes, not as welfare recipients, not as beggars. You are here as equals, as responsible law-abiding, tax-paying people. You are a people that with your sweat have helped shape this country, this State, and this particular city. You seek no special favor. You seek a just share of your tax monies to have a decent community."

His words, delivered slowly and clearly like fingers gliding over the keyboard of a fine piano, met absolute silence. The silence seemed to last a long time. And then a clap of applause came all at once.

That was not all. Archbishop Frances J. Furey, an Irishman who is a bit slow to join a fight but fast on his feet once in the ring, rose and said: "To some it may seem a pity that people have to form an organization like COPS in order to get social justice. I agree it is a pity. But I also must say very emphatically that in our modern society there seems to be no other way."

Furey said those words in November 1974. The business community of San Antonio paid them little mind. But nine months later, in August 1974, the established businessmen in San Antonio not only thought COPS a pity; they thought it an outrage.

COPS "actions" are not mild affairs. It is not a simple matter of bringing a citizen complaint to a local officeholder and requesting action, please. It is a matter of several hundred people confronting the officeholders; defining a problem; demanding action; and then bringing pressure to bear until the problem is solved.

Alinsky, who developed the tactic, called it "clubbing the way." He wrote: "Power has always been derived from two main sources, money and people. Lacking money, the have-nots must build power from their own flesh and blood. A mass movement expresses itself with mass tactics. Against the finesse and sophistication of the status quo, the have-nots have always had to club their way."

Clubbing their way was, at first, difficult for COPS members, who had regarded government as ineffectual, yes, but something of a sacred institution. Many have admitted experiencing fear and trembling at the prospect of shouting down elected leaders.

But a severe rainstorm on May 7, 1974, which

forced at least 150 West Side residents to leave their flooded homes and seek overnight shelter, angered the fledgling organization enough to chase away the fear.

When it rains in San Antonio, the West Side becomes a holding pond for water flowing from the newer, heavily-developed suburban neighborhoods on the city's North Side. When the rain stops, water stands for days in the streets.

The rain kept coming that summer of 1974 and finally, in August, COPS confronted the city manager to "do something" about the flooded conditions.

The confrontation took place not in the plush city hall office of the city manager, as had been the traditional approach, but on COPS' own turf: The hot, humid auditorium of a West Side high school.

The 500 COPS members present were not shy. They were irate. They demanded action on drainage improvements in the neighborhoods. They told the city manager they were not interested in long-winded explanations; he could keep his responses to "simple yes or no answers."

The city manager, overwhelmed at the sight of 500 angry faces shouting him down, obeyed.

Ray Kaiser, an early leader of COPS, showed slides depicting the havoc that torrential rainstorms had caused in the neighborhoods and told the city manager: "Scenes like these have been there for years and are still the same. We have decided to not take it any more. We have decided to make our problem, your problem."

The city manager said he could not meet demands for an immediate start-up on five drainage projects.

"To give a yes and not be able to deliver would be a fraud," said the city manager, desperately. "I can't do it."

When COPS asked who could do it, the city manager replied that only the City Council could appropriate the money.

It was on to city hall.

When the 500 COPS members took their demands to the City Council the following week, an interesting thing happened: It wasn't the COPS crowd, many of them women who had never seen the inside of city hall, who were uneasy. It was the council members, sitting in their swivel chairs on an elevated platform, who found themselves awash in confusion.

The COPS members did their thing. They took over the meeting. They ignored the gayeling by the mayor. They broke all the time-honored rules about how citizens are supposed to address the council on a sign-in



basis, one at a time. They shouted. They cried. Their children carried placards.

The organization's spokesperson, Mrs. Hector Aleman, a slightly built woman who turned out to have a very loud voice, did not go to the microphone alone. When she stood up to speak, the entire COPS delegation rose to their feet. Some crowded close to Mrs. Aleman, offering psychological support. The entire council chamber was wall-to-wall people. The council members were intimidated. The press gaped open-mouthed and sat with pens poised to notebooks.

"We are here," Mrs. Aleman said, speaking slowly, "to demand action. We don't want excuses."

She told the story of her neighborhood, a cluster of homes built around Holy Family Catholic Church. She said every time it rained even a half-inch, residents had to shovel water out of living rooms.

"How would you feel getting out of bed in the morning and stepping into a river right in your house," Mrs. Aleman said, screaming by now.

She then pointed out that it was not as though the city hadn't recognized the problem. The Mayberry Street project, the one affecting her area, had been safely tucked away on the city's master plan since 1945. Nobody ever saw fit to fund it.

Mayor Charles Becker, a man who had one year

earlier defeated the political party that had held the city in sway for 20 years, shook his head, muttering something about the sorry way things had been handled at city hall. He stared directly at Mrs. Aleman and said: "You mean to tell me that this project of yours had been on the city's list that long and never received a thin dime. That's a damn shame."

(Much later, when Becker was no longer mayor, he became one of COPS's most articulate enemies. He accused them of being "rude, of trying to establish mob-rule at city hall, and of trying to force the city to adopt a master plan for growth that would hare-lip every cow in Texas.")

But then, the mayor's gaze continued for a time on the COPS crowd and finally he announced that something would be done. He told the city staff to find a way to fund the project and to find it in less than 4 hours. He told the council and the COPS delegation to meet back at city hall later that very night to deal with the problem.

Staff came up with a plan. The council voted unanimously to fund the Mayberry Project. COPS walked away victorious, convinced that Alinsky's "politics of confrontation" had worked and that it would work again.

Three months later, COPS egged the council into

calling a special \$46.8 million bond election to fund 15 drainage projects. For the first time in the city's history, the press did not write a "West Side Stays Home on Election Day" story. COPS hauled its people to the polls in school buses, chauffeured by parish priests. The bond proposal passed overwhelmingly.

To understand COPS, objectively, one can simply look at the long list of victories:

- It has racked up \$100 million worth of commitments for public funding of neighborhood projects.
- It has forced the city water board to abandon extension policies that encouraged sprawling growth outside the city's boundaries and to give first commitment to replacing 250 miles of substandard water mains in the central city.
- It aligned itself with an environmental group to force a referendum on a zoning decision that would have allowed construction of the largest shopping mall in the southwest over the city's underground water supply system. The zoning decision was reversed at the polls.
- It blew out of the water a decision by the board of trustees of the San Antonio School District to build a \$1.6 million administration building. A new board was elected—a board that agreed with COPS that the money could best be used refurbishing out-of-date school rooms.
- It has won literally hundreds of housekeeping victories. Stop lights have been put in. Trash has been picked up. Junkyard owners have been discouraged from locating their operations only in poor sections of town. Pedestrian bridges have been built across railroad tracks.

But to understand COPS, emotionally, one must examine the leadership.

Father Albert Benavides, who grew up in West Side housing projects as one of six children of a packing-house worker, is probably the most angry COPS leader and consequently, the most popular among the membership.

He was assigned to St. Timothy Catholic Church in 1973, becoming the second native Mexican American priest in the city to lead a West Side parish.

His masses are in Spanish and his sermons often are sprinkled with examples of local political injustice to prove his Biblical point. There is guitar and drum-playing in the services. Parishioners are regularly reminded to make sure they and their friends are registered to vote.

While some of the COPS leaders struggled with Alinsky's rules for the politics of confrontation, Benavides took to them instinctively.

He has had a number of City Water Board and City Council meetings recessed on him in mid-shout. He even had one council member challenge him to "take off that collar and fight like a man."

That kind of reaction is music to Benavides' ears. He is convinced that Alinsky was right when he wrote that a good tactic is one your people enjoy. They enjoy defending a priest.

He is good at ridicule. Consider the following dialogue at a city council meeting:

Mayor Lila Cockrell: "You asked me a particular question and I know that there are perhaps other council members who would like to speak, and also there may be other citizens and so I don't want to monopolize you."

Father Benavides: "That's all right. This is our time, isn't it?"

Mayor Cockrell: "Yes, it is."

Father Benavides: "So, you may continue with your remarks, Mrs. Cockrell."

Councilman Bob Billa: "Father, let me say . . ."

Father Benavides: "Sir, you are out of order; Mayor Cockrell has the floor."

Benavides doesn't mind the public criticism of mixing politics and the parish. He expected that. But if you want to hit him where he lives, tell him that COPS is "dependent" upon him.

He will flatly deny it and launch into a tirade about how the organization's structure is expressly designed to prohibit one person from becoming indispensable.

Andres Sarabia, a former president of COPS, is not a stand-up-and-shout kind of person. But he has been known to do just that.

He is a computer programmer at Kelly Air Force Base, a man who has worked within the civil service system for 19 years. He and his wife have two sons, live in a modest home, and like thousands of other San Antonians are good Catholics.

Sarabia is an understated sort of guy. He doesn't ask questions loudly, but he asks the pertinent ones.

There was the day that Sarabia led a group of COPS members, mostly women, to the State capitol in Austin to participate in a public hearing on the State's water policies.

As is their general practice, COPS took over the meeting. It was a procedure that the bureaucrats in Austin found unfamiliar and distasteful.

Sarabia refused to be intimidated and demanded answers to their questions.

The chairman recessed the meeting in an attempt

to end the confrontation. He rose and walked into the hallway.

Sarabia and his flock followed him into the hall. They insisted he answer the questions.

The chairman refused and stalked off to lunch.

Sarabia and the ladies followed him to lunch, standing over his table as he ate, demanding answers to their questions.

When asked about the incident later, Sarabia said: "Do you think anybody would arrest 100 middle-aged Mexican American women and a big mouth male?"

He is often asked if COPS will ever become violent, since many of the organization's actions seem to border on eruption. Sarabia has replied: "Violence comes out of desperation, powerlessness. We won't become violent because we have power. COPS is a lesson in democracy. We aren't used to it and the politicians aren't used to it. That's why it makes them so uncomfortable."

Mrs. Beatrice Gallego, currently at the helm of COPS, has defeated a severe case of housewife timidity in order to push and prod the organization to find "pressure points" within the political system.

When COPS was in its infant stage, Mrs. Gallego lived a quiet but active life as a devoted wife and mother of three in a West Side house which, in fact, is to her more of a shrine than a place to live. Her husband, Gilbert, works in a hardware store and has put his carpentry skills to work adorning their home.

She was a member of the ladies council at her parish church and president of the PTA at her children's elementary school. She did substitute teaching from time to time. She was, in a phrase, a "perfect mother."

When she finally did become active in COPS through her church, she was known as "the quiet one who does all the research."

One of her early major efforts was in forcing the city to adopt a master plan for libraries that would provide facilities for West Side families as well as the more affluent North Side readers.

She could rattle off drainage projects like she was calling a bingo game; she knew more proposed park projects than the city's own director of parks, and if someone called attention to a chuckhole on Colima Street she'd know instantly how bad the situation was.

When Sarabia stuck by the COPS constitution and stepped down as president after two years, there was mild surprise that Mrs. Gallego sought the organization's highest office.

But she has grown in the job.

She quickly let the city's mayor, Lila Cockrell, know there were no bonds of "sisterhood" between Mrs. Cockrell and herself.

She has warmed up to the COPS membership, telling them again and again that "COPS is the most effective citizens organization in the Nation" and cautioning them: "When you do the right thing, there will always be those who try to beat you, ridicule you, and drag you down. Justice is a hard fight."

At a public hearing on a proposed growth sketch that will discourage the expenditure of public funds to support urban sprawl, Mrs. Gallego looked the mayor right in the eye and complained that when COPS speaks out business interests in San Antonio label them as "radicals, communists, people who have been trained in Chicago."

"But I noticed that when a friend of the monied interests spoke out, you called him an 'urban expert.' We from COPS don't care much for labels," Mrs. Gallego said, icily. She was rewarded with enthusiastic applause from her troops.

The days of mild PTA meetings and cakewalks seemed a life time ago.

What will become of this foot-stomping, rabble-rousing organization that the executive director of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce has called a "group of egalitarians"?

COPS says it is here to stay.

"COPS is permanent," said Father Benavides, "I am amazed at the networks within the organization. The people are dependent upon it. It seems to move at five different levels at one time. The networks were always there but we never had a vehicle of expression."

COPS has proved that it has vote-getting ability far past the 5,000 people who attend citywide conventions. It proved it in the November 1974 drainage bond election. It proved it in the January 1976 referendum on the issue of building a super-mall over the city's water supply source. It proved it in January 1977 when the city voted, with COPS help, to change from a system of electing council members at-large to electing them from 10 single-member districts. And, it is on its way to proving it in the current city council elections with "central city" candidates favored over "pro-North Side growth" candidates.

The "opposition" to COPS—developers and bankers with notes on developers—hasn't yet found a successful avenue of attack.

The "movement" is no longer a match flame in San Antonio. It is a bonfire.

READING & VIEWING

COMMISSION REPORTS

School Desegregation: The Courts and Suburban Migration. The papers and comments presented by scholars at a consultation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held December 8, 1975. Topics covered include suburbanization, "white flight," and the role of the courts and Congress in school desegregation. *208 pp.*

Reviewing a Decade of School Desegregation 1966-1975. Staff report based on a national survey of the attitudes of school superintendents toward desegregation. The report correlates this information with demographic data to provide a comprehensive picture of experience with school desegregation. *140 pp.*

Last Hired, First Fired: Layoffs and Civil Rights. An examination of the effects of seniority as applied to layoffs on minority and women workers. Contains findings and recommendations. *89 pp.*

The State of Civil Rights: 1976. Reviews developments in civil rights, with mixed results. Contains findings and recommendations. *41 pp.*

Statement on Metropolitan School Desegregation. Recounts the barriers to school desegregation that is limited to city boundaries and analyzes the feasibility

of a metropolitan solution and the legal principles involved. *119 pp.*

School Desegregation in Colorado Springs, Colo. Case study of the impact of various local policies, practices, and programs on school desegregation. *20 pp.*

The Challenge Ahead: Equal Opportunity in Referral Unions. Reports on discriminatory practices by referral unions and on the Federal role in bringing the unions into compliance with equal employment opportunity standards. Includes findings and recommendations. *291 pp.*

Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools. Evaluates desegregation in a variety of school districts throughout the country, using data compiled during the last 20 years, and attempts to clarify the issues surrounding busing. *163 pp.*

Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future. Examines the condition of Puerto Ricans, focusing on education, employment, and income, and analyzes the failure of Federal programs to meet Puerto Rican needs. Includes findings and recommendations. *170 pp.* (Also available in Spanish. *190 pp.*)

A Guide to Federal Laws and Regulations Prohibiting Sex Discrimination. (Revised edition.) Summarizes Federal laws, policies, and regulations banning sex discrimination, and tells how to file complaints. 1976. 189 pp.

Making the Constitution Work for All Americans. Reports proceedings of a southern regional civil rights conference held in Atlanta, Ga., on April 16-18, 1975, and sponsored by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. 135 pp.

SAC REPORTS

Working with Your School (Texas Advisory Committee). Handbook with chapters on legal rights of students and parents, how to influence school decisions, how to evaluate a school, Texas State education agencies and laws, and how to file complaints. 118 pp.

Policed by the White Male Minority (Florida Advisory Committee). Covers recruitment, hiring, training, and promotion of police officers in Miami and Dade County, and examines the internal review process of complaints against the police and police-community relations. 97 pp. plus appendices.

Justice in Flagstaff: Are These Rights Inalienable? (Arizona Advisory Committee). Outlines discriminatory treatment suffered by American Indians as evidenced by unnecessary arrest, unnecessary requirement of bond, failure to notify defendants of their rights, and lack of court interpreters, among other problems. 57 pp. plus appendices.

In the Gray Shadow: Parole in Nevada (Nevada Advisory Committee). A study of how parole works in Nevada and what can be done to make it work better. 52 pp.

Civil Rights and the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Volume II: A Comparison with Model Cities (Michigan Advisory Committee). The report finds that low-income and minority citizens have fewer opportunities to affect decisionmaking under the Community Development Act than under the model cities program, with adverse results. 132 pp.

Civil Rights and the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Volume III: The Chippewa People of Sault Ste. Marie (Michigan Advisory Committee). A report on discrimination against the American Indian Community of Marshunk in Sault Ste. Marie, in the provision of housing and municipal services. 94 pp.

How Far Have We Come? (Iowa Advisory Committee). Details deplorable housing conditions and inadequate services available to Iowa migrant farmworkers along with the difficulties inherent in leaving farmwork for other employment in Iowa. 93 pp.

State Administration of Bilingual Education—Si o No? (California Advisory Committee). Documents the failure of the California State department of education to ensure equal educational opportunities to non- and limited-English speaking children. 100 pp.

Access to the Legal Profession in Colorado by Minorities and Women (Colorado Advisory Committee). Reports on obstacles preventing women and minorities from becoming licensed attorneys. 108 pp.

Access to the Medical Profession in Colorado by Minorities and Women (Colorado Advisory Committee). Examines preparation for medical school, admissions, learning opportunities in medical school, and appointments to residency and faculty positions. 91 pp.

A Study of Adult Corrections in Louisiana (Louisiana Advisory Committee). Covers all facets of prison life, including housing conditions, work assignments, health care, legal services, education and training, etc. 159 pp.

The Media in Montana: Its Effects on Minorities and Women (Montana Advisory Committee). Examines the portrayal in television and newspapers of minorities and women, as well as their employment in visible and decisionmaking positions. 70 pp.

Hispanic Participation in Manpower Programs in Newark, New Jersey (New Jersey Advisory Committee). Reports on the extent of participation by Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic persons as advisors, clients, and staff of manpower programs funded through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA). 60 pp.

Equal Employment Opportunity at the State University of New York (New York State Advisory Committee). Reviews the status of minorities and women in professional positions at SUNY and the progress achieved by the university's affirmative action plan since 1971. 69 pp.

Crisis and Opportunity: Education in Greater Kansas City (Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees). An assessment of the problems and prospects for education in Metropolitan Kansas City, with attention to desegregation, quality of education, and the problems of a united approach by several governmental jurisdictions. 142 pp. plus appendices.



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