

a movement of many voices.....



ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND ACTION PROJECT  
Students for a Democratic Society

I am 17 years old and one of the many that has to drop out of school because of no clothes and no money for books and lunch. Mrs. Hager that lives at Lothair came around to my house with the anti-poverty proposal that the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment had drawn up. She explained it to me, and I thought that it was a good thing and I know it would help the people in the Appalachian Region. I decided that I would help Mrs. Hager to get signatures and tell people about the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment, and I have been going down to the office and helping with the newsletter, "Voice for Jobs and Justice."

I went with some of the Committee people to a meeting at Knoxville, and I am trying to organize a young people's group of boys and girls that have dropped out of school because of financial reasons. We can't get jobs, and I am sure that there are many of boys and girls like me who would like to get back in school if they had the money to go back on. If we could get this group started we could get something done.

.....Walter Archer, Diablock, Kentucky



For me personally, there was a lot of things that happened there that were different than what happened all my life like black and white together. I was always against it, but I saw it there, and I don't know who to give the credit to: SDS?, the Cleveland Conference, Newark Community Union Project? I never thought it would happen. In the South we always had to beg or stand back and get things last, but here we walked up and asked. Newark is just like the South, right here they look down on you, give you a funny eye, make you feel different---it, (the Cleveland Community Conference) made me feel like I didn't have to be scared or nothing. I could say anything I wanted. Deep down in my heart I feel we are one and not two or three kinds of people. At the Conference, the way we went into little rooms and talked about our town made me realize the need to work for rent control in New Jersey. We've been talking about it in the neighborhood, but I know now that we can work and fight for it.

.....Betty Moore, Newark, New Jersey



I have just recently been introduced to JOIN and am proud to take part in such a worthwhile movement. Personally, I feel it is one of the greatest things that I've learned of to make us (the poor) become aware of our needs, not as individuals but in a union.

JOIN has once again given me faith in America as a whole nation instead of the two nations that have existed for far too many years. I find it uplifting to know that we are not really a forgotten people, that students and young adults in JOIN care enough to give so much of themselves to help us to help ourselves, by leading, guiding and entrusting us to form a union for and of ourselves. This can be and must be brought about if we (the poor) are ever to be more than a number or statistic to the wealthy and politicians of America, and once again become a democratic country as our forefathers intended.

When the wealthy of America see strong action from the poor and know that we know that we are no less man by being poor, we will be heard.

.....Dorothy Perez, Chicago, Illinois



## STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

SDS is an association of young people on the left who seek alternatives to poverty, racism, corporate or military rule in public affairs and governments which people no longer control. Its members work for a democracy which involves students in the setting up of courses in universities; the poor in directing a public war on poverty; and all members of society in charting the directions of American foreign policy. SDS as it is now constituted, was organized in 1960. It has chapters on over 50 campuses.

W. H. Ferry, A. J. Muste and I. F. Stone have said this about SDS:

"Most of us have been hoping to see a revival of the radical spirit in America---that spirit which, in the past, vigorously attacked entrenched interests, eagerly sought to organize at the grass roots, and offered a vision of a new society in opposition to the corrupting status quo. But while many "old timers" remained skeptical, a group of students has been working against the odds to try to help achieve this revival.

The group we are referring to is Students for a Democratic Society....Their plan aims at creating inter-racial movements in key Northern and border-state communities around such issues as jobs, housing, and schools. Their strategy, like the strategy of the Southern civil rights movement, is to have students and young people serve as catalysts of protest in these communities.

Their hope is to see the emergence of grass roots political organization in many parts of the country capable of developing a program and a constituency independent of local political machines and the national Establishments."

Harold Taylor has said:

"SDS is doing the toughest thinking I know about in the universities on the large issues of peace, race, education, and social change."

Walter Reuther has said:

"(SDS) is in the vanguard of student organizations dedicated to the forces of progress in America."

#### ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND ACTION PROJECT

The Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) was formed by Students for a Democratic Society in the fall of 1963. Supported by labor unions, church groups, foundations and hundreds of adults and young people in every part of the country, it has grown in a short time to be the largest independent community organizing program in the North. Last summer, ERAP supported 150 people as community organizers in 10 cities. This summer 250 people will join the 60 member year-round staff.

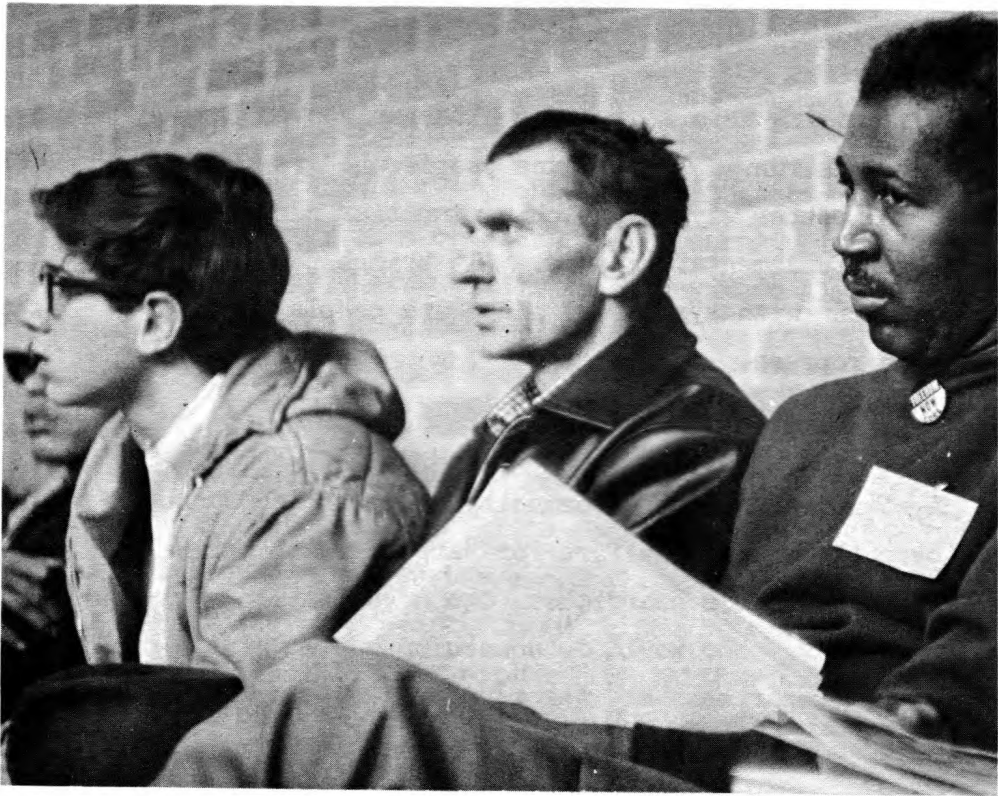
ERAP aims to stimulate a broadly-based interracial movement among those Americans who are now denied the opportunity to participate fully in the country's economic and political life.

ERAP organizers work with poor people who are struggling to create their own organizations capable of protesting economic and social injustices. Work is among the white and Negro unemployed, among mothers on welfare, public housing residents, displaced Southern miners, the young and old who face a future of economic insecurity, and the neighborhood groups with common goals for social change.

Central to Economic Research and Action Project is the assumption that poor people---Negro and white---can be organized around economic and political grievances, and that there is a natural alliance among all poor in their common need for jobs, income, and control of their lives. This program is motivated by a belief that fundamental rearrangement of American priorities are needed if the problems of poverty are to be solved.

This pamphlet is for those who wish to devote themselves to organizing activity for a summer or longer.....





## COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Community organizing is talking to people---in the streets, homes, restaurants, bars or places where people stand in line for food stamps or jobs. It is learning what people in a community think and feel by getting to know them and their families and their problems. The organizer works to break down barriers of communication and to cut through isolation. The work is hard: doors get slammed in faces; screaming children pull mothers out of conversations just as they get started; some people have heard an organizer is a communist who should be reported to the police.

Organizing is a search for alternatives to the way the country is run. It involves people who are working out new and better ways by which communities can work together for fundamental change. It brings people into open conflict with systems of ideas and people that manipulate or repress.

A woman comes to the Community Union office because she's been thrown off welfare for "arguing with her welfare worker." She's heard that the organization helps people like her. She would do something but is afraid of the welfare department and the people downtown who hate

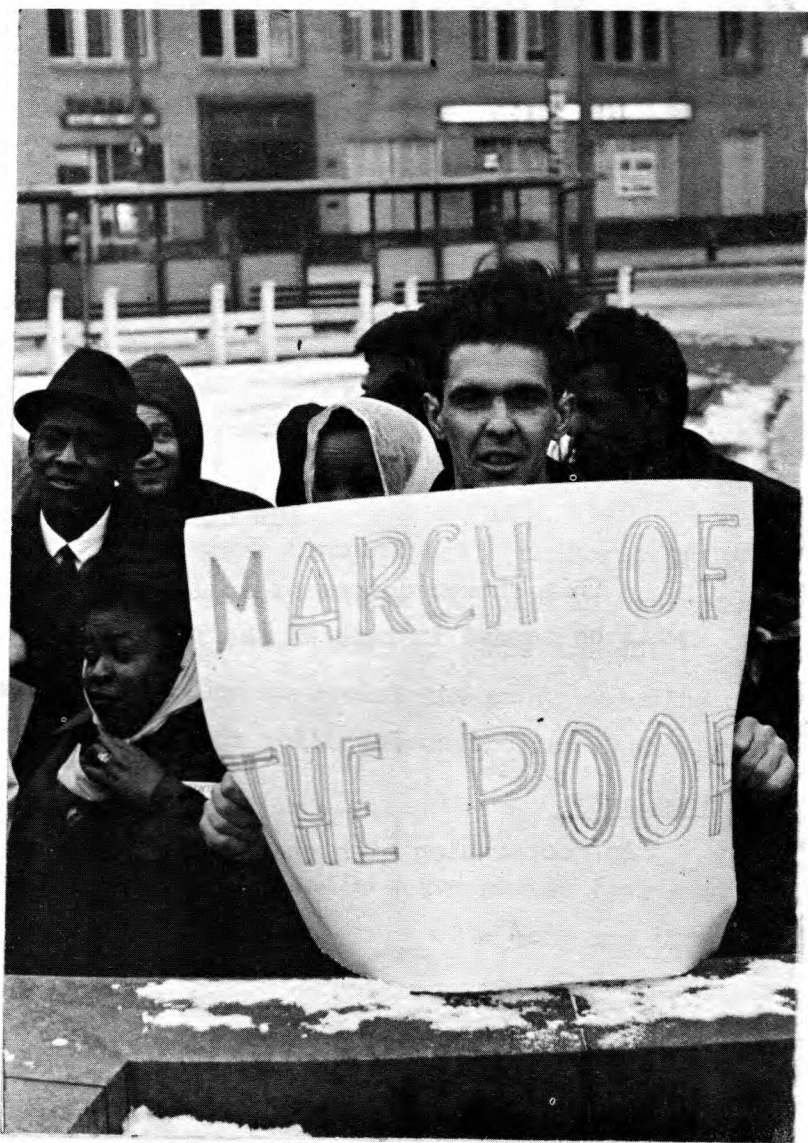
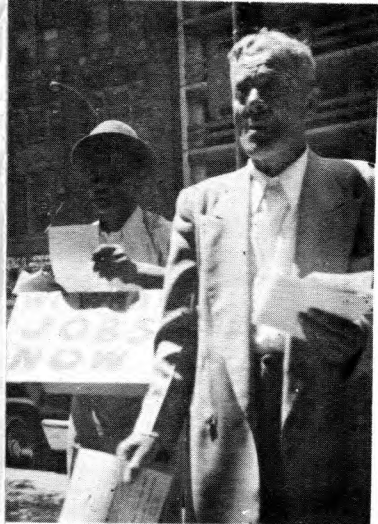
her. Organized with the hundred other women who have the same story, something could be done. The woman offers her home for a first meeting of welfare recipients in a two block area. Leaflets are circulated announcing the time. People trust the organizer to help them get together because he isn't from the government or welfare department. He lives around the corner and pays rent to the same slumlord as the lady on welfare.

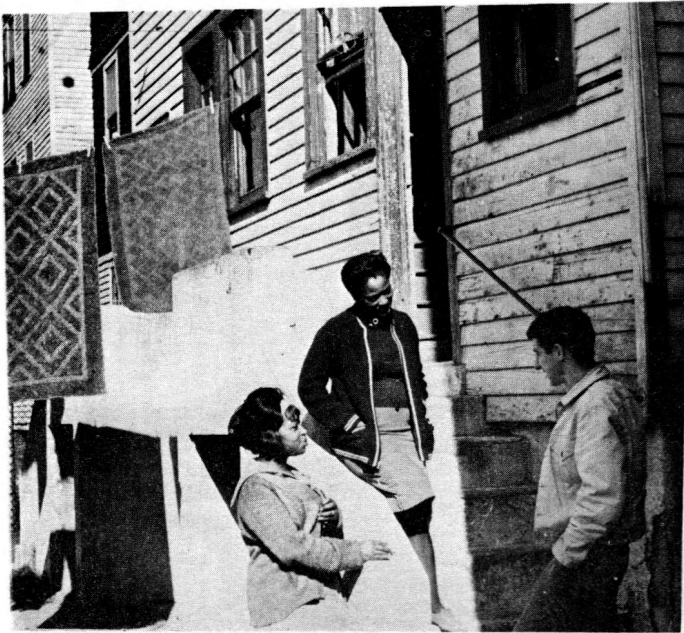
The organizer may make a major commitment of time to residents in a small area---usually a block. He knows everyone on his block, visits them frequently, and talks with them about problems in the neighborhood, the city, the country, and the world. Talk is important. It helps people think through the problems. When angry people go to the mayor or slumlord or poverty board, it's easier for them to say their demands when they have already been talked out back in the neighborhood.

Organizers help people meet and talk. Ideas lead to programs and to actions and to political strength. Talk helps people consider the possibilities open for social change if the poor people organize themselves. Movements begin when people get together to think out loud about the kind of city they might help create. One person said, "Freedom is an endless meeting."









### THE PROJECTS

This summer dozens of full-time community organizers will be needed in each of the following areas:

#### Appalachia

In cooperation with the Appalachian Economic and Political

Action Conference and the Committee for Miners, SDS helps recruit people to staff projects in Hazard, Perry County and other areas of Kentucky and Tennessee. The Hazard-based Appalachian Committee for Full Employment represents the kind of grass-roots political organization that it may be possible to create throughout the region if people will organize.

#### Baltimore, Maryland

Organizers are needed to work with groups in South Baltimore called U-JOIN (Union for Jobs or Income Now). U-JOIN is demanding that poor people run the local war on poverty and that the federal money sent to Baltimore's poverty program not go into professional salaries and expensive offices. U-JOIN has organizing offices in both Negro and poor white sections of the city.

#### Cairo, Illinois

An incredibly depressed community in Southern, rural Illinois is beginning to organize for a real war on poverty, for democratic trade unions, for housing, jobs and political power. Organizers are needed to assist the poor majority of Cairo's population organize for political control of their lives.

#### Cambridge, Maryland

Citizens of Cambridge, Maryland's Negro ghetto have asked to be identified with SDS-ERAP. Veterans of a long and bitter

civil rights fight, they want their movement to be extended to encompass the full range of human needs---civil rights, jobs, housing, democratic decision-making. Organizers are needed to work with Cambridge residents to build such a movement.

### Chester, Pennsylvania

SDS supports the program of the New Independent Committee for Jobs, Homes, and Schools with summer and year-round organizers. A fight for civil rights and economic change was temporarily beaten back by city and state police. Efforts are being made to rebuild morale and the movement. Spanish speaking people are particularly needed to organize in the Puerto Rican neighborhoods.

### Chicago, Illinois

Organizers are needed to expand the oldest ERAP project to a city-wide network of opposition to Daley's political machine and to support a predominately poor white Uptown movement called JOIN. JOIN is currently fighting Mayor Daley's war on poverty for excluding poor people from its decision-making. JOIN is also beginning rent strikes in slum tenements. This summer, students are needed to help JOIN create a community theatre project, a political education program, day care centers and youth action programs. Spanish speaking people are critically needed to develop wider support among the 25 per cent Mexican and Puerto Rican population in the Uptown area.



### Cleveland, Ohio

SDS will continue support to a city-wide Negro and white welfare mothers organization, Citizens United For Adequate Welfare (CUFAW). The welfare organization has made substantial gains in challenging and reforming Cleveland's welfare system. In a poor white community on the near West side (where the project has been based for the past year), SDS is organizing a community union around economic problems. This summer, the work will be extended to Negro neighborhoods on the near West side where organizers will assist CUFAW members who are building a local community union around welfare and other community issues. As new community unions are formed, every effort will be made to create working coalitions among them.

### New Jersey

In Newark, SDS has helped build a locally-controlled Newark Community Union Project in a Newark neighborhood, where the Negro ghetto is half the city. Efforts are now being planned to create similar organizations in nearby neighborhoods, looking toward the 1966 election to demonstrate the power and demands of poor Newarkers. The central organizing issues have been housing, and in particular the urban renewal project aimed at demolition of the neighborhood.

In New Brunswick, ERAP cooperates with the Community Action Project, (an organization run and organized by people from the ghetto and the state university), in organizing around issues of housing, a day nursery and a tutorial project.

In Hudson County, an area of severely deteriorating cities

like Jersey City and Hoboken, large concentrations of poverty and low-income groups are found in predominately white and racially mixed neighborhoods. Research and groundwork are being done in the spring, and an action program will begin as soon as fulltime (as well as summer) staff is recruited.

In Trenton and rural Southern Jersey there is a possibility that summer staffs will be needed. We hope that it will be possible to link up existing and planned groups of poor people throughout the state into a coalition.

#### Roxbury, Massachusetts

Organizers are needed to work in the Dudley Street Action Center, building block clubs and tenants' associations in a racially mixed poor neighborhood. The community is organizing against urban renewal, a city program in which the poor will not determine the outcome, and the community will be destroyed by the "planners." Many residents are also active in a welfare mothers movement which student volunteers will help expand.

#### San Francisco, California

Organizers are needed to support and enlarge the program of Freedom House---primarily a citizen's fight against undemocratic urban renewal and for rehabilitation of crowded, run-down housing.

## ORIENTATION SESSIONS

The summer program will formally begin with an eight day training session the 2nd week of June. The training week will provide an intensive orientation to the work of the project, the politics and history of each city, and the goals of the summer period. The first week will also define jobs for summer volunteers which complement the organizing program of the year-round staffs and community people. Precautions will be taken to minimize a possible let--down feeling at the end of the summer by emphasizing work which can be completed in a summer period, or which contributes specialized skills, such as research, writing, tutorial or survey work. Summer activity will be found which can either be discontinued with a minimum of disruption or which community people can maintain after the summer. New staff members will go directly from the orientation sessions to the project area.

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Some volunteers will live in homes with community people. Most, however, will be housed in large buildings where meals and responsibilities for house upkeep are shared



Volunteers are expected to live at the level of the community in which they work. The general standard is the county's ADC budget.

#### EXPENSES

The cost of a new staff member for three months is estimated at \$225, though the amount varies from project to project. ERAP asks that each new staff member raise money for the project from whatever sources are available to him. No set amount is required. Many people raise more than the



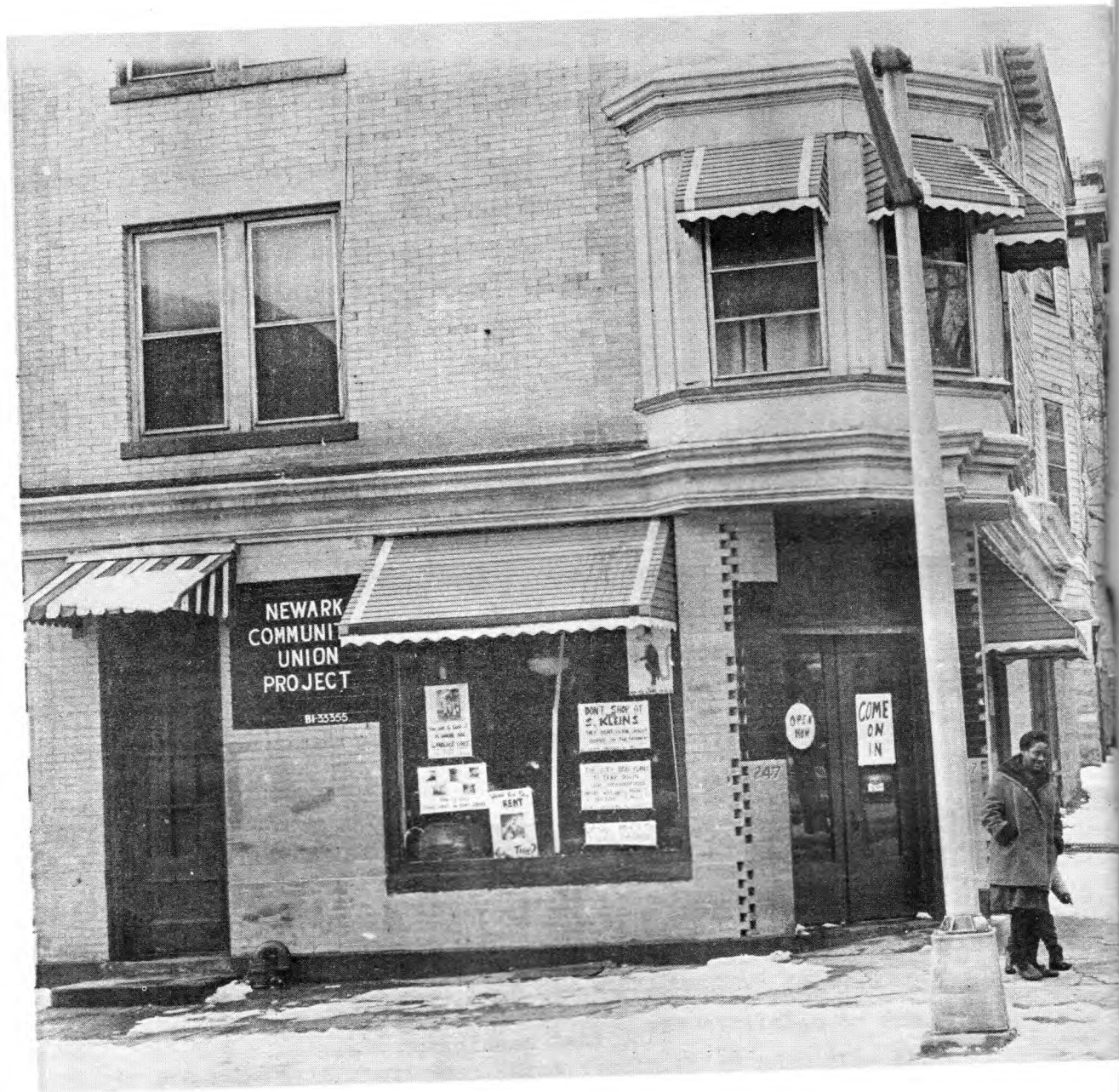
amount needed to sustain one person. Some can raise very little. At the beginning of the summer, organizers contribute to a general project fund which is then drawn from as people need food, clothing, travel money and incidentals.

#### SELECTION OF NEW STAFF

Since ERAP receives more applicants than it can field, it asks prospective staff to meet with full-time organizers and community people before the summer for interviews and discussions of the summer plans. Applicants will be notified of the dates of such meetings. In the selection of ERAP staff, highest priority is given to people who will work for a year or longer.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, SEND THE ATTACHED APPLICATION OR  
WRITE:

ERAP  
1100 East Washington Street  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



NEWARK  
COMMUNITY  
UNION  
PROJECT

BF-33355

DON'T SHY AT  
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AN OPEN LETTER TO ERAP SUPPORTERS AND NEW ORGANIZERS.....

Dear Friend:

As I sit beginning this letter, a woman has just come in the office, strong and teardrained, who wants us to come to the apartment of a friend of Clinton Avenue, the main strip in Clinton Hill. The apartment, she says, smells of dead rats and sewage, has dangerous hanging wires, no back door. The girl in it, she goes on, hasn't been here long from the South and doesn't know what to do against the slumlord who's charging \$95 a month. The rent money comes from her welfare check, and she's afraid to intervene in the cooperative exploitation carried on by the City and the slumlord. Maybe we can do something, she hopes, because she's heard from others that we do good things in the neighborhood.

Louise Patterson and Terry Jefferson of our staff set up a meeting with the woman an hour from now, as soon as her kids are fed. Louise lives on Hunterdon Street and is a long-time community leader; Terry, like Louise, is a youthful grandmother whose experience reaches back into apparently all parts of the Newark tradition. With others in Clinton Hill, they have dropped their past routines to become staff organizers of the Newark Community Union Project. Such is the way it goes here: tragedy and protest are not cause and effect but one and the

same. This is the motion of change, and I begin by describing it because a point-by-point description of our activity would be misleading.

We started seven months ago, created lives for ourselves in Clinton Hill of a deeper sort than days can measure. Door by door, block by block, we asked people to band together for better jobs, housing and schools, and something deeper, for real control over living conditions. We organized 200 people into groups on six streets, dozens of others into rent-strike organizations in their buildings. People discussed, picketed and petitioned against immediate grievances: the lack of garbage collection by the City, the lack of play streets for the kids, the lack of lighting in the streets, the lack of repairs by the slumlords, the lack of representation by the councilman, the lack of, the lack of, the lack of---you know the story in the big cities, the way people are treated. Out of the block groups came an informal group of leaders, about 50 of them, wanting to take action as a community organization. In the last three months there have been 15 meetings of these leaders, the term "leader" coming to mean anyone whose commitment is with us, daily, all the way.

Today on every neighborhood street there are signs, like flags, announcing our presence, which tell cars to move aside while the streets are cleaned. Today numbers of people, probably in the hundreds, live in better conditions because of



pressure, or the threat of pressure, on their landlords; today kids have play streets in several parts of Clinton Hill. These and other improvements came from rent strikes, demonstrations, delegations to City Hall, letters and phone calls of protest. While these are important changes in a way of life, they also are tokens, of course. Deeper changes which reconstruct rather than dent the order of things are needed and we are looking for the ways to produce them. The issue we are facing most directly is the future of the neighborhood. Powerful elements in the City seek to put a "light industry park" here in place of homes. Other elements plan to "rehabilitate" the homes in such a way that only the middle classes will be able to afford the rent and upkeep. While these designs are taking shape, slumlords and other profiteers are cramping more families in the houses and taking more money out.

Thus the struggle against slumlords becomes a struggle to maintain and improve the neighborhood on the terms of those who live here now---the scuffling class, the tenants, the small homeowners, call them what you will. This is an issue that goes to the heart of Newark's problems and national problems as well. As the nation's most respected "urban renewal city", the present Newark design is to push out or demoralize the potential majority of poor Negroes, poor whites. We are saying that the City should not eliminate the poor in favor of a new middle class, but stand as a political representative of the poor in this state and in the nation as a whole. Let the people create their own plan for housing, schools, parks---That's our demand.

With such a question raised, we are challenging the most advanced, enlightened institutions of America. Why are most of the people economically victimized in the same city which serves as the headquarters for Prudential Life Insurance Company? Why is there so much misery in a stronghold of political liberalism? The City takes notice of us. Just the other night we met in our office with the Newark Corporation Council, the main administrator of the City, once again to go over our demands for better services and housing in Clinton Hill. He agreed to make numerous procedural changes to protect tenants, and will personally wage "war" against some slumlords to make examples of them. We said tokenism is not enough. We want politicians to base themselves on the needs of the victimized, not on the needs of banking, business and the respectable classes. He sat a little lower in his chair and nodded that he understood.

The lady who came in earlier is back now, with the tenant who wants help. Barry Kalish, Betty Moss, and our friend Rev. Crusoe Welsh are talking with her, planning to organize a meeting tonight, get the other tenants in the building organized, take it to the block group tomorrow. Carl Wittman is cooking a few feet away; we moved all the food to the office since it's a waste to go home until late in the night.

From here we will expand into other Negro neighborhoods of

this city; from there to Jersey City, the big stronghold of white poverty; from there to Paterson, Passaic, Elizabeth, and the other slum cities. Already we have people working along similar lines in New Brunswick, and some in Trenton; some also on campuses around Jersey. With a staff of twelve in Clinton Hill, including five community people, we are beginning to do well---we'll need 50 for this summer though, and as many as possible full-time from here on.

What about money? Well, there's not much. Some comes from national SDS fund-raising, but we never know when it will and when it won't. Some comes from our own appeals to parents, friends, local and campus groups; again we never know. Some comes from the community itself, through cocktail parties, raffles, nickle-and-dime contributions, meals cooked for us by the people. The office and apartment cost us \$200 a month. Sometimes food is low, and we spend about 40 cents a day each to eat. We need a better mimeograph. We need to print posters by the thousands. We need another car in addition to the Volkswagen. We need another phone. Independent financing is indispensable, and anything you can do in that direction will be welcomed happily.

But more than money is needed for our support. We are not seeking a dramatic moment of conflict, but a long series of such moments that change the balance of power. That will take a climate of fresh opinion in the North, a willingness to support

popular movements for change here as well as in the more backward South.

And, of course, opinion without action is only a flash where a current of power must be generated. Students especially ought to consider whether their own needs are satisfied by life in the universities and the professions as now constituted, or whether they must find an alternative to staleness by taking sides, risky as it must be, with the movement for a truly democratic society we are trying to build.

For those who want to take sides, I believe the time is at hand when real vocations exist through which we can realize our values and realize ourselves. Organizing—and many, many different skills are needed in organizing—can be a way of life if only we make it so. We ask that people join us, down here.

Freedom,

*Tom Hayden*

Tom Hayden  
Staff, SDS and  
Newark Community Union Project



Economic Research and Action Project of SDS

Application for Community Projects

Name.....Age.....Sex.....  
Last First

Current Address.....

Phone Number.....Place of Birth.....

Home or Permanent Address.....  
Street City State

Race (for assignment purposes).....

Person to notify in case of emergency:

Name.....Relation.....

Address.....  
Street City State

College.....Year in school.....

Field of specialization.....

If not now in college, what is your educational background?

Organizational affiliations.....

.....

Experience in campus or other political activity. Please describe.  
(Enclose extra sheet if necessary.)

If you have had any experience in community organizing or research please describe the type of work or research skills. (Enclose extra sheet if it is necessary.)

Have you done any research or are you presently engaged on research that you feel would be valuable to the project? Please explain.

Describe any particular skills or experience you have which you feel would be useful to this work. (Legal knowledge, teaching or organizing experience, photography or artistic interest, etc.)

Please list the cities or towns that you have lived in and the dates.

List in order of preference the cities or areas which you would like to work:

....Appalachia ....Baltimore ....Cairo ....Cambridge ....Chester ....Chicago  
....Cleveland ....New Jersey ....Roxbury ....San Francisco ....no preference

Are there any reasons why you could not work in a particular city?

ERAP field staff generally live at a subsistence. They are expected to assume responsibility for raising money for the project. They draw from project funds whatever they need for food, clothing, travel, and incidentals. Is there any particular reason why you could not live at a subsistence level?

For what period of time do you wish to work?

What do you think should be the short-range and long-range goals of the project? (Enclose extra sheet if necessary.)

ERAP  
1100 E. Washington St.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

photographs:

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