

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 10 OF 16

FOLDER 3

MCLL DETROIT CASS

TRUMBELL COMMUNITY

To: MCLL General Staff

From: Bill Bunting

Subject: External work activity in the Cass-Trumbull Community.

Date: February 1973

This report is submitted as an updating of my external work activities during the last 9 months or so. Included in it are five sections.

1. Brief description of the specifics of the University City "A" Citizens District Council and my work role there.
2. The UC"A" CDC as a part of the process of organizing in the Cass-Trumbull community.
3. Description of the nature of the community.
4. Background for organizing in the Cass-Trumbull Community.
5. Recommendations to MCLL vis-a-vis Cass-Trumbull.

1. Specifics of the UC"A" CDC and my work role there.

The University City "A" Citizens District Council is a 24 member citizens group, 18 of which are elected and 6 appointed by the mayor, created by Michigan Public Act No. 189 of Public Acts of 1968 as amended and City Ordinance 622-G as amended. Its purpose is to provide resident input into urban renewal project areas within Detroit. There are a number of CDCs in Detroit and the UC"A" CDC is responsible for the area generally bounded by the GTRR, Cass, Canfield, and Trumbull. This includes Wayne State University, the Calumet Housing site (the old site of many W.C.O. struggles), the University City II project (site of most PECAUR activities over last 3 or 4 years), W.S.U. Matthaei Field and Complex, and Research Park (the Hobart Street confrontation). This area today is described as part of the Cass-Trumbull community.

This area of the City has a long, and probably the most well known or at least the most media covered, history of confrontation and struggle around urban renewal and the role WSU has played in community oppression in Detroit. In the late sixties the Model Cities Citizens Governing Board brought legal action against the City of Detroit and the Federal Government for not properly involving residents in the urban renewal process in the University City II area (Warren, Forest-Canfield, Cass, Trumbull). This legal action resulted in a settlement in 1970 which changed the status of the UC II project from a total clearance project to one of neighborhood rehabilitation. At that point it then became clear that the urban renewal plan and supporting documents would have to be redone and submitted to HUD. The City then proceeded to set up a contract with the UC"A" CDC to develop this plan. This contract was signed and implemented March 21st, 1972. The contract provides for the hiring of 5 staff and funds totaling \$71,005 for a twelve month period starting when staff are hired to complete this task. The staff include (1) Coordinator, Leo Schulzitski, (2) Sr. Organizer, Sam Stark, (3) Jr. Organizer, Sharon Calvert, (4) Planner, me, and (5) Secretary, Mona Rothschild. We have been functioning since June 12, 1972. Our existence will, in all probability, be significantly longer than one year. The view of almost all

of us involved is that planning and development are continuing processes with organizing, educational, and political dynamics. This is just the first year and it provides the opportunity for laying the groundwork for ongoing programs and organizational efforts.

2. UC"A" CDC and Community Organizinf in the Cass-Trumbull Community.

The UC"A" CDC consists of the following people:

1. Jan Arneson
2. Thelma Smith
3. Margaret Washington
4. Mary White
5. Dolores Weber
6. Jack Mooradian
7. Kae Halonen
8. Bud Alcock
9. Judy Brown
10. Sally Carey
11. Mary Masterton
12. Ruth Tenney
13. John Winbury
14. Mildred Smith
15. Quenda Story
16. Don Story
17. Sue Barrell
18. Camelia Williams

The makeup of the CDC is changing constantly due to people moving, quitting etc. We just had an election in February and will be filling the other positions with our reccommendations to the mayor. He usually accepts and appoints our suggested reccommendations.

Objectively, the UC"A" CDC is a top-down organization. It has been created by state apparatus and imposed on the community. (It was, however, community pressure that brought about this state apparatus.) That, however, does not mean that it cannot become a community organization based on the objective conditions in the C-T community. If it cannot become such at least its existence can be utilized to create such an independent community-based organization. The process whereby either or both of these occurs will probably require a significant protion of the time and energy of this first year of the contract. It is the view, as just implied, of the majority of the staff and many of the CDC members that both of these should occur. Up to this time this process has been very time consuming, frustrating, and slow but also positive and productive.

Presently, both efforts have the following status and orientation:

Within the UC"A" CDC we have the contradiction often present in such a form. The work necessary to meet contractual obligations and maintain the legitimacy of the operation often dominates our time and energy. It therefore prohibits us from doing what we view as more important work such as doing outreach through service organizing, internal organizational organizing and growth and development, and general educational activities. This being so we are still developing the organization to function as (1) a coalition form for crisis response around the numerous day to day and longer term issues threatening the community, (2) a support mechanism

already functioning^{to} indigenous organizations, (3) an educational form through the development of educational workshops, distribution of leaflets and a monthly newsletter, through preparation of educational packages on issues directly affecting the community and distributed throughout the community, through planning a film series, through petitioning and surveying on issues brought to us by residents and/or initiated by us.

Secondly, this community, due to the presence of many absentee-owned buildings (bad conditions, high rents, etc.), Wayne State students, and city-owned one-two and 4 family and multi-family buildings (purchased through urban renewal) has seen the existence of many tenant organizations. Our office has worked closely with one very successful tenant organization in a supportive advocacy role and a technical resource role. We are now in the process of developing an independent organization around building conditions and tenants rights. As one initial step we are concentrating on city-owned buildings as our organizational effort and support of privately owned building efforts. As part of this we are setting up a maintenance and repair cooperative and tenants unions in all the large city-owned apartment buildings in the UC II area. We view both of these as having potential for larger organizing efforts. Right now we are functioning based on an awareness of our limited resources. We expect a number of individuals and organizers will be developed out of this process. We hope to work with these folks as providing the leadership and basis for a community-wide tenant organization.

3. Community Description.

The Cass-Trumbull community is a very complex area where objective conditions make the failure of capitalism rather blatant. (Unfortunately not enough folks view it in these terms. That's ok-with the right theory, practice, and discipline we can change that.) Some of the basic data only begins to indicate the dynamics of the community.

POPULATION

Total.....30,000-35,000

white 60% predominantly southern white with a large number from West Vir., Kentucky, Tenn.

black 35%

Figures do not show it but there are a number of native Americans, Asian Indian, Chinese, Latino and other third world minorities.

Between 20-30% of the population is over 50 years of age.

Average family size ranges from 3-4 people for about 6,000 families depending on race.

Over 25% of the families have a woman as head of the family unit.

Over 40% of the people in the community are single, divorced, or separated.

INCOME

Median Income.....\$3,000

One third of families make under \$2,000 per year.

About one fifth of families make between \$2,000-3,000 per year.

About one fifth of families make over \$7,000 per year with about 10% making over \$10,000.

Figures are difficult to obtain but there is a high percentage of people on welfare, pension, social security, disability, etc.

EMPLOYMENT

Manufacturing
 skilled and unskilled.....16% of total
Office workers.....33
Gov. and service workers.....25
Professional.....5-10
Unemployed.....10-20

Place of work:
 Inner city or downtown.....53%
 H.P. or Mam.....42

Access to work
 Drive own car.....35%
 Walk.....17
 Bus.....33

HOUSING

Owner occupied.....11%
Renter.....88

Type of structure
 Multi-family low rise.....21%
 " " high ".....40
 Single/duplex.....39

Age of structure--55years average 85% were built before 1920.

Building Condition.....about 55% are substandard.

Length of residency
 1 to 2 years.....45%
 10 or more years...20

Housing cost to occupant
 value of owner-occupied....\$10,000-11,000
 rent
 less than\$ 29/month..... 6% \$91-180....11
 \$30-60.....37 over 180.. 3
 61-90.....43

HEALTH

Health care is almost non-existent in the community. The Model Neighborhood Health Component is the only recent effort to reverse this situation. This area has one of the highest incidences of TB, high drug usage, high amount of prostitution, and generally poor health.

The Cass-Trumbull community is obviously a proletarian community. The class divisions in the community, however, are great both in number and effects on life and organizing potential within the community. The influence of Wayne State and the New Center area creates a significant mix, which is increasing, of white-blue collar workers, low-middle income workers, renter-owner workers, etc. There are a number of physical factors which manifest themselves in these divisions.

1. The Jeffries Public Housing Project houses about 10,000 people who are predominantly black.

2. Buildings on the east of the Lodge Freeway are predominantly large multiple units.

3. Buildings on the west side of the Lodge are mostly 1-2 and 4 family units. Jeffries, however is mostly on the west of the freeway.

4. The area bounded by Trumbull, 12th, Ford Freeway, and Grand River has a number of owner-occupied (and the number is increasing) units in good condition. Many WSU and young professional people have and are moving into the area and fixing buildings.

5. Wayne State physical expansion has created much physical deterioration and, as a result, much student and community activism.

6. The Lodge Freeway does serve as a divider in the community both socially and physically.

The presence of Wayne State cannot be viewed lightly. as it significantly affects physical, economic, political, and cultural dynamics in the community.

4. Background for community organizing.

Attempts to do community organizing in the C-T community in the last decade have been very numerous. The presence of Wayne State, its expansion, the resulting cultural and political forces, and the urban renewal process in a basically, "fighting for survival", community provide much of the basis for this activity. Much of this community can be accurately described as lumpen. Yet, today, objective conditions in the community are as bad as ever and there is no real organization with anything close to mass-base in existence. This is not to say there is nothing going on and that much of what is going on is not community based. As the previous section indicates, there are a number of issues around which there is potential for organizing; objective conditions are bad and there are many good resources potentially. An analysis of what has and has not occurred is not a simple task. The dialectics are complex, but the following is an attempt.

Organizations and interrelationships.

Four major types of organizations, programs, and institutions exist in the community. They are (1) regulative-state created groups, (2) churches and related organizations, (3) Wayne State and related organizations and institutions, and (4) independent

organizations.

(1) Regulative, state-created organizations.

Poor communities in the inner-city of Detroit, particularly in the black community, have been organizing and fighting for survival for many years. As part of the "Great Society" efforts of the sixties and the increase of cultural consciousness in the Black community, activities were particularly numerous throughout the sixties. The C-T community has traditionally lagged behind other inner-city communities in this regard. I suppose there are many reasons, but the independence and strong-wills of the many southern rural in-migrants cannot be viewed as an insignificant factor contributing to this. However, some groups did emerge. These were usually single issue, one person dominated efforts that never became anything else. Activities did begin to increase significantly during the second half of the sixties. These activities were primarily a result of Federal and State legislation. They include:

- McHRD-Mayor's Committee for Human Resource Development, (Detroit's poverty program)

- Detroit Model Cities Program, People's Area Development Corporation (a Model Cities Spinoff),

- Jeffries Public Housing Tenants Council,

- and -University Citizens District Councils A & B.

These programs have not contributed to developing mass-based organizations or much class-consciousness. In fact, to simplify a long tedious description, they have consumed, coopted, tracked, channeled, and regulated most of the people involved in them. They have maintained and increased class hostilities throughout the community. They are dominated by the Democratic Party and the UAW interests and forces. Social democracy has been a dominant political tendency in most of these activities.

There is one program that fits into this section which appears to be more significant than any of these individually. VISTA has brought many people to the Cass-Trumbull community into many different programs. Much of the VISTA work has been of missionary service characteristics. What is significant though is not necessarily what VISTA's have done, although they are now into some pretty good things as compared to the past, but the fact that they have stayed after their VISTA service was over. It is often ex-VISTAS that are found in "organizing" positions or in the jobs in many of the groups and efforts discussed later and the programs listed above.

(2) Churches and related organizations.

The church is a significant institution and influence in the C-T community. The churches that are most dominant are Cass Methodist, St. Patricks, St. Dominics, and the First Unitarian Church.

CASS METHODIST

Cass Methodist is a relatively conservative church dominated by Rev. Lou Redmond. It houses the Associated Indians of Detroit, and a number of recreational activities. The church has tried to get money in the recent past, unsuccessfully, to rehabilitate

some housing. The church functions pretty much on its own without necessarily entering into the affairs of other groups or organizations. It functions paternalistically and with a missionary perspective but is rather low-keyed.

St. Patrick's is a Catholic Church with more of a history for community organizing than Cass Methodist. Father Mike O'Hara is the primary personality, but Jerry Cherbanneau and Tom Dwyer also play key roles in many of the church's programs.

St. Patrick's used to house the VISTA program in the Cass Corridor. However, when Kae Halonen was VISTA supervisor serious differences developed between the VISTA program and St. Patrick's and Kae and VISTA left.

The Patrick's Youth Center is the forerunner to the present Brainard Street Library and Center. There still is, however, a fairly strong relationship between people at St. Patrick's (O'Hara and Cherbanneau) and Brainard (George, Patsy McMahan).

It is also important ~~At~~ note that the Community Reporter got its start at St. Patrick's.

St. Patrick's, through Mike, Jerry and Tom, is involved in developing Senior Citizens housing at Woodward and Mack. (The old ~~ARADIA~~ roller skating rink was torn down for this project.)

The politics of St. Patrick's is definitely social democrat. There is a strong tie to the UAW and the Democratic Party through Rosemary and Roger Robinson. There are very strong hostilities between St. Patrick's people and the Cass-Trumbull Collective (see (4) this section.) people. Sometimes it is very difficult to tell which of these two is more social democratic although it is clear St. Patrick's is committed to the maintenance of capitalism.

St. Dominic's is the only one of the four churches being discussed that is west of the Lodge Freeway and in the Trumbull portion of the community. St. Dominic's is the location of the Detroit Childrens' School. It is the old location of the Trumbull Community Center which after 9 months was asked to leave due to friction with Father Smith and the Parish Council.

The church is now developing a housing committee which hopes to be able to put up a Senior Citizens project in the immediate community, probably in the University City II urban renewal area.

St. Dominic's is involved with the process of encouraging the return of the "middle class" to the city. It is in the midst of a poor community but really does not relate to it at all. There are areas west of Trumbull where houses have been bought by Wayne State related people and have been well restored. St. Dominic's likes this and is encouraging it. This is the basis for a lack of communication and of hostility with other groups within the community.

The Unitarian Church at Cass and Forest has taken over many of the roles St. Patrick's used to have. VISTA now functions out of here and is supervised by Cathy Ransam (used to be Cathy Miller). The basement of the back of the

church used to be the location of the Young Prides Coffee House. The church provides resources and support to many of the activities in the community through its Community Program Committee. Sue Barrell (Sue Brown) is the staff person with the committee from the community.

The Unitarian Church definitely functions in a social democratic way but more progressively than any of the other churches. Their individualism and opportunism does not appear to be as obvious as any of the other churches.

(3) Wayne State and related institutions

The presence of Wayne State and its influence has been already discussed to some extent. It is additionally necessary to recognize that Wayne State produces a population in the community which is very diverse. The middle and lower sectors are both heavily recognized. This does produce a fair amount of friction and hostility within these sectors in the community. It does not appear that efforts to deal with it have been particularly successful.

At the present time Wayne State has taken a conservative direction under George Gullen. It is now most concerned with its physical appearance as opposed to creative programming. This is going to create interesting dynamics both in the community and within the University. It is also going to create some real potential for organizing.

Organizations which are of particular concern both now and for future potential are: South End, Student Faculty Council, Montith College (Otto Fienstein), University Community Coalition, Association of Black Students and the Matthaiei Community Program.

The University Community Coalition and the Matthaiei Community Program need some comment.

The University-Community Coalition came about as a result of efforts by PCAUR, Young Prides, the Center for Urban Studies, Citizen District Councils and some others in 1970 to try to develop a working relationship between the University and the community. One purpose of the committee is also to get direct community contact with the Board of Governors. Most of the community participants are now very skeptical about the potential of the committee due to poor credibility on Wayne's part. Kae Halonen, Leo Shulzitski, Vicki Buckley and Mildred Smith are the most active people from the community involved in this effort.

The Matthaiei Community Program came out of the PCAUR - Young Prides' initiated effort to open up Matthaiei to the community. Jimmy Brown's arrest, etc. (Buck knows the issue - he defended Jimmy) occurred in this process. The program is now functioning successfully and is always trying to grow and expand. It serves a large number of community residents. Fred Kane, Liz Cole, Dewey Harris are community people who run the program.

(4) Independent Organizations

Independent activity in the Cass-Trumbull community is quantitatively high. The list is very long but the following is inclusive enough for an analysis:

Fifth Estate
Global Books
Food Liberation Front
W.E.U.
Y A W F
U U A W
Community Reporter
Cass Community Health Corporation
Cass-Trumbull WRO (defunct)
Bethune Collective (RU)
Trumbull Community Center
Brainard Street Library/Center (Jim Bish has more
knowledge)
Merrill Palmer (Ron Scott - public housing rent strike)
Cass-Trumbull Democratic and Revolutionary Collective

My information is not extensive on all of these. I will speak to the ones on which I have some substantial knowledge. The Community Reporter comes out monthly throughout the Cass-Trumbull Community. It is put out collectively by about 10-12 people. The two major persons involved are John Miller and Frank Berends. Both are VISTAS. Sam Stark puts in effort and views his contributions as very important. Others at the paper do not view Sam's role as important as he does. Gene Garrett also relates to the paper quite a bit.

The paper has a pretty wide distribution in the community but does little to really assist in organizing. It provides little real information, and shallow analysis. It does "rap" at people and is rather insulting to peoples' basic intelligence.

The Editorial Board is, from what I can gain, an ultra-democratic form. Meetings have little structure and often turn into just rap sessions. Community control is the main theme and articles often only give an individualistic perspective of community control in relation to a particular subject. *They are, however, changing*

The Cass Community Health Corporation is an outgrowth of the Park Avenue Clinic. Kae Halonen, Sharon Popp and ~~Mona Rothchild~~ *PAULINE REDMOND* are very active and significant people in the Corporation. I know little of how it functions organizationally. Programatically the Corporation has a physical screening program at Burton Elementary School and is trying to set up a womens' alcholic-drug program. RU does have a relationship informally to the Corporation through Sharon Popp.

The Trumbull Community Center is an attempt by old PCAUR people to set up a peoples' institution. Sam Stark played a major role in setting up the center. The Center has a thrift store, a library, a childrens' program and is attempting to set up a seniors' program. In the past the center has functioned in a very loose unstructured manner and has just existed to a great extent. There are efforts now going on within the center to change this.

The people making the Center function are Ken Parks, Sue Barrell, Kae Halonen, Bud Alcock and Cathy Hiel. ~~know her last name~~ Sam Stark functions in Center staff meetings but does not play a key role.

The Cass-Trumbull Democratic and Revolutionary Collective (The Collective) is basically made up of people who function in the above three organizations and the University City "A" Citizens District Council. Its purpose is to pull all these people (many of the old PECUAR folks and some new VISTAS) together to coordinate efforts and assist one another in making efforts more productive. The Collective has just recently (it has existed since the summer of '72) begun to realize the importance of organizational structure. This is also true of the way their meetings have been run (ultra-democratically). Until now they have functioned as ultra-democratically as much as I have ever seen. They have stayed away from leadership, meeting structure and agendas, and anything even beginning to represent discipline.

The Collective is supposedly a result of past work and is an effort to improve that work and organizational response to the needs of the community. My observation, which is not based on attending any meetings but on discussions and knowing many of the people, is that humanism is the dominant force amongst the Collective people and that they are often afraid to be, or even try to be, strong. This has recently begun to be recognized in a serious way and is attempting to be dealt with. Political analysis through the Collective is weak and often self-supporting. Specifically, I mean that it is oriented to justify what they are doing and the way they are doing it. Criticism and self-criticism seems to be done in a way that I would describe as coddling. Collective discipline and self-confidence is very weak. The Collective does say that they realize this and they are moving to work through these results of bourgeois socialization. It appears that they are serious but still in the state of realizing what that means and trying to get to the point of doing something about it.

The structure that does exist in the Collective is loose and appears to be ultra-democratic. Regular meetings are held each Sunday evening. There are three groupings of people within the Collective that each hold an educational each week. Much of the material used in these educational was Mao's work at the beginning of their efforts but are now using materials similar to the CME readings. Much of the material appears to come out of a close relationship between Sam and Kae and Mike Hamlin and other BWC people. (BWC people are now moving into the project area of the UC "A" CDC) There are six leadership people for these educational groupings: Kae Halonen, Leo Shulzitski, Sue Barrell, Sharon Popp, Sam Stark, and Laura Chenet. Just recently they have moved to set up more organizational structure with six people functioning as organizational leadership (they have been discussing democratic centralism). These people are: Sam Stark, Sue Barrell, Pauline Redmond, Frank Berends, and Bob Repoley.

The people that I know for sure that are in the Collective are:

- Kae Halonen
- Sam Stark
- Sharon Popp
- Patsy McMahon
- Laura Chenet (relates more the the Latino collective in southwest Detroit)
- Sue Barrell
- Leo Schulzitski
- Mona Rothschild
- Tony Rothschild
- John Miller
- Cathy Ransome
- Frank Berends
- Bob Repoley
- Ken Parks
- Pauline Redmond
- Bud Alcock

To my knowledge at least eight of these people came to this community through VISTA. They stayed and one of the constantly recurring questions is who is the community and are they really a part of it. It is clear that many of the efforts going on in the C-T Community are Collective dominated. (The Health Corporation, Trumbull Community Center and the Community Reporter are now trying to obtain New Detroit funding for a Cass-Trumbull Coordinating Council) As can also be seen there is a serious lack of indigenous involvement and leadership and this does not appear to be changing significantly. (In fact, leadership development is lacking, as mentioned before.)

It is also important to note that most of the Collective people have intentions of staying in the community for some time. They view the one thing that they do have as time and that this community is very important. They have developed very little that would, by any stretch of the imagination, represent any kind of mass organization. They do, however, appear to have a mass base for mobilizing. They also appear to be able to mobilize that base for a number of community related issues. They do not agree with this assessment but I feel that is more *out* ~~off~~ of different uses of terms. Recently these differences, which are based in real political differences stated throughout this paper, have come up in UC"A" CDC staff meetings when Kae has been present and the results have been positive. It is a frustrating and draining ~~as a~~ process that we are going through, but to describe it as anything other than positive would be incorrect.

The result of all this, however, is that to anything in the C-T Community will take time and resources. As I view it now organizing could be done in one of two ways. A collective of people could be developed around myself and any other cadre in the community and then move to set up a program or involve people in already existing programs such as 3 for 3. A program could be set up off of a further analysis of the community and brought into

the community. Leadership and organization could then be built around and through that program. At any rate, which ever approach would be taken would require significant time and energy. A political struggle would definitely develop due to the presence of the collective RU, and BWC efforts. It would probably prove to be productive, but that is hard for me to measure alone. Commission discussion and analysis of this paper would be the most productive way to go.

At this point in time it appears that it would be destructive for me not to stay at the CDC past June 12. Organizationally, this would mean limited amount of time for me to put into other MCLL assignments as the recent past has indicated. Although I do not feel that work here and similar work elsewhere merits a work committee in MCLL at this time, there is a lot more analysis that needs to be made by MCLL as to the nature of work, resources, and time commitments to work here. I feel that particular emphasis by the S&P and Women's commissions would be logical. This is definitely a wage-earning community of those that work. Many of the workers in this community are women and some of the most potentially high organizing issues are particularly related to women. It should be noted that the closeness to COM is an important consideration. The 3 for 3 effort there my past relationship with Kevin which I feel is still there but latent, and the fact that the first issue of the COM newspaper (Moving Up) with assistance from Changeover Productions will come out March 19, 1973 should not be ignored in an analysis of work here. Therefore, it might be good for A&P to take a look at efforts here.

At times it is really hasseling to be in this community and working with the Collective people, but then nobody ever ~~SAD~~ creating a socialist, than communist, society in the U. S. was going to be roses.

CRITICISM-SELF

It has taken too long to get this paper to cadre; I guess some may have seriously wondered if it would ever be done.