

URBAN RENEWAL

and

CIVIL RIGHTS

by

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Distributed by:

Students for a Democratic Society
119 Fifth Avenue
Room 308
New York, New York

and its

Economic Research and Action Project
1100 East Washington
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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URBAN RENEWAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS*

by Stanley B. Winters

Urban Renewal and Civil Rights--what does one thing have to do with the other? Few persons are chaining themselves to radiator pipes to prevent demolition of Negro housing for new luxury apartments or shopping centers. Few civil rights groups picket urban renewal sites or housing authority offices to demand changes in official policies. The lack of activity indicates that while the civil rights movement has broadened its range to include many issues in American life it has not yet tackled urban renewal. Yet it is the Negro more than any other citizen who has felt the impact of urban renewal. Since 1949 renewal has funneled over \$10 billion in public and private funds into the clearance and redevelopment of "blighted" areas in United States cities. Up till the end of 1963 a total of 160,000 families (about 500,000 persons) had been displaced from over 700 project areas in the United States and Puerto Rico. Nearly two-thirds were Negroes. In the next decade about one million more families are due to be displaced. At least half of them will be Negroes¹.

The Negro, because of his recent migration to industrial areas and confinement to housing ghettos in central cities, is feeling the process of dislocation more in proportion to his numbers than the white. Whereas in 1900, 22.6 per cent of the nation's nonwhites (95 out of 100 "nonwhites" are Negroes) lived in urban communities, in 1960 there were 72.4 per cent. Their number in 1960 included about 10.3 million in the central cities, or a gain of 63 per cent over 1950.² The involuntary removal of large numbers of Negroes from their homes, businesses, churches and communities through the operations of a joint private and public program makes urban renewal a civil rights problem of enormous magnitude.

To the uninitiated, urban renewal appears to be a matter of public laws, private interests, bureaucracies, physical structures, programs and philosophies. The basic action which launched it was the Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 117, 81st Congress), which declared it to be national policy that

"the general welfare and security of the nation...require ...the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family..." An urban renewal project is defined under Section 110 of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, as undertakings and activities of a local public agency in an urban renewal area for the elimination and for the prevention of the development of slums and blight, and may involve slum clearance and redevelopment in urban renewal area...or rehabilitation or conservation...

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or any combination or part thereof...

Because urban renewal expropriates houses and land and forces people to move, it is a lengthy and complicated affair. A project takes about five years to reach the demolition stage and several more before completion. In contrast, school boycotts, sit-ins, picket lines, and rent strikes are relatively brief, dramatic, and colorful actions that attract people and receive good press and TV coverage. Talking urban renewal in the face of such competition is like shouting into the wind. The Administration of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, which directs all federally assisted housing, mortgage financing and urban renewal activities, is Dr. Robert C. Weaver, a nationally known critic of discrimination in housing long before he took office under President Kennedy. Dr. Weaver stumps the country trying to convince businessmen and officials that they have a responsibility toward the low-income families uprooted by renewal. He also tells the uprooted themselves that urban renewal "is the only major operation involving the displacement of people that assumes both a legal and moral responsibility for what happens to them."³ Dr. Weaver's presence may tend to restrain some civil rights groups from subjecting urban renewal to close scrutiny, but there are weightier reasons to account for this.

Urban renewal is a primary source of government and construction jobs in an economy where many jobs are vanishing. Its growth in the past fifteen years has been probably been more explosive than that of any other domestic program. The number of Negroes in government employment has risen 500 per cent since 1940 to over one million in 1960. Negroes comprised 5.1 per cent of government employees (federal, state, and local) in 1940, 12.1 per cent in 1962. Hundreds of Negroes unable to break into the arms industry have gained housing and renewal jobs ranging from janitors and maintenance men to surveyors, draftsmen, relocation officials and project managers. In some cities Negroes are winning building trades apprenticeships on renewal sites. Local officials, faced with demonstrations and unfavorable publicity, have begun to implement President Kennedy's Executive Order on Equal Opportunity in Housing (November 20, 1962) which banned discrimination by lenders, builders and public agencies in federal programs. In Newark, New Jersey, the civil rights movement and Rutgers University officials recently opened new jobs to Negroes in the work force erecting the new University Law School on urban renewal land. The engineer in charge of the city's 1700-acre meadowland redevelopment project and the executive secretary of the central planning board are Negroes. Government is accommodating to rising protest by opening jobs to Negroes in a program that heavily affects them. It would be interesting to study whether the renewed areas support more or fewer people--through housing, business, and jobs--they did before renewal, and how many belong to minority groups; in other words, whether the job-generating capacity of renewal depends upon the ongoing momentum of the program or upon its results.

Few of the Negroes employed in the renewal process make a

basic decisions on the use or re-use of land and space. These decisions stay in the hands of the omnipotent executive director of the local housing and redevelopment agency, the agency's commissioners, the mayor and councilmen of the municipality--all, with rare exceptions, non-Negroes. The commercial and financial interests who work closely with these officials are also represented by non-Negroes. The tendency of the decision-makers is to accept the advice of their expert staff headed by the executive director. Harold Kaplan says that in Newark since 1948 "There is no case on record of a staff proposal being rejected or modified by the commissioners, and there are very few cases of split votes."⁴ The same holds true for the municipal council. C. Wright Mills has commented that, "The main forces that consciously shape the structure of the city today are private commercial interests, along with the presumably public interests that are more or less beholden to them."⁵ If Mills is correct, then the struggle for Negro political representation has properly taken precedence over any campaign on urban renewal. But the two will have to be linked sooner or later. Urban renewal decisions are both economic and political. The future character of the big cities is being shaped before our eyes. Whole electoral constituencies are being swept away by the bulldozers. The growing Negro concentration may never reach its maximum political potential⁶ if it is relentlessly harassed, disorganized, and displaced by clearance. If the ghetto were truly eliminated by urban renewal, then the urgency for realizing this potential would be reduced; but it is not, it is merely displaced to form again.

Also mitigating against renewal's having become a civil rights issue is the aura of legality and inevitability that surrounds the program. The old saw that "You can't fight City Hall" is now reinforced by the federal government and private enterprise. The civil rights movement thrives on victories. Few are quickly or easily won in urban renewal. To stick with a project from start to finish takes expertise, sitzfleisch and cash, all scarce commodities. Even before news of an impending project breaks in the press much veiled maneuvering has already occurred among the business, political and bureaucratic elites, with the last often holding the upper hand.⁷ The public announcement thus gives the impression of a fait accompli, leaving neighborhood and civil rights groups off balance, defensive, discouraged.

Urban renewal may involve no greater active mass participation than any other federal program, but no other program reaches so forcefully and intimately into the civilian existence, and no other is officially required to develop conscious citizen participation. However, only among the competing power interests is there any sort of open-ended debate. At the top levels the public receives merely token or indirect representation. Some critics advocate public referendums on renewal projects. To require a referendum, as Mississippi and Alabama presently do, could place the whole program in jeopardy, whereas even these critics feel that something should be done, only differently.

The process of acquiring land, applying for funds, and drawing up plans seems interminable to those caught in the renewal net. State laws require that municipalities declare areas to be slum or "blighted" before they can seek federal aid. Public hearings are required at various intervals. At the initial hearing the local public agency must show that the area in question is in fact "blighted" as defined by law. Opponents may rebut. Invariably the area is found to be "blighted", for the statutes are quite loose in their definitions⁸ and the power structure usually mobilizes with its civic allies to demand a "yes" vote. When this hurdle has been passed there is a public hearing on the plan for re-use and development of the "blighted" area. Few citizens or groups at these hearings know their rights and resources. In Newark, the chairman of the planning board used to impose a five-minute gag-rule on speakers, that is, speakers from the citizenry liable to oppose a "blighted" declaration, not the officials who were requesting one. Not until 1961 was the chairman challenged by an alert attorney in behalf of a neighborhood group and forced to permit unlimited testimony as required by law.⁹ And not until the following year was the Newark Housing Authority ordered by a court of law to open to public scrutiny the individual housing surveys compiled in proposed "blighted" areas, materials which it had hitherto kept confidential and refused to open to citizens. But each of these victories was won only through local awareness buttressed by expert help. Among the few communities that have hired experts to analyze officials programs are Cooper Square in New York, Clinton Hill in Newark, Woodlawn in Chicago and Powelton in Philadelphia.¹⁰ To raise funds and hire experts are tedious tasks that understandably turn some activists to greener pastures. But without expert analysis of the official plans, not only from the bird's-eye view of the power structure but also from the worm's-eye view of the local community, the opposition generally voices one big protest and then fizzles out.

The juicy federal funds available to cities that want urban renewal are so tempting for local officials to resist. Federal aid mainly involves sharing net project costs with municipalities on a 2-1 basis (3-1 in cities up to 50,000 people). Money is also available for preliminary surveys, land-use and planning studies, relocation assistance, loans, and other needs. More than one local politician glances nervously at the strong link Washington is forging with his home town. Since 1950, a vast bureaucracy, public and private, has gathered to feed at the renewal trough. Several mayors with labor support were elected during the last decade on platforms supporting renewal. (Clark in Philadelphia, Lee in New Haven, and Carlin in Newark come to mind.) In New Jersey dozen of municipalities have abandoned the commission and other older forms of government in favor of the non-partisan strong mayor-council type that can push through the ordinances needed to enable the city to qualify for federal renewal funds. In many cities one also notes the formation of business strategy groups concerned with revitalizing the downtown areas; for example, the Cleveland Development Foundation, the Greater Baltimore Committee, and the Greater Newark Development Council. These groups maintain expert staffs

and feed redevelopment ideas to official agencies.

The new business groups and city administrations have supported massive clearance in the downtown core as prelude to modernization and realignment of streets, public utilities, and shopping areas. They believe that these steps will make the city competitive with the burgeoning suburban shopping centers. Urban renewal is a necessary vehicle for assisting this costly process. By emphasizing the wholesale clearance of existing structures, renewal remains comfortably with the American economic ethic of accelerated obsolescence: capital would not remain in fixed, cumbersome, stagnant, non-competitive forms. The insurance companies were among the first to recognize the value of long-range investment in urban real estate.¹¹ However, not all businessmen were so farseeing. It has taken an enormous urban renewal subsidy from government in the post-World War Two era plus a population explosion to awaken the holders of landed and commercial capital to the potential profits arising from the relative scarcity and redevelopment of urban real estate. "Urban renewal is to the community what new product development is to industry," says one advocate.¹³ "Urban renewal creates more wealth. It turns over more dollars. It pays its own way on a long-term investment basis," says another.¹² Another man sees renewal in an even broader light:

This is bigger than housing problem alone. This is the structure on which the American economy is based, which is shifting under our very eyes... This, after all, is the payoff of all renewal efforts--the situation under which private capital will flow back into the cities and restore life and vibrancy and activity, and push blood through urban veins.¹⁴

According to Jason R. Nathan, regional director of the Urban Renewal Administration in Philadelphia, in one New Jersey project a federal investment of \$800,000 and a local investment of \$400,000 generated \$5 million in private redevelopment and returned 600 percent more in taxes from the project area than before.¹⁵ Under urban renewal, government becomes both a consumer and a financier of land and housing in order to enable capital to expand. Thus there passes from the realm of free enterprise into the world of the mixed economy the last of the holdouts--real estate.

The new municipal administration with their emphasis on urban renewal politics have not provided the Negro with a full measure of representation. In a direct participatory sense this is well illustrated by Newark, where the sole Negro among ten officials elected after the change of government in 1954 remains the only member of his race to have served in office, although Negroes today comprise over 40 per cent of the population of the city. Some mayors who gained office on pledges to consider "the human side of urban renewal" have lost their resolve once in power. They cannot ignore the federal funds needed to bolster a sagging local economy and, incidentally, to fatten patronage rolls. These infusions somewhat balance embarrassing losses in tax revenue suffered by many cities when cleared project land lies idle for years because developers back out or haggle for better terms on land costs and

uture taxes. Urban renewal has expanded the patronage available to City Hall just when Negroes are demanding more government jobs.¹⁶ In the scramble for a share of the prizes, the mayor (or sometimes the executive director of the local redevelopment agency) mediates among the various elements vying for jobs and contracts: one firm vs. another, the downtown vs. the neighborhood, big business vs. small business. The city administration, surrounded by satrapies and dependencies, becomes a factor of great importance in the lives and fortunes of many people and in the economy of the region. The mayor is forced to compete for available funds against other cities attracted by renewal. Among the local participants in this system there develop implicit understandings and methods of accommodation, one of them being never to air disagreements in public where the cities image might be damaged.¹⁷ It is short shrift for dissenters under such a setup. Open critics who will not play the game are assaulted by the power structure. Community groups which struggle in such a whirlpool often mistake minor successes for major victories. A minor success may be the substitution of low-rent for high-rent housing on part of a site; the incorporation of new safety features into public housing; the redesigning of a shopping plaza to allow some of the demolished small businesses to relocate, rents permitting. One of these modifications, won after bitter and exhausting struggle, alters the basic character of the city's master plan for redevelopment, of which most citizens are unaware.

Once the public hearings are over, the private developers brought in, the plans "firmed up," and the contracts signed there is little that the community can do to stop the bulldozers. The preliminaries have taken several years, demolition takes a few days. In a few days, a Negro ghetto may now be levelled, often an area of mixed old houses and old buildings. But also gone are many rehabilitable structures, community centers, street corner haunts, churches, and various informal mechanisms of social control and, above all, the political organizations with their network of fraternal and defensive relations¹⁸--things alien to the administrative mind.

Only in the last few years have agencies acknowledged the massive clearance has not eliminated slums and ghettos but merely transferred them to adjacent fringe neighborhoods. Some agencies are now experimenting with "vest-pocket" clearance and others with rehabilitation of salvable structures, but these are still isolated cases. By the end of 1962, 218,000 dwelling units had been demolished by urban renewal and only 25,000 units had been rehabilitated. Rehabilitation, which extends the life of old housing capital, is anathema to many officials and city planners. It is selective and individualistic; it requires close and cooperative working relationships with small property owners and tenants; its economic and job-generating impact is uncertain and protracted. The overall effect of clearance due to urban renewal, highway construction and other public actions has been to reduce the supply of available low cost housing.¹⁹ As of December, 1961, ground had been broken for only 46,000 new dwelling units, mainly high rental, in urban renewal project areas. Under such conditions of diminishing supply, the dislocated tenant is actually robbed of income, for he tends

to pay a higher rent in his new quarters than before.²⁰ Although some claim that many of these dislocated families may be enjoying better housing after moving, there is enough evidence to contest this generalization. In the new location the family is often further from work, child care facilities and place of worship. Urban renewal provides no compensation for tenants beyond minimal moving expenses. The dislocated slum dweller, as Staughton Lynd says, is the new forgotten man of urban America."²¹

In the case of the small tenant-businessman whose trade depends upon neighborhood good-will the loss due to dislocation is irrevocable. The Negro-run corner grocery or cleaning store is swept with its white-run counterparts, only a few to survive in other areas. Among Negroes urban renewal has won endorsement from only a small segment, primarily those owning slum properties or receiving jobs and moluments from the program. The ministers, both colored and white, with some notable exceptions, have stayed away from the issue. Most Negroes have reacted to dislocation with apathetic resentment other than active opposition; yet what big-city opposition there has been has almost always been Negro-based. Frequent moving has been a feature of Negro life in recent years, more than one-third of all nonwhite households having moved during the two and a half years which preceded the 1960 census. Hundreds of thousands of these families occupy low-rent public housing, which is now used for relocation purposes, or depend on other types of public subsidies for survival. In Chicago about 100,000 persons or 3 per cent of the city's population live in public housing; in New York 67,000 or 7 per cent; in Newark 37,000 or 9 per cent. Most dislocated families reject public housing, and those lowest on the social scale are usually ineligible. The effect of these subsidies is to make their recipients hesitant to join a struggle for civil rights they have rarely enjoyed. For many occupants public housing has become the end of the road, "a type of institutional support, which they need," rather than the temporary way-station to a better life which it once was.²²

The greatest resistance to dislocation has come from Negro and white small homeowners caught in the "blight" declarations as project boundaries expand from the original inner core out to the ringes. These people are irked at having to move again, often having lately relocated from the center of the city. They may possess little equity in their heavily mortgaged homes, have little chance of purchasing elsewhere at comparable prices, and face problems of mortgage financing due to advanced age.²³ Most displaced families move on their own to neighborhoods within a one-mile radius of their former homes. Local prejudices, low incomes and discriminatory realty practices limit their mobility. The racial and economic ghetto, set in motion by urban renewal and reinforced by n-migration from rural areas, thus tends to shift like a mass of living protoplasm rather to fragment equally in all directions. To reply that if these families had accepted relocation assistance they would have had a chance of settling in a racially mixed area is to forget that the racial "mix" is of brief duration as more of the uprooted move from the city's core.

Official pronouncements today hail urban renewal as a cure to a host of social ills including poverty. But the perpetuation of the ghetto is the Achilles heel of the program. Federal regulations now prohibit the use of public funds to promote discrimination in any form. However, the displacement of thousands of low-income and Negro families by massive clearances is helping to preserve one of the major causes and symptoms of poverty, deprivation, and inequality--ghetto housing.²⁴ Federal agencies have been slow to insist that localities enforce the regulations, but under the general impact of the civil rights movement some have begun to crack down. The civil rights movement itself clearly has not attacked the ominously emerging phenomenon of urban resegregation in housing in the vigorous, systematic manner with which it tackled segregation in the public schools.

Under present conditions, building a civil rights coalition to win a revision in current politics in a more humane, people-entered direction will not be easy. Urban renewal advances under a protecting umbrella of favorable reports and editorials in the press.²⁵ Editors tend to regard redevelopment as progressive and critics as obstructive. They long for the return of the white middle class to the rising high-rent housing, for the revival of downtown commerce and the restoration of in-city newspaper circulation. These aspirations are called "a new dimension to urban living,"²⁶ and various other things. Liberals, both urban and suburban, are loathe to fight against urban renewal. Many liberals see it simply as an extension of the idealistic New Deal housing programs of the 1930's, and obtaining funds and help from them will be difficult. One New Jersey attorney, noted for his handling of police brutality and housing discrimination cases, refused to undertake a lawsuit which challenged the legality of "blight" proceedings that would have opened the door to a plan by which 18,000 persons, four-fifths of them Negroes, would have been dislocated. He held that no civil rights issue was involved, that the proposed total reuse of the 250-acre site for light industry was a forward step.²⁷ Liberals back renewal because it conjurs up a vision of the rational, planned city. "it's the only tool we have," they say, "and we've got to work with it." In the absence of constructive alternative programs their argument has substance.

Even if liberals had a desire to oppose present policies, they would be stifled in their reaction to the assault on urban renewal from conservative quarters. This assault initially came from chambers of commerce and associations of realtors and industrialists, which saw in renewal merely another case of "creeping socialism" through government acquisition, resale and subsidy of land. Cooler, more prudent elements in the business and financial communities in the early 1950's lauched the American Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods-(ACTION). With Ford Foundation help they began a nationwide public relations campaign to win cooperatin from businessmen and all property owners. The reluctance of large sections of business to enter the renewal field made them dependent upon the bureaucracies in local housing and planning authorities, who got the

jump by gathering the legal and technical know-how essential to running the program. Today the opposition that lingers within the affluent community comes mainly from local real estate interests, who decry the disappearance of saleable properties through mass demolition to the advantage of a handful of big brokers, from the U.S. Chambers of Commerce (but not from most of its local affiliates), and from the conservative right. The right fears the loss of its political base among small property holders in the city. It holds that urban renewal breeds favoritism and corruption, violates property rights, expands public housing with all its evils, foists federal schemes upon hapless municipalities and threatens the American tradition of local self-government--all at the taxpayer's expense.²⁸ These arguments should not be lightly dismissed, especially the one on corruption, for which there is continuing evidence.²⁹ The right emphasizes a fragment of the American Dream that the Negro middle class has clasped to its bosom: individual home ownership. The potency of this dream can be appreciated on week-ends when Negro property owners tend hedges and lawns as diligently as their neighbors, or when they unite to resist encroachments by undesirable intruders into their neighborhood. The rightist critique serves to detach liberals from campaigns against confiscatory aspects of urban renewal.

Organized labor, in contrast, takes little interest in renewal save as a source of jobs. The industrial unions, preoccupied with the struggle over the effects of automation, do not perceive how renewal affects them.³⁰ They are deceived by its outward dynamism and facade of social concern. The active labor supporters come from the building trades, who have long favored such job-generating mass dislocation operations as highways and urban renewal. By and large, labor's representatives on the various private economic development committees and public redevelopment agencies have been no more distinguished for humanism, originality and individuality than other members.

Several generalizations and conclusions below are offered for discussion:

1. Modern technology and the cybernation revolution make possible the realization of the goal set forth in the Housing Act of 1949: "A decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family...." But urban renewal, on much of the evidence, helps to prevent this goal from being realized. It aggravates the shortage of housing, especially for minority and low-income families.

2. Renewal is part of society's post-World War Two response to changes in large cities: decline of downtown commerce and real estate, movement of the white middle class to the suburbs, heavy migration of Negroes from rural areas; traffic congestion; accumulation of surplus capital in land-investment oriented institutions. It aims to make urban real estate competitive with suburban and out-of-state. It rewards owners of slum properties and subsidizes new landlords in adjacent neighborhoods by increasing the demand for housing near to clearance sites.

3. Urban renewal hurts the low-income Negro and his white counterpart more than it helps them. It displaces the ghetto but

does not eliminate it. By promoting overcrowding in fringe areas, it tends to create new slums.

4. Urban renewal accentuates the struggle for existence, which makes the economically strong stronger and the weak weaker. To that extent, it is inimical to human values. It penalizes those persons least able to benefit from the skills revolution, although it brings some of them in touch with social agencies that try to ameliorate their lot. It may even aggravate crime, racial tensions and other social pathologies by disrupting established communities.

5. Urban renewal is speculative, not scientific, change. It relies on closed-system planning and elitist decision-making, ruling out alternatives based on open-ended studies and pluralistic values. It relies heavily on forecasts of the future of the uncertain real estate and construction industries. It introduces people to the concept of centralized planning in a remote, undemocratic manner; hence it alienates people from planning.

6. Urban renewal generates Negro instability and mobility, thereby undermining the foundation of Negro economic and political power. It liquidates most accumulations of Negro capital which it encounters, but it permits a few to survive and may even create some. In some central cities urban renewal is an answer by the power structure to the possibility of a Negro political victory.

7. The city of a center of culture and source of wealth is still vital to the middle class. Urban renewal favors middle class hegemony in the city by "trying to force the American lower classes to turn 'middle-class' or get out...."³¹

8. Urban renewal attacks basic social problems but it does not solve them. The existence of slums, congestion, and poverty is the sine qua non of its operations. It generates these qualities even as it destroys them. The directors of the program see themselves not as problem solvers but entrepreneurs. They pursue what Harold Kaplan calls "activism per se."³² On this principle there has developed an enormous bureaucracy organized into public redevelopment authorities and other autonomous agencies not directly responsible to the electorate or even elected representatives.

9. Urban renewal negates the limited successes so far won by school integrationists by dislocating communities, upsetting racial equilibriums and forcing the postponement of badly needed school improvements in "blighted" areas.

The relationship of urban renewal to community organization and politics can only be sketchily outlined here because the full implications of this question are still unfolding. Certainly without the active participation of the persons adversely affected by renewal and those conscious of its significance, there will be little hope of redirecting the program along lines beneficial to the great majority of city dwellers. And without major changes in the values guiding those controlling federal policy, a genuine alternative approach to urban problems is out of the question. It is on the neighborhood and municipal levels that the chances of victories, albeit small ones, are brightest. Here the civil rights movement has an advantage in its closeness, actual or potential, to the residents of the slum ghettos and fringe neighborhoods of the big cities. It can knock on the doors and speak to people in language they understand.

There are two approaches to neighborhood participation. The first holds that people can play little more than a passive, informational role, perhaps to modify a technical plan or prepare the public for imminent change. A variant of this view is that renewal will not succeed if it tries to adjust to lower-class demands, for the city will then regress to "a slightly dilapidated way-station" for the depressed. The second largely identified with Saul D. Alinsky holds that no movement can be effective unless it is based on a territorial community and welds a coalition of cross-representative forces around a wide spectrum of issues. Urban renewal may be one of these issues, and it will be taken up to the degree that the community feels itself menaced by official proposals. The aim of the organizing effort will be to focus pressure based on wide support against the political power structure through a series of well planned shows of strength and sometimes overt political action. "We are desperately concerned," Alinsky says, "with the vast mass of our people who, thwarted through lack of interest or opportunity, or both, to regularly partake of the frequent duties and responsibilities of citizenship are resigned to a destiny determined by others."

Between these two approaches are many variations shaped by the characteristics of each community and the knowledge, leadership, constituency and cash available to it. While Alinsky's method is closer in technique and philosophy to the objectives of the civil rights movement than Rossi's and Wilson's, it is not without critics. Among the charges levelled against Alinsky are that he encourages negativism, manipulates people and groups, fosters neighborhood particularism and avoids basic confrontations. Those who endorse him do so with emotional fervor. The civil rights movement cannot follow in his footsteps because it rarely will be able to train and pay for community organizers like Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation have done. In addition, the movement lacks the volunteer professionals who service middle-class housing and better-school groups. It has only the dislocated and dispossessed, the forgotten men and women, and a small group of dedicated students and activists who are seeking to light the sparks of self-interest, dignity and hope among the urban masses.

A modestly successful self-defense movement in the Clinton Hill section of Newark has been offering independent criticism of official renewal policies for about nine years. It is a volunteer-staffed neighborhood council organized on a block basis among small homeowners and tenants. The council, racially mixed from the beginning, at first sought to stabilize an integrated housing and school situation. This aim was defeated in the late 1950's by the heavy in-movement Negroes from the rural South and the relocation into Clinton Hill of many others uprooted by urban renewal demolitions in the city's core. Today the organization consists mainly of lower-middle and middle-income Negroes and some whites. The most critical internal problem has been instability of leadership due to mobility. But the council has still managed to contest for three years the city's declaration of "blight" for light industry, mentioned above, that would have dislocated 18,000 persons. It prevented, through cancellation, through publicity and protest, the city's only rehabilitation project in a 14-block section of the neighborhood and forced the creation of a citizen participation body, although feeble at best,

to speak for some of the residents in the project area. In 1962, aspects of its program were co-opted by successful candidates in the city election, and officials have revised procedures at urban renewal public hearings to meet some of the council's criticisms. In 1964 it is participating in an experimental effort with the National Committee on Full Employment and Students for a Democratic Society, to build block groups among tenants and the unemployed. The Clinton Hill group has thus under great pressures kept an organizational backbone in a rapidly changing neighborhood subject to urban renewal planning and adjacent to wholesale clearance sites. It has successfully slowed the pace of demolitions in its own backyard, meanwhile advocating the maintenance of full city services, improvement of school and recreational facilities, rehabilitation of salvable structures, and drastic revisions in the officially proposed land use plan for the "blighted" area. The council's major external weakness has been isolation because of its commitment to critical evaluation of the city's redevelopment program, while the civil rights movement generally is indifferent to the issue.

Assuming the validity of the thesis that urban renewal is a civil rights problem, what can be done? One approach would aim at community organization: Organize the indigenous population of urban Negroes and low-income whites, block by block, to resist mass clearance that would destroy the community, worsen living standards, and perpetuate the ghetto elsewhere. Raise demands for a full public accounting of relocation facilities before any families are displaced. Urge people not to move until adequate comparable housing is provided as required by law. Analyze project costs, contracts, expected tax returns and other economic aspects of proposed redevelopment. Demand vest-pocket construction and locate possible sites after the fashion of the Metropolitan Council on Housing in New York. Provide legal protection for affected residents at "blight" and planning hearings. Sponsor independent surveys to evaluate official plans and to advance alternatives. Subject urban renewal and the city's master plan to full and open discussion. Advance the concept of "new towns", integrated racially and economically from the outset, to compete with the old cities for people and business displaced by renewal and to expand the choices available for relocation and investment. Institutionalize fund raising to support the united efforts of the civil rights organizations, cooperating experts and professionals and the residents of the ghettos themselves to break into the decision-making circle.

Another approach would raise urban renewal as the crucial issue around which to develop the program and ideology essential to the creation of a new movement aiming for election victories. The large central cities are key. Thousands of Negroes and low-income whites are daily experiencing the ills generated by present renewal policies. The white middle class has largely deserted many cities, but enough like-minded people still remain to furnish a base for the newer political machines which are supporting urban renewal. These machines have not yet clashed with the embryonic constituencies in the ghettos and fringe areas where housing exploitation is at its peak. They are trying to avoid such clashes through harassment, mass clearance,

coercion and assorted forms of social bribery. Behind the machines stand the big city press and the mass media generally, the real estate industry, downtown business and top financial and investment institutions. They all exalt renewal as the answer to the city's prayers, and the new constituencies, through lack of alternative explanation, suffer political castration. This explanation could be brought to the people by the civil rights movement and the organizing movement in the indigenous community. The practical basis could still be the block group, which would facilitate the transition from other forms of activity to political action. At block meetings people could be made aware of their strength and the prospect of success. The forces behind City Hall could be pointed out, and those who benefit from urban renewal. The blocks could register voters previously unreachable. They could blanket districts in behalf of candidates pledged to reform, or better, seasoned in the urban renewal and civil rights struggles. Political action would not end civil rights action: it would complement it, and as the tempo of the campaign mounts, of necessity overshadow it. The alienated slum dweller, active on his block, may see the need to shift to politics more readily than the civil rights activist, habituated to non-political negotiations with the power structure.

Political action should focus on a particular district or ward which returns a particular representative, but opportunities for alliances with reform and like-minded elements in other districts should be seized. Issues such as race and the small house-owner-tenant dichotomy should be handled within the context of the over-all impact of urban renewal on all city dwellers and of its political manifestations. At least two years before the next municipal elections should be allowed for preparation. While the victory of one candidate would be significant, the success of a coalition slate could effect the balance of power and open new horizons. The degree to which the candidates are beholden to the community will help their actions in office. At this time the municipal level is better suited for such efforts than the state or federal. Municipal campaigns are less expensive; concentrations of Negroes and poor whites are still growing; the consciousness of thousands will stir as urban renewal activity swings upward. No easy victories can be expected, but the possibilities are there.

The civil rights movement, in alliance with the movement to organize the indigenous community, could awaken the political potential among residents of slums, ghettos and "blighted" areas through utilization of issues like poverty, dislocation, mass clearance, unemployment and land profiteering. It thus might not only redirect public policy to eliminate these evils but could bring into local politics the inclusive, democratic participation of the disenfranchised now largely absent.

1. Sixteenth Annual Report of the Housing and Home Finance Agency: 1962 (Washington, D.C.: 1963), 282-4; Alvin L. Schorr, Slums and Social Insecurity (Washington, D.C.: 1963), 67; William L. Slayton, "The Social Problems of the American Community." (Urban Renewal Administration, Washington D.C.: 1963.) This does not include and equally large displacement due to pending highway, public works, and private programs.
2. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Economic Forces in the United States (7th ed., Washington, D.C.: 1963), 51; Housing and Home Finance Agency, Our Nonwhite Population and Its Housing (Washington, D.C.: 1963), 3-5.
3. As quoted in the New Jersey Afro American, June 13, 1964.
4. Harold Kaplan, Urban Renewal Politics: Slum Clearance in Newark (Columbia University Press, New York: 1963), 46.
5. The Canadian Institute of Public Affairs, The Troubled Metropolis (Toronto: 1959), 28.
6. See the political forecast by Theodore Whyte in Life, November 18, 1963. Also "Negro Mayor Is Predicted for Newark," Newark Evening News December 19, 1963.
7. Harold Kaplan, op. cit., 10-38, passim.
8. See for example New Jersey Revised Statutes 40:55-21.1 (L.1949, C. 186, P.626, Sec. 1) and 55:14-A-32 (L.1949, C.300, P. 917; Sec. 2). The ritual of the public hearing is well described by Harold Kaplan, op. cit., 115-120.
9. Testimony of Stanley B. Aronowitz and Harold Ashby, Esq., Transcript of Public Hearing on N.J. R-32 before Newark Central Planning Board (1961), 66-74.
10. See Cooper Square Community Development Committee and Businessmen's Association, An Alternate Plan for Cooper Square (New York: 1961) 69pp.; Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council, Industrial Potential in Clinton Hill (Newark: 1962), 39 pp.
11. Daniel M. Friedenber, "Who Owns New York?" New York Herald Tribune, February 16, 1964.
12. David L. Walker, urban renewal commissioner under the Eisenhower administration, as quoted in the New Jersey Afro American, September 30, 1961.
13. Paul Busse, then executive secretary to the Newark Economic Development Committee and later business administrator of the City of Newark, as quoted in the Newark Evening News, June 5, 1962.
14. Robert H. Ryan, national director of area development for the Committee for Economic Development, as quoted in the Newark Evening News, March 5, 1958. See also the remarks of David Rockefeller, "The Responsibility of the Businessman in Urban Renewal," printed by the Chase Manhattan Bank. (New York, 1960), 17pp.
15. New Jersey Housing Newsletter, vol. 3, No.1 (January, 1964), 6.
16. Viz. the complaint of Rep. Adam Clayton Powell of New York that "Negroes and Puerto Ricans are not getting the opportunities, the patronage jobs in the big cities, that reflect voting strength." New York Times, April 18, 1964.

17. Harold Kaplan, op. cit., 167-68

18. The scientific and popular literature on this is now considerable. See William Foote Whyte, "Social Organization in the Slums," American Sociological Review, Vol. 8 (February, 1943), 34-39; the works of Oscar Handlin; and the articles by George F. Brown and others in Freedomways, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Summer, 1963).

19. State of California, Report on Housing in California (San Francisco, 1963), unaged; Alvin L. Schorr, Slums and Social Insecurity, 109.

20. For the results of a survey of the relocation program in 41 cities which found that 80 per cent of the affected families paid higher rentals see Harry W. Reynolds, "The Human Element in Urban Renewal," Public Welfare, Vol. 19 No. 2 (April, 1961), 71-73.

21. "Urban Renewal-- For Whom?" Commentary, Vol. 3 No. (January, 1961), 37.

22. Kurt W. Beck, Slums, Projects and People (Durham, N.C.: 1962), 102.

23. Testimony of Mrs. Louise Patterson and others, Relocation of Elderly People: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Involuntary Relocation of the Elderly of the Special Committee on Aging, United States Senate. 87th Congress, 2nd session (part 2--Newark, N.J.:USGPO, Washington, D.C.: 1963), 232 pp.

24. Michael Harrington, The Other America (Penguin Books, Baltimore, Md.: 1963), 149-168; Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., Youth in the Ghetto (New York, 1964), 135-136, passim.

25. Harold Kaplan, op. cit., 33

26. Henry W. Connor, "Newark Plans Dynamic Changes in its Downtown Center," Traffic Quarterly (April, 1960), 232. Connor sees Newark being able to regulate its intake of "metropolitan growth" through a long-range renewal program.

27. The case is now on appeal for review by the United States Supreme Court, viz., Webster et al vs. City of Newark et al., Supreme Court of New Jersey, Docket 4361 (1964)

28. "The Case Against Urban Renewal," a special supplement of Human Events (April, 1963), 16pp.; Rep. John Dowdy, "The Mounting Scandal of Urban Renewal," Reader's Digest, vol. 84, no. 503 (March, 1964), 51-57.

29. Fred J. Cook and Gene Gleason, "The Shame of New York," The Nation (October, 1959), esp. 284-306 on New York's Title II scandals.

30. The relationship between jobs and urban change is discussed in Walter Thabit, "Economic Functions and Industrial Location" (New York; 1962), privately printed, 13 pp. Also see State of New York, Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Industrial Renewal: Determining the Potential and Acceleration the Economy of the Utica Area (New York: 1963). 77pp.

31. Joan Colebrook, "People of the Slums," New Republic (June 15, 1963), 22.

32. Harold Kaplan, op. cit., 168, 179.

33. Peter H. Rossi and Robert A. Dentler, The Politics of Urban Renewal: The Chicago Findings (The Free Press of Glencoe, Ill.: 1961), 281-293

34. James Q. Wilson, "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," Journal of the American Institute of Planners (November, 1963), as quoted in Current, No. 45 (January, 1964), 63f.

35. Saul D. Alinsky, "Citizen Participation and Community Organization in Planning and Urban Renewal" (Chicago: 1962), 17. On Alinsky's early views see Reveille for Radicals (Chicago: 1946), 228 pp. For his program in action see Georgie Anne Geyer, "Woodlawn: A Community in Revolt," Chicago Scene, Vol. 3, No. 12 (July 7, 1962), 12-17. Also, Nicholas von Hoffman, "Reorganization in the Casbah," Social Progress (April, 1962), 33-44.

36. For example see Harold E. Fey, "Maintaining the Democratic Organization of Communities," The City Church, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (September-October, 1963), 8-11

37. Harold Kaplan, op. cit., 88-89, 149-150; Stanley B. Winters, "New Challenges to Neighborhoods," The Crisis, Vol. 69, No. 2 (February, 1961), 83-89.

38. "Team of 13 Students Busy in Clinton Hill Jobs Drive," Newark Evening News, July 7, 1964.

39. Metropolitan Council on Housing, A Citizens' Survey of Available Land (New York: 1964), 22pp. 122 maps; "Housing Urged on Rundown Lots," New York Times, June 9, 1964.